

just entertainment

PGMC premieres Svoboda's "Festival" at arts center opening

When Portland's new \$19 million performing arts complex opens at the end of August, PGMC will be among the major attractions of the two-week celebration.

A concert by the Portland Gay Men's Chorus is scheduled for Saturday evening, September 5, in the 930-seat Intermediate Theatre of the performing arts center. Reserved seat tickets are now on sale.

The opening festival begins with a street event on Friday, August 28, and runs through Saturday, September 12. Portland Civic Theatre's production of *Sunday in the Park with George*, Storefront Theatre's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and dance programs by Oregon Ballet and Pacific Ballet Theatre are other features of the opening.

"The Chorus concert on September 5 is likely to be the most widely noticed event in our seven-year history," said Richard Brown, PGMC general manager. "We hope it will make the gay people of Portland very proud of their Chorus."

The concert opens with the world premiere of "Festival," a piece for men's chorus by the distinguished composer, Thomas Svoboda. This piece was commissioned by the Chorus for the occasion, with the aid of a grant from the Metropolitan

Arts Commission.

Thomas Svoboda, composer of "Festival," was commissioned in 1984 to write an orchestral work for the Oregon Symphony to play at the opening of the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. His music has been played by the Prague Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, and many other major orchestras. Two of his symphonies have been recorded by the Louisville Orchestra.

After the premiere and one other classical piece, the program is planned in two sections: Broadway show tunes, and songs about the sea.

Seven new arrangements have been written especially for this show, six of them by David York, conductor of the Chorus, and one by Tom Simonds, composer of *Zillions* and *Christmas 1914*.

Choreography for the Broadway segment is by Mark Bishop and Sandy Shenar.

After intermission, the Chorus will sing popular and traditional songs about the sea, beginning with a tribute to Noel Coward in new arrangements of three of his songs, including the slyly funny, "Has



Anybody Seen Our Ship?"

Visual effects for the second half of the program are being created by Clifford Smith, photographer and projection artist.

The Intermediate Theatre, which PGMC hopes to make its home, is a state-of-the-art hall with a large proscenium stage, an orchestra pit, and comfortable seating on the main floor and two balconies. Although it has more than 900 seats, it is designed so that no seat is more than about 65 feet from the stage.

PGMC applied for tenant status in the new complex nearly two years ago. After a lengthy process, the Center announced in

the spring of 1986 that the Chorus would be one of the eleven designated Major Tenants. The others are Storefront Theatre, New Rose Theatre, Pacific Ballet Theatre, Choral Arts Ensemble, Portland Civic Theatre, Oregon Repertory Singers, West Coast Chamber Orchestra, and Portland Symphonic Choir.

Tickets for the PGMC concert on September 5 are available at \$7, \$10 and \$12 from the Civic Auditorium box office and at GI Joe's. Telephone orders on VISA and Mastercard may be made by calling 248-4496.

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Community theatre groups greet success with plans for more productions

B Y W . C . M c R A E

Spread Eagle Production's *Jerker*, by Robert Chesley, was "wild and a success, if not a wild success," says actor Darell Geissler. *Jerker*, which was staged at Embers Avenue, was extended two weeks beyond its original month-long run, and played to about one thousand people, according to director Kevin Koesel.

Jerker gained a degree of notoriety recently when the Federal Communications Commission threatened to prosecute a California public radio station for obscenity after it broadcast a reading of portions of the *Jerker* script. The play deals with two gay men who develop a relationship through erotic phone conversations.

Koesel says that Spread Eagle Productions will return with a new show this fall. Koesel is looking at several scripts, and is considering an all-male production of Noel Coward's *Private Lives*.

Portland Women's Theatre Company had a "huge success" with its recent production of Sarah Dreher's *Alumni News* at MCC. "We had a packed house every night," says Sarah Packer, a member of the theatre group. "We even made money."

The group received a \$1000 grant from the Metropolitan Arts Commission to stage another Dreher play, *8 by 10 Glossy* next spring. The play involves a lesbian who returns home to her mother and sister after her father's death.

Portland Women's Theatre Company will have a fall production, yet unnamed.