

just entertainment

Raucous laughter to real tears
Emotional roller-coaster takes us for a superb ride

BY SANDRA DE HELEN

"Homo-Genized" was billed as a lesbian and gay performance festival and was presented by circa NOW and Howie Bagdadonutz at the Echo Theatre during Gay Pride Week. The two "acts" included eleven separate performances, several of which are among the best seen in Portland in the past several years.

The results of lesbians and gay men working together to create an evening of entertainment truly unified the audience and made us all laugh, cry and think. What more could anyone ask of entertainers?

Theatre

"Acting Out," by Lesbian Improvisational Theatre Troupe, opened the production with audience participation. The finished their set with an hysterically funny piece of visual business that had the audience thoroughly warmed up at the sight of Meg Grace being made up from behind by Sara Packer.

"Love and Other Addictions" was a series of poems acted out by Don Tavel and Gayle Forsberg. These ranged from moving to funny and set the tone for the rest of the evening as it swung from one emotion to another. Approximately every other piece was a musical one, such as "Safe Sex," an excerpt from the musical *The Sound of Lesbians*, written and performed by Sally Sheklow. Sally wasn't as accustomed to the microphone as she could have been, but the writing was impeccable, and her clowning was uninhibited. Her demonstration of how to use a dental dam will not soon be forgotten.

Howie performed his "Christ, Your Hair Smells Terrific," an irreverent look at what might have happened at a biblical hair salon just before the last supper of Jesus Christ. One hopes that "HOMO II" (a must!) will contain more of Howie's writing and acting.

"The Lesbian Shuffle" by Carol Steinel was a country and western look at how lesbians break up. Eight women square danced the shuffle only after Steinel laid the groundwork for the audience. The "Shuffle" contains some stinging truths which could have indeed been painful to any audience members who are in one of the stages of breakup described. Instead, there was the healing of laughter.

E. Ann Hinds made her stage appearance preceded by a slide presentation of her artwork which was captivating and brought the audience to the appropriate emotional setting for her "Cultural Differences." This

was a telephone conversation Ann has with her mother. "Mother" is nearly as sympathetic a character as "Daughter" in this sketch, which allows the audience to better understand parental relationships and how our parents might feel while trying to accept our lives. Ann's attempts to explain her anniversaries with her two lovers to a parent who had been clued in all along, but somehow still couldn't grasp the concept of non-monogamy was delightfully funny. The end of the piece brought us face to face with our inner children.

Robin Lane opened Act Two by going in search of her inner adult, the one who pays the bills, makes the appointments, and wonders why she does what she does so well. Robin's "Adjusting to the Light" began with gibberish and thirteen T-shirts with messages which shifted our thinking back and forth between new age angst and jealous, grumbling reality.

The production ended with "Pouf Positive" by Robert Patrick, performed by Tim Stapleton. Tim played a man with AIDS in his last moments, choosing to die as he had lived, with humor, wit and dignity. This brilliant piece should be mandatory viewing for every citizen of the United States as we face the scourge of our time. The lines are funny, biting, and touching. This sketch should grow to a full-length play and be performed repeatedly until we all know the entire script by heart.

Between nearly every piece, Sarazan Torell James came by as "The Tap Dancin' Fool." She wore Birkenstocks with taps and danced to Cris Williamson's "Filling Up and Spilling Over." Her antics drew attention away from the necessary scene changes, or in some cases drew attention to them, whichever suited her purpose. In addition to the pieces mentioned above, the production included B.J. Castleman and her music; "Know Water" which was two songs performed by Meg Rowe, Cathryn Heron, Lynda Byers, and Elissa Goldberg; and "Acid Folk" by Barbara Bernstein. All pieces were appreciated; all were contributions from our complex and varied culture. Nearly fifty people worked together to make this production happen.

"Homo-Genized" should become an annual tradition for Gay Pride: gay men and lesbians performing, laughing, crying and being together for the good of us all. Thank you circa NOW and Howie Bagdadonutz for presenting the entire community with a wonderful gift.

Entertainment editor Sandra de Helen has won first place in the fiction category of the writing contest at Standard Insurance Company. Sandra's "Birthday Boy" will be published in "Life at Standard," an internal publication with more than 1200 readers.

God's Country
Today's terrorism on stage



A boy (Adam Michael Hogan) lights an altar to Adolf Hitler. The actual altar was found in a raid by FBI agents in the home of Order member Gary Yarbrough.

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival presents Steven Dietz' powerful play *God's Country*, running through September 16 in the Angus Bowmer Theatre. Michael Kevin directs an ensemble of twelve actors, each of who plays multiple roles.

God's Country relates the history of The Order, the white supremacist underground responsible for the murder of Alan Berg, the controversial and combative Denver talk show host. They assassinated Berg for his "belligerence toward the white movement... and he was Jewish."

The center of the piece is the 1985 trial of members of The Order, indicted for a crime spree of robbery and counterfeiting to fund their "call to arms for the white race in its battle against ZOG," (the Zionist Occupation Government), a governmental conspiracy existing in the imagination and rhetoric of The Order and other neo-nazi organizations. ZOG, they believe, is financed by "Jewish capitalists" and "Aryan-betrayers" who authorized the American melting pot society and bargained away the future of the white race.

The members of The Order were — and are — part of a proud racist community which sees itself as victimized, revolutionary and good. *God's Country* illuminates their mindset, white identity. The play moves in time between the trial and moments which reveal the tradition of this identity as it is handed down from parent to child, from family to community.

The Identity Doctrine is the official religion of The Order, a combination of Nazism, revisionist history and selective interpretation of the Bible. At the trial, the "scriptures" of the Identity Doctrine are revealed: a novel called *The Turner Diaries*, essentially a how-to manual of hate and racism, and *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, supposedly incontrovertible proof of a Jewish conspiracy to undermine and destroy "goyim." *The Protocols* was, in fact, a forgery published and distributed in the 1920s by Henry Ford and his dealerships. It resurfaced later in *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*.

God's Country will be produced next by the Performing Arts Council of the Transvaal in Pretoria and Johannesburg, South Africa in August and September of 1990. It will be performed by a multi-racial acting company.



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