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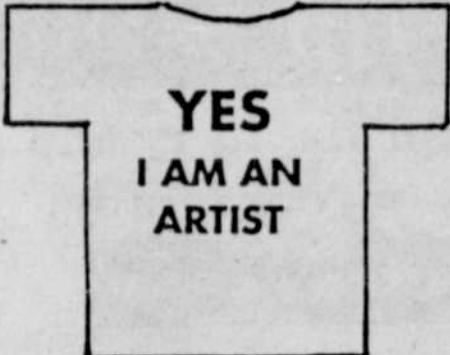
STEVEN BERKOFF'S

# KVETCH

"OUTRAGEOUS" HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

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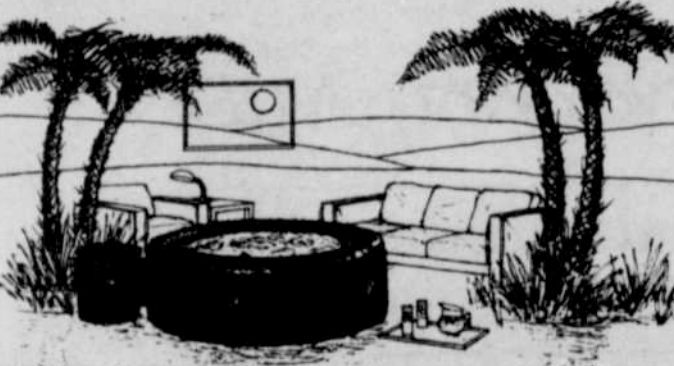


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## Surprising groans and healing laughter

*Puns pepper play about Bob the beast-boy*

BY SANDRA DEHELEN

The title, *Lloyd's Prayer*, is only the first of a multitude of puns employed by playwright, Kevin Kling. The prayer in this play belongs to Bob the beast-boy, who has been inexplicably raised by raccoons. When he chooses to stick his hand into a man-made trap, he begins his spiritual journey that leads him to and through zany, yet dark, experiences. He can no more tell you who his father is than he can tell you the ingredients in a hot dog, but before the evening is over, he learns even that secret.

## Theatre

The script is a cornucopia of twisted cliches, mixed metaphors, literary allusions and puns—only one of which draws the traditional audience response of a groan. The lack of groans were replaced by absolute howling on opening night.

Bob is captured by a barking farmer and his long-suffering wife who predicts her own unbelievable future—she will have a nervous breakdown, fall in love with her lesbian therapist, write a famous book and go on

national television talk shows.

The wife has her nervous breakdown. Bob is left caged and starving while the farmer teases him with a bird feeder. When the farmer falls dead in a ditch, Bob unlocks his cage, drags the man into it and eats half of him. Not to worry, the other half shows up later to complain about the ingratitude of children.

Next to adopt Bob is Lloyd, a recently released convict who immediately sees the economic value of the beast-boy: Ninety-five percent of Bob's body is hair. Lloyd begins by attempting to draw visitors to a freak show, but quickly realizes he can earn money quicker via evangelism. He convinces both Bob and the congregation that he is trying to save Bob's soul, but the chances are slim due to Bob's background and inability to speak.

The angel of the Lord (Laurie Holland) appears in the body of the town beauty queen and provides the very necessary spiritual guidance for Bob, Lloyd and us. She has a remarkable number of quick changes to accomplish, flies across the stage in a squeaky harness, on a trapeze, skates onstage, rides a scooter, tap dances, plays the wife/mother, the angel, the beauty queen, the wife transformed into radical lesbian and back again.

Duffy Epstein likewise plays numerous roles: Dad, Boss, Porpy, and Peter, the talk show host. His ability to alter his character from a barking redneck to an enormous boss to a smoking fish to a nervous television

personality shows his many-faceted talent.

Bob McGranahan plays Lloyd the evangelist as a real-life convict might. Rather than depicting a stereotype, he leads us into his web and traps us into believing the plight of the beast-boy.

John Steinkamp is Bob. His shy persona shines through the unbelievable physical stunts required of this role. The actor must be absolutely uninhibited, but seem vulnerable and innocent.

Bob's journey leads him away from Lloyd, to attempting a sexual encounter with the angel, to taking a job in a freak show, to returning to his tree, and finally, to contemplating suicide. He and the script have come full circle.

With great contributions from George Comall (set), Debra Bruneaux (costume), and Mike Holcombe (lighting), director Dennis Bigelow (Oregon Shakespeare Festival producer) creates an evening of magic which won't soon be forgotten.

This play is not a gay play. However, it is about not fitting in with the rest of society, about the need for love and acceptance, and about the universal quest for spiritual guidance. Its sensitivities are universal, and the laughter it provides is healing.

*Lloyd's Prayer* is being presented by the Artist Repertory Theatre (A.R.T.) at the Wilson Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 SW 10th, 242-2400, 8 pm, Thursday-Saturday, through August 11.

There will be two benefit performances for the artists on Wednesdays, August 1 and 8, 8 pm.

## Popular "nuns" to stay longer

If you still haven't seen *Nunsense*, go for it. It will be held over until August 26th. The month of July was sold out and further extensions may be necessary. Sylvia's Class Act Dinner Theatre will continue to offer the popular Sunday brunch as well as the dinners. Check *Out About Town* for specifics.

## Echo to stay open

Echo Theatre will remain open! The theatre will continue to produce original dance and theatre performances but will have to decrease the number of movement classes it currently offers. What they would prefer is to get \$10,000 more and be able to add to an already fine performance space.

Upcoming at Echo Theatre is a night of "lezzie laughs and dancing" featuring Sally Sheklow in her one-woman show, "The Sound of Lesbians" and the all-gal dance band the Saddle Soars. Showtime is Saturday, August 18 at 8 pm. Echo is located at 1515 SE 37th and Hawthorne.

Echo board member and producer Howie Baggadonutz attended the National Lesbian and Gay Theatre Conference in Seattle July 8 and 9. "There's a lot of theatre companies and producers around the country who have trouble finding affordable, quality spaces to do shows in. Portland is lucky. We have the Portland's Women's Theatre Company and Echo Theatre. As the right wing tries its damndest to silence queer culture through their assault on the NEA, it's become more evident to me that our visibility is vital to our survival. I am, therefore committed to keeping Echo's doors open and will continue to present openly gay and lesbian performers on its stage."

To help out at Echo call 231-1232.



The Tudor Tappers rehearse their number for the 1989 Daedalus Project, an AIDS benefit. (This photo was taken during the technical rehearsal prior to last year's performance.)

## The Daedalus Project

The Daedalus Project, an AIDS Benefit, returns for its third season on the Elizabethan Stage. On August 20, members and friends of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival (OSF) will perform a varied program including "a lot of song, a lot of dance, some serious thought and some tribute," according to James Edmondson, who originated the show and will coordinate the 1990 benefit.

Last season's benefit, organized by Rex Rabold, raised more than \$21,000, which was donated to several local organizations specializing in AIDS support and education. Both Edmondson and Rabold feel the Daedalus Project give the Festival company a creative means of showing they care and it helps unite OSF with concerned members of the community.

Tickets for the Daedalus Project will go on sale at the box office, (503) 482-4331, on August 1. The minimum donation is \$10; larger contributions are welcome.

—OSF Playbill