

Everybody's talking about Gary Luckey.



Portland's First
Non-tipping Salon.

Gary Luckey

281-7831
4016 NE FREMONT



Call for your
IGTA Calendar
of Events

1939 SE Hawthorne Blvd
232-5944

IGTA

Emily Simon

620 SW Fifth Ave., Ste. 1204
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 241-1553
(503) 241-2587 FAX

Emphasizing
representation of the
accused in all
misdemeanor, felony,
traffic and DUI actions
in state, federal,
juvenile courts and
administrative actions

WORLD PREMIERE BEFORE 1995 NATIONAL TOUR

DISHIN' WITH *Divine*

Starring Walter Cole/Darcelle

Written by donnie • Directed by Sharon Knorr

**SUNDAYS ONLY! • Jan. 8 - Feb. 5
7:00 PM • Portland Rep's Stage II**

Tickets: \$10 in advance; \$12 at the door. • FASTIXX - 224-8499

• Jelly Bean Card Shop in downtown Portland

• triangle productions!, 2805 SW Hume St., Portland 97219

All Shows 7 P.M. • Portland Rep's Stage II • 815 NW 12th

Logo design: Jeff Fisher

ROYAL ART

Seattle is one of four U.S. cities chosen to exhibit
treasures from ancient Benin

by Christopher Kamera

A rare exhibit of art and crafts from one of Africa's oldest and greatest civilizations—the kingdom of Benin—continues through Feb. 12 at the downtown Seattle Art Museum. "Benin: Royal Art of Africa" features more than 100 royal treasures, including incredible cast-brass works, monumental ivory carvings, precious jewelry, and ceremonial objects.

The collection, drawn from the holdings of the

remarkably, is constant, unlike many other monarchies. (While other nations have royal families dating back further in history, the original bloodlines have often ended centuries ago—the British monarchy is a prime example.) Like that of many nations, the art of the country is directly tied to the religion and history of the kingdom. The first major act of a new Oba is to commission a brass casting of the head of his late father and order an ivory tusk carved to celebrate the late king's life and political accomplishments.

Most of the current exhibit is from work seized by the British in a punitive expedition in 1897. When the British decided soon after to sell the stolen royal artworks to finance the expedition, two Austrian museum directors sent a directive to "buy everything available." A key patron in Vienna pledged 10,000 guilders to keep the royal collection intact, saving it from a "turn-of-the-century collector's mania that would have divided the collection and destroyed the impact of the works." Thus, Austria, with no colonial history, became the repository of the world's third-largest collection of Benin art—with only London and Berlin featuring more holdings. Royal art from Benin is so rare that museums with examples rarely lend them because "they simply don't have replace-

ments to exhibit while major pieces are on tour," the representative said.

Curators from the Museum für Völkerkunde praised the Seattle installation, calling it the best of those on the U.S. tour.

A stunning pair of 660-year-old brass dwarfs—probably court jesters or tumblers—open the exhibit. Stylized brass heads of former kings and queen mothers, their necks and chins wrapped with necklaces, are among the most powerful of the objects. (They originally had ivory tusks protruding from their woven hats.) Forty-two brass relief plaques record court life, including the arrival of European traders and explorers. A remarkable number of crosses are included in the royal treasures, but they are not Christian sym-



One of a pair of brass dwarf statuettes

bols. Rather, they represent the four points of the earth. Benin religion features a number of transformation beliefs, and the royal collection is full of pendants, bracelets, staffs of office, bells, clappers, horns and altar works featuring snakes, crocodiles, mud fish, chameleons and other native African creatures.

Swarovski, the Austrian-based company best known for its cut-crystal stones, jewelry, and collectible figures, is sponsoring the national tour. The company has made metal recreations of a number of the jewelry items in a very affordable price range. A fully illustrated exhibition catalog is also available.

The Seattle Art Museum is closed on Mondays; admission is free on the first Tuesday of every month. For more details about the Benin art exhibit call (206) 654-3100.

The current Oba—believed by his people to be of divine birth—is the 38th in a line of monarchs that dates to the 14th century. The bloodline,