

# SEX + DEATH + RELIGION = DANGEROUS THEATER

Direct from New York City, Purgatorio Ink presents its  
iconoclastic *Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay*

by C. Jay Wilson Jr.

Nietzsche's vexatious *The Gay Science* contains the aphorism "The secret of reaping the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment from life is to live dangerously!" Most artists would certainly agree with Nietzsche, yet those artists who actually strive to ascend to the Nietzschean apogee of iconoclastic dissension are few. Enter Assurbanipal Babilla, the prophet of the perilous, who brings to the Pacific

anarchic theater amidst the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. He was exiled in 1979 after the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent installation of the Ayatollah Khomeini and moved to New York to continue his career of contumacy in the United States. Babilla continued to stir up controversy as his subject matter freely explored homosexuality and a host of social and sexual taboos.

The controversial subject matter of Bani's plays has been likened to that of Nabokov's, and his influence upon artistic communities and the intelligentsia in his native Iran was compared to the legacy here of Andy Warhol. Bani's most recent autobiographical composition, *Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay*, employs the stark minimalism of Beckett's plays and combines it with the dark dementia of Genet's diseased world.

The plot involves child abuse, incest and murder as experienced by a four-member circus family on the eve of the Second Coming. Challenging conventional perceptions of familial relationships, Bani's play offers an examination of the nature of social authority and its initiation of violence and abuse in a world sustained by misanthropy.

*Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay* was produced originally by La MaMa, New York City's theater famous for bringing to life brilliant underground works of a more absurdist inclination. This play's exploration into the obscene promises to be an experience that has the unique ability to simultaneously delight and horrify.

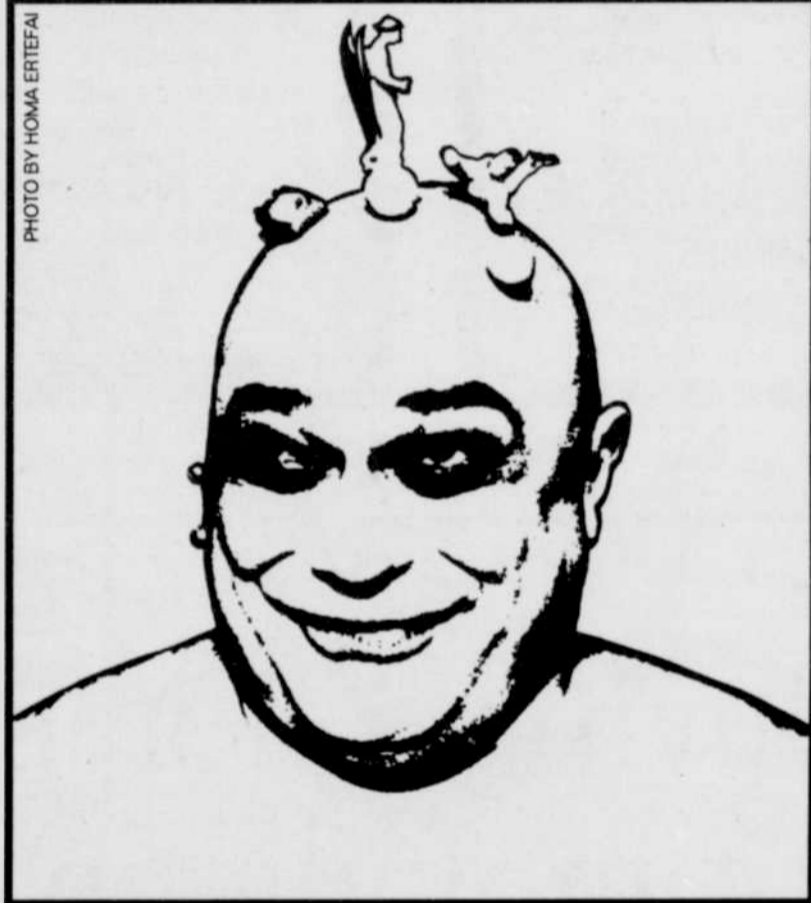
*Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay* runs Jan. 22-24 at the Clinton Street Theatre, 2522 SE Clinton St., in Portland. Tickets are \$14, call 242-1419.

## Theater

Northwest for the first time the offense of his controversial company Purgatorio Ink in its performance of *Suddenly Something Recklessly Gay* or *Cirque de Ca Ca*, Jan. 22-24 at the Clinton Street Theater. The program is part of the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art's 1995-96 season.

Assurbanipal Babilla, known simply as Bani, combines a formal stagecraft and classically structured texts with elements drawn from symbolist imagery and stand-up comedy to communicate ideas that wrestle with themes of homosexuality, religion and sexual grotesqueries. His work forcefully attacks the moral and social constructs that define the delicate matrix of our society, establishing him as the avant-garde Momus of contemporary U.S. theater.

A former Protestant minister who studied theology in Beirut, Lebanon, Bani found it increasingly dangerous to exist as an Assyrian, Christian, homosexual playwright producing his brand of



Assurbanipal Babilla

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