

WATCH IT!

*Time waits for no one to catch his or her breath in
All in the Timing*

by C. Jay Wilson Jr.



PHOTO BY RICK ADAMS

The wrong sandwich: (from left) William Harper, Karen Trumbo and Michael Mendelson in the "Philadelphia" sketch

Wasn't it Shakespeare who said, "Life is time's fool"? His Elizabethan sensibilities couldn't even begin to fathom our ridiculous enslavement to time in the 20th century—a servitude that predicts a routine mass exodus at the beginning and end of each scheduled workday. And does anyone ever stop to consider the irreversible repercussions of time's systematic progression?

Theater

If you believe that time is "of the essence"—even if you have been unable to pinpoint its essentiality—then I suggest that you attend Portland Repertory Theater's production of *All in the Timing*, an accelerated evening of theater devoted to the manipulation of our modern concept of time.

Above all else towers David Ives' meticulously crafted script, through which he has probed into the temporal construct of time's authoritative influence upon our lives. As Ives confuses the linear timetable in his script, we understand how language and discourse must follow in a similar fashion, as their definition completely depends upon the context in which they exist. The audience is left to observe the furiously comical results throughout the course of *All in the Timing*.

Dennis Bigelow's precise direction of Ives' script is sustained by Curt Enderle's utilitarian scenic design and the quirky musical composition of Rick Adams; all are instrumental in setting into motion the wild ride that audiences are left to experience throughout the performance. With all of these aspects in place, we are left with the actors, who are consequently nothing more than playthings in this production. The actors exist merely as puppets whose strings are manipulated

by the absurdity of the theatrical circumstances into which they are thrown.

Actually, their presence in the play is slightly more significant than that. The four actors who are called upon to advance the action in this play each delivered more than adequate performances.

All in the Timing comprises six sketches that were originally produced independently as one-act plays between 1987 and 1993. The production opens with "Sure Thing," a fast-paced exchange of dialogue between two characters played by William Harper and Karen Trumbo. The exchange is frequently interrupted and repeated to facilitate the perfect combination of words to guarantee their continued interest in each other beyond their strained initial encounter. Sharonlee McLean and Michael Mendelson were delightful in another sketch that required impeccable timing in their interchange of dialogue. This sequence, entitled "The Universal Language," was perhaps the most demanding, for much of the dialogue was delivered in the tongue of Unamunda, a fabricated language that sounds like a strange hybrid of English, German and Latin. Milking the prepos-

terous drone of minimalism, "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread" featured all of the actors in a choreographed musical number complete with some direct quotations from Glass' compositions.

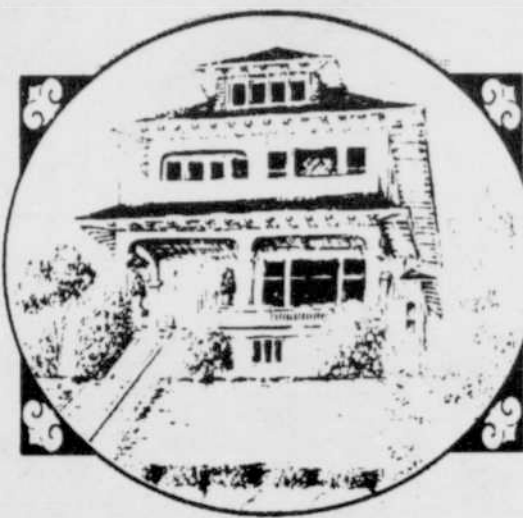
All in the Timing offers a riveting evening of theater that races forward

with little regard for the lack of oxygen in the lungs of its audience members. This is theater for those who demand a little extra on their theatergoing plate: It is smart, funny, absurd and perhaps just a little thought-provoking.

All in the Timing plays through March 16 at the Portland Repertory Theatre, 2 World Trade Center, 25 SW Salmon St. Tickets are \$27 on Friday and Saturday, \$25 for other nights; call the PRT box office at 224-4491. Half-price rush tickets go on sale half an hour before show time.

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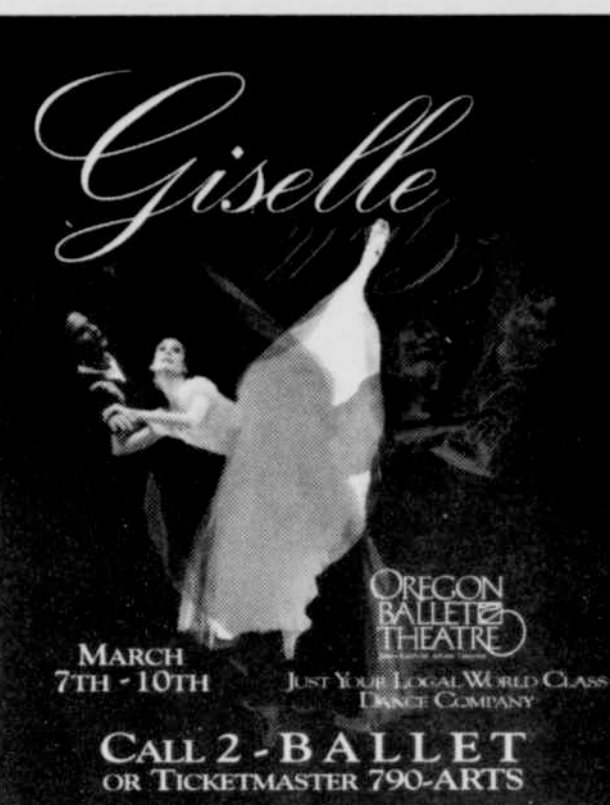
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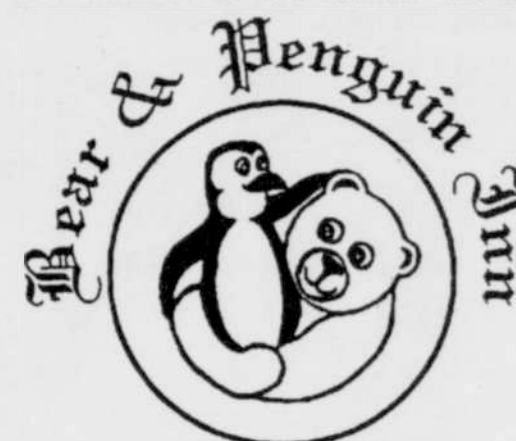
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