

★You don't have to be GAY
to love going to the theatre...
but it helps!

...Especially if you come to the **Gay and Lesbian Audiences Series (GALA)** at **Portland Center Stage**. Sponsored by **just out**

Selected Tuesday evenings throughout the season – attend great plays and join the cast for the parties that follow at **Piatti's** on Broadway – for the gay and lesbian community.

★**The 1998-99 Season**★

The Little Foxes

by Lillian Hellman ★ GALA night is October 6

The measures Regina Giddens takes to pursue her desires reveal a woman of singular and horrifying purpose. This portrait of a ruthless Southern family stunned Broadway when it premiered in 1939—and again when Bette Davis starred in the movie..

September 26 – October 24

Red

by Chay Yew ★ GALA night is November 3

A world premiere play of spectacle and substance spanning two generations as a contemporary author revisits Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution, and comes face to face with a man renowned for his portrayals of the divas of Chinese Opera.

October 30 – November 21

A Christmas Carol

by Charles Dickens ★ GALA night is December 8

The Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future visit Ebenezer Scrooge in this delightful holiday treat featuring holiday musical favorites, original carols, and Portland favorites Terry Sneed, Michael Mendelson, and Susannah Mars.

December 1 – January 2

How the Other Half Loves

by Alan Ayckbourn ★ GALA night is January 19

Two dinner parties – both appearing on stage at the same time -- collide with some ferociously funny results. Directed by Cliff Baker, director of Comfort and Joy at PCS.

January 9 – February 6

The Old Settler

by John Henry Redwood ★ GALA night is February 23

In 1940s Harlem, two sisters must find a way to lay down the bitterness of the past if they are to find peace for the future.

February 13 – March 13

As You Like It

by William Shakespeare ★ GALA night is March 30

This beloved tale of love, marriage, reconciliation, and cross-dressing in the forest of Arden reminds us that "all the world's a stage." Cast includes Suzanne Bouchard (A Midsummer Night's Dream), Kate Heasley (Sylvia), and Mark Chambers (A Tuna Christmas and Sylvia) in another gender-bending role.

March 20 – April 24

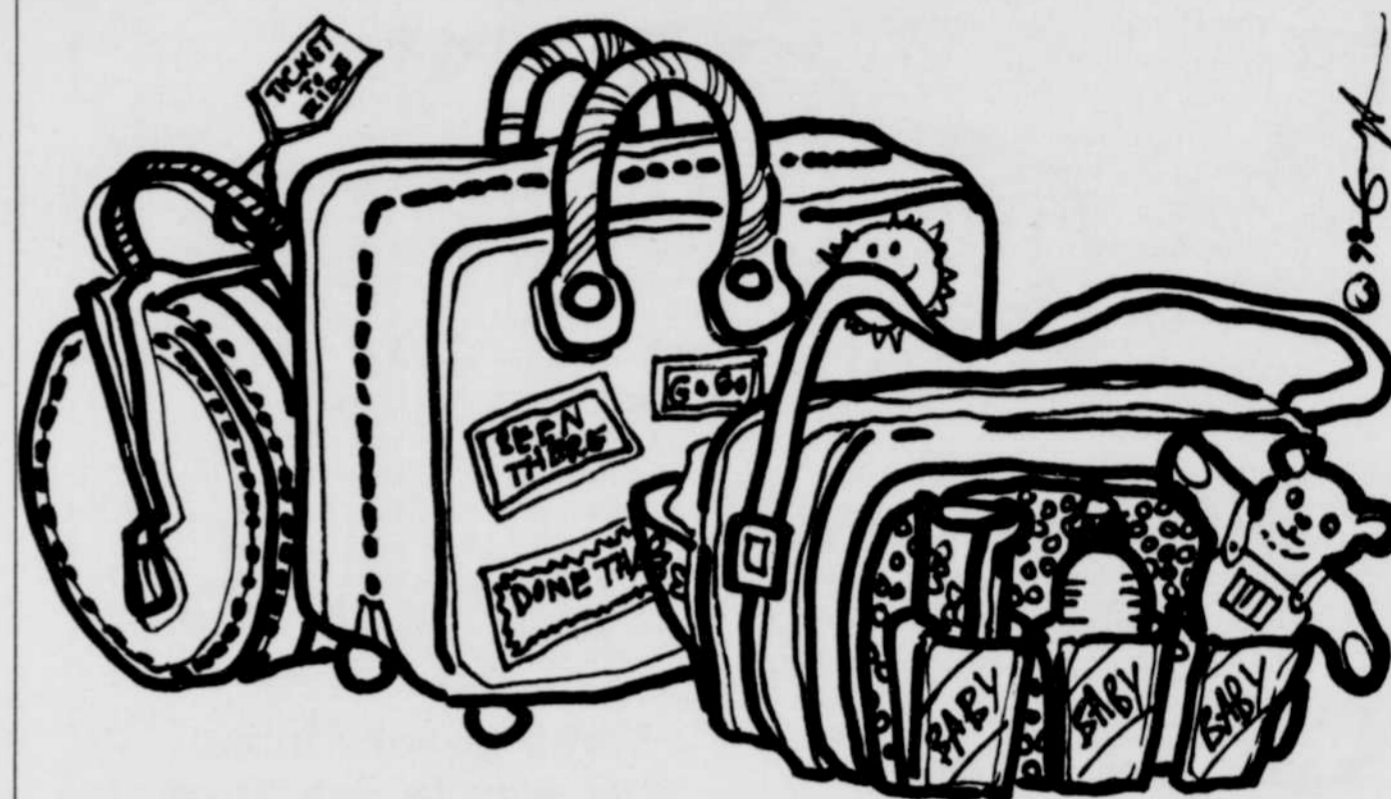
★Save 20% off the regular ticket price by purchasing tickets to all six productions, and enjoy all the additional benefits of becoming a PCS subscriber! Call the box office and ask for the GALA series ★

★503-274-6588★

Experience the Drama in Someone Else's Life...
Portland Center Stage

Birthright

Climbing through a lifetime of old baggage
to board the baby train



We have been given a gift: we have been born different. We have been made to live at cross purposes to a basic biological imperative. We have been made to be sexually attracted to our own gender.

No matter how frequently or how well I make love to my boyfriend, we will never, ever create a child via that lovemaking. I could change the law of the land tomorrow and sweep the HIV pandemic off the face of the globe. Still, I could not create a child with my soul mate, my husband.

This does not mean I am immune to the nesting instinct. Nor does it mean I have never entertained adoption, co-parenting, or the many other options for procreation and parenting available to us queers.

Not that parenting is necessarily a top priority for a lot of gay men. I might just as well ask, "Have you found Jesus?" I'd likely get a more favorable response from most gay men. I have a few theories about this.

The most obvious reason many gay men want nothing to do with children is that they are men. I have met few straight men who are, until the little bundle is in their arms, all that fired up about being a father. Men are not nurturers in our culture and so the whole idea of actually making babies that require nearly constant attention for two-plus decades is anathema.

The next factor, I believe, is homophobia. No matter how out and comfortable you are, the old "queers are all pedophiles" way of thinking keeps most gay men away from children. We may do no wrong, but simply the appearance of wrongdoing based on others' perceptions frightens us half to death when a child comes too near.

I also believe gay men are, despite the old axiom of being sensitive, self-interested to the point of omphalocentrism. (They contemplate their navels.) Anyone with children will tell you that kids require a large degree of selflessness.

Probably our greatest problem with children is that we have had really shitty childhoods. Beaten, terrorized and ridiculed, we are shut off from our own childhoods and don't want anything that reminds us of being at the mercy of

others. (I also believe this has something to do with why some of us choose to become body-builders.)

While some of us didn't fit the shitty-childhood mold, most of us had the smell of queerness about us. We got picked on and abused. Being around children can't help but remind us of that abuse. I was punched, called "faggot." I endured nearly unending ridicule. Even without these attacks from the outside, most of us have had to deal with a lot of internal conflict. We don't seem to be noticing how those conflicts' resolution often has left us with gaping wounds.

I belong to Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, a wonderful organization that provides support to parents dealing with their kids' homosexuality. I listen to them and grieve the loss of the child they thought they'd raised—a child they imagined would bring them grandchildren. I try to remind them those dreams don't have to be dashed. I counsel them and tell them to support to their kids, and I remind them grandchildren aren't an impossibility. (The lesbian baby boom is heartening.)

Most of us do a great job of cutting ourselves off from children. We don't even support children's issues as well as we should because we are so damned afraid of kids. We have been so hornswoggled by our self-interest and internalized homophobia that we abandon every whispered yen to become parents or even mentors.

I sat one night watching a man and his sons going home on the train. The man looked like any number of my friends. He turned to me as I sat smiling at the spectacle of his two sons sleeping only moments after the train got underway.

"Do you have some of your own?" he asked. I remembered finding out my last girlfriend had gotten an abortion before informing me she was pregnant.

"No," was the best I could get out.

"Well, don't let it pass you by." He turned his attention back to his sons' faces, saying, "You'll regret it forever if you do." I was glad he'd stopped staring at me, because the tears in my eyes were obvious.

I know that being someone's father isn't something I am going to do today, or probably tomorrow. I also know that if I don't become a father—if I let homophobia or other fears stop me—I will indeed regret it forever. I will have let what I am get in the way of who I want to be.

OUTWARD

BY
JULIAN
SOUTH