

**THEATER**

**W**hen I agreed to write this review, I had not yet seen the play. I didn't know there were nasty words involved and beds and sex and stuff.

As perhaps the biggest prude in Portland, I'm finding this task quite a challenge. I suppose I could have thought through what kind of play might be named *The Dyke and the Porn Star*, but I'm a notoriously simple thinker, and the implications did not hit me.

This is a play attempting to explore our complex relationships with sexuality and desire. It's also a play about image and reality and the confusion that results when those boundaries are mushy. But mostly this is a play about beds and sex and stuff.

The actors bravely march into territory usually left to the real porn stars—brightly using the word "fuck" a lot, simulating masturbation, going into excruciating detail about their sexual fantasies and taking their tops off. It seemed an uncomfortable fit. (Note: My partner, Mary, thinks this is an uncomfortable projection.)

Not to say the women didn't do a good job. With the exception of a few opening night jitters resulting in dropped books, rolling oranges and a missed cue or two, both actors jumped into their roles with great energy.

The dyke is played by Jenni Green, who, although looking much less dykey than all the dykes I know, revels in the humor of her role. Torrey Cornwell gives the porn star just the

right amount of bravado and vulnerability.

Karen Tate's direction is clean and to the point. The set and lighting are simple and help the story progress, although a little more differentiation between one bedroom and the next would have been helpful. (Again, my partner vehemently disagrees with the bedroom differentiation statement.) The script by Bayla Travis, however, left me frustrated and dissatisfied, and that's a statement with no sexual innuendo intended!

The story begins with the dyke's rather lengthy confession of a long-term video obsession with one particular porn star. This involves lots of the aforementioned nasty words along with a little preparatory masturbation.

Next is the improbable yet predictable dyke's meeting of the same porn star at a party where fantasies are revealed, a little gentle whipping takes place and oranges are dropped. This party was my mother's worst nightmare when she learned her little girl was a lesbian, I might add. (Mom, I can assure you I have not yet been to this party.)

After the improbable meeting comes the even more improbable mutual attraction phase, complete with lots more dirty words, a bedroom scene and, yes, the aforementioned baring of breasts. Then, guess what? The porn star isn't really ready for intimacy! Wow, can you believe it?

Gee, it never would have occurred to me that a woman working in a tradi-

tionally sexually exploitative field might have some problems with intimacy!

This, however, sets the stage for some more fantasies courtesy of the porn star and much discussion about the public vs. private persona. The whole story winds up with a little stalking and more boundary confusion.

OK, I know that sounds a bit harsh. I found the story predictable to the point of yawns and the attempt to raise the interest level with a little lesbian titillation insulting.

Who really spends that much time on beds and sex and stuff? Where was the gentle whipping at my last potluck?

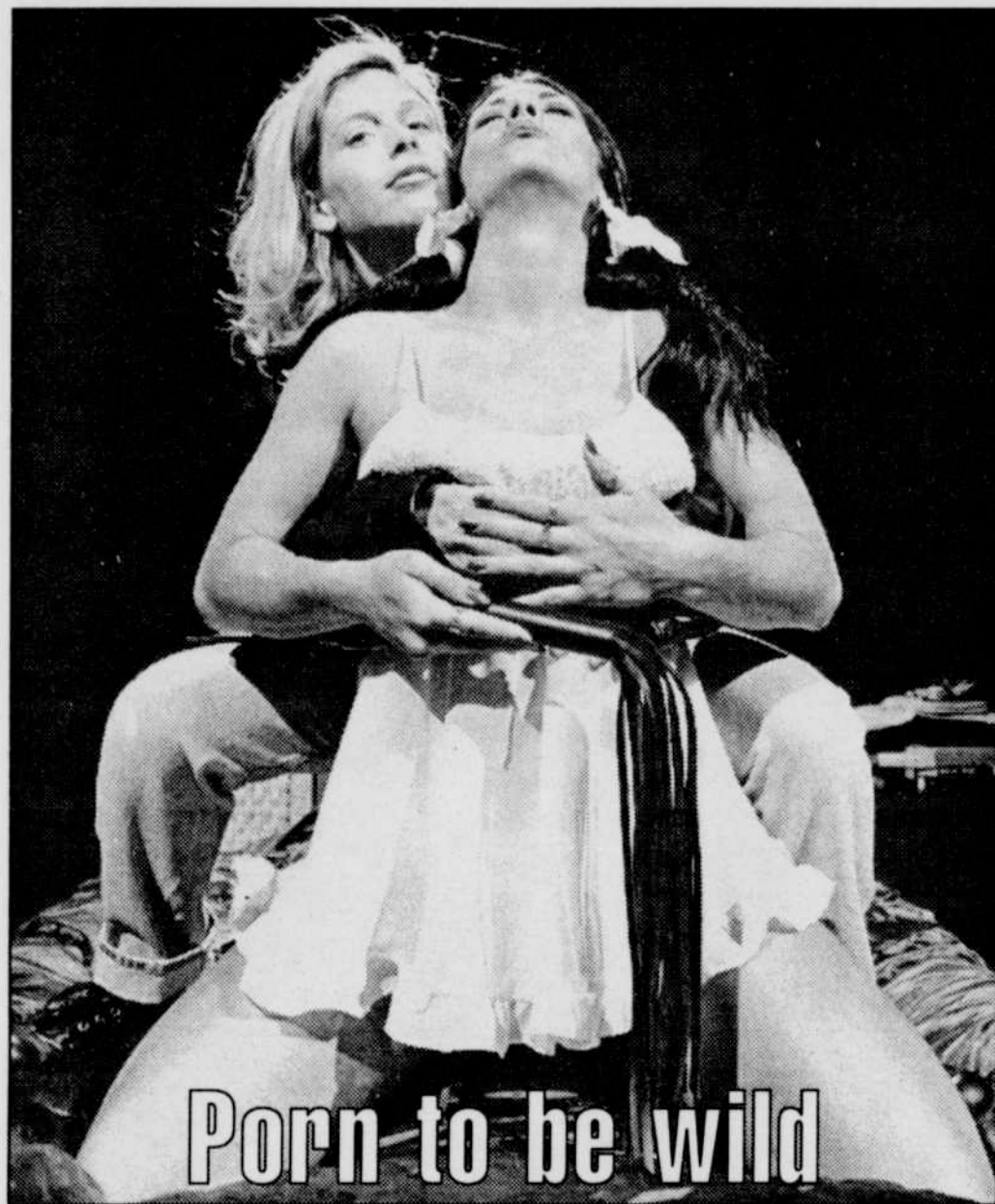
But because of the skill and willingness of the cast and crew, this slim vehicle did become the instigator of some interesting conversations and is certainly worth seeing. I appreciate triangle productions! exploring taboos and daring to raise issues surrounding our sexuality. My hope is that *The Dyke and the Porn Star* will inspire many budding lesbians to write their own plays about what is real to them and that, through them, I finally will be able to see something on stage that is real to me.

By the way, my partner gave the actors, director and producer a standing ovation. She also liked the play lots better than I did.

I think she has been to some of those parties. Note to self: Talk about parties at next counseling visit. **J**


*THE DYKE AND THE PORN STAR* plays through July 28 at Theater! Theatre!, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. Tickets are \$19 at the door or \$17 in advance from 503-239-5919 or Fastixx.

CATHRYN CUSHING is a plain old-fashioned Portland lesbian who used to be a member of the Fallen Angels.



**Play dares to raise titillating issues**

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