

DIVERSIONS

Mary Melodies

When Bugs Bunny donned a female hunter's outfit and planted a sloppy one on Elmer Fudd's rapturous lips, was it a cross-dressing homosexual moment in cartoon cinema? Donald Duck walking around in a sailor's suit but no pants—code? And there's no need even to talk about the Liberace-obvious Snagglepuss.

These and other cases in the cartoon closet can rest easy now—**Queer Duck** is here, out and proud. Launched last summer as a series of animated shorts at Icebox.com, *Queer Duck* enjoyed a big-time television premiere Jan. 29 after Showtime's *Queer as Folk*.

Queer Duck is a flamboyant trickster—a cross between Daffy Duck in his wilder "woo-hoo!" stage and the beloved Jack of *Will & Grace*.

Appropriately voiced by Jim J. Bullock (remember Monroe of *Too Close for Comfort*? Yeah, him), he is surrounded by animal friends who register icons of standard gay history: Oscar Wildcat, Openly Gator (with a voice like Harvey Fierstein) and Bi Polar Bear (Billy West of the old *Ren & Stimpy* delivers a dead-on Paul Lynde).

Stories send up situations specific to gay life—from coming out to one's neurotic family to the undying worship of Barbra Streisand—with mixed results. It's funny, but in a juvenile way, often leaving the targeted stereotypes relatively unharmed. Cartoon buffs will get a kick out of satirical references (e.g., porno spoof title *Rock Hard & Bull Sprinkle*.)

If a Showtime subscription seems too high a price to watch a five-minute short, you can watch episodes at Sho.com's impressively interactive *Queer Duck* site. You'll also find screen-savers, games and e-greeting cards.

—Kevin Moore

Scopitones at Clinton Street

Camp and kitsch collide in one of the most fascinating and, until recently, forgotten phenomena of the 1960s.

The Scopitone was a 7-foot-tall video jukebox with a television screen on top and a selection of three-minute musical numbers available for the price of a quarter. Clinton Street Theater presents 28 of these hilarious early music videos from Feb. 1 to 7 during *Scopitone-a-GoGo*.

What could you get for your two bits? How about lounge lizardette Jane Morgan singing "C'est Si Bon" in a cheesy faux Paris? Or Stacy Adams and Her Pussycats demonstrating the jerk, the monkey and the twist at a tacky Vegas motel? Or blond bombshell Joi Lansing crooning to a queen in a cobra costume while cooking in a jungle cauldron?

These wacky, often surreal numbers were shot everywhere from the local zoo to minimalist sound stages to colorful cardboard sets standing in for Bombay or London (or less identifiable realms).

The accent was mostly on pop-rock, but Scopitones were generous in their reach. You can find early R & B, satirical folk songs (George McKelvey's



QUEER DUCK

"My Teenage Fallout Queen"), unlikely protest numbers (Debbie Reynolds wailing "If I Had a Hammer") and even breeder-male surf rock.

Along with each song the viewer was treated to a now-hilarious parade of period pop couture, from Mondrian dresses to string bikinis to vinyl go-go boots.

Scopitone was invented in France during the late '50s, and the French were mostly modest with their numbers. In the United States, Scopitones got sleazier—and more interesting. There were still plenty of "respectable" acts, but the Mafia's secret takeover of the 'Tones made sure there was also plenty of cheese and beefcake.

The format was also surprisingly queer-friendly. Practically all of the numbers have at least one queen cavorting or being serenaded by a clueless straight chanteuse. And they're a



Celebrate with Wild Abandon on Feb. 5, 6 or 7 treasure trove for grrl-watchers of all sexes.

The Scopitone screens went dark forever in 1969 when the mob connection was uncovered and a right-wing folk group called the Back Porch Majority sued over some "vulgar" footage inserted into their number. The Back Porch Majority is now mercifully forgotten, but the Scopitones are enjoying renewed popularity as one of the more endearing excursions into '60s camp culture.

—Gary Morris

Abandon yourself

Wild Abandon restaurant celebrates its seventh anniversary with a benefit for Our House of Portland. From Feb. 5 to 7 the gay-owned eatery will be open for business as usual but will donate 40 percent of all proceeds to the residential care facility.

"Wild Abandon has been a part of the gay community from its beginning, and the community has been good to Wild Abandon," says Michael Cox, owner of the popular digs. "Our House is a cause that is close to my heart, and the milestone of seven years demands celebration and giving

back." Call 503-232-4458 for reservations.

Get thee to the museum

In an obvious bid to attract gay men to the Portland Art Museum, those cunning curators have obtained *Matières de Rêves* (which sounds a lot better than the English translation, *Stuff of Dreams*) from the Paris Museum of Decorative Arts (also a translation, albeit a nicer one).

This vast exhibit contains more than 100 astonishing works of art, introducing crass Americans to the unimaginable beauty of objects of daily European life created between the Middle Ages and the present.

You will gape in awe at the 1788 clock of Marie Antoinette, the 1819 ceremonial cradle of the Duc de Bordeaux and the monumental bronze bed of Emilie Valtresse de la Bigne from 1875. But don't miss—I repeat, *do not miss*—Rupert Carabin's Spider Pin Tray, which shocked the Paris art world in 1908 with its integration of a muscular nude woman. (She looks great!)

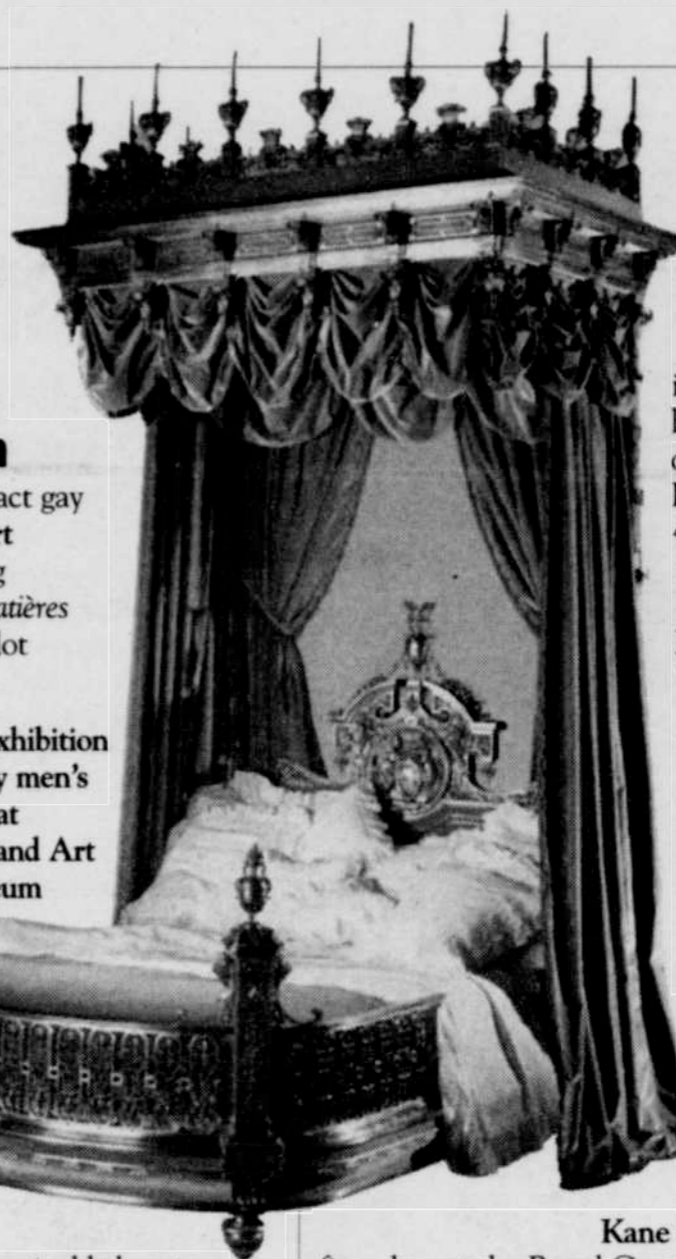
The exhibition runs from Feb. 2 to April 28. An opening lecture titled "Bedtime Stories" will be given at 2 p.m. Feb. 3.

Remember when you first met?

Now you can share it with a theater full of people. *When We First Met* will play in several cities around the world on Valentine's Day, including Eugene's Lord Leebrick Theatre. The romantic comedy show interviews real live couples, then improvises their stories on the spot.

"When we hit upon the universal truths about love and dating, the audience erupts with laughter," says the show's New York creator, Jill Bourque. "It's also enlightening because there are moments when the couples reveal very profound aspects of their relationship."

The all-woman improv team WYM-PROV! will perform the Eugene show and is looking for queer



An exhibition of gay men's beds at Portland Art Museum

couples as well as straight. If you're interested in being interviewed and lightly chided onstage, call Jill Bourque at 415-538-8660, ext. 102, or Trish McDermott of Match.com at 707-765-1526.

Lord Leebrick Theatre is at 540 Charnelton St. Tickets are \$12 from 541-465-2067.

defunkt does Kane

Controversial British playwright Sarah

Kane wrote and produced

five plays at the Royal Court Theatre in London before her suicide three years ago at age 28.

Fellow playwright Mark Ravenhill says she "created a theater of great moments of beauty and cruelty." Her work is described as powerful, violent and sexually charged. One critic described her first play, 1995's *Blasted*, as "a disgusting piece of filth," and the producer called it "the least seen and most talked-about play in recent memory."

Portland's defunkt theatre presents Kane's *Phaedra's Love* through Feb. 16 at Back Door Theatre, 4319 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. This visceral, unflinching work is an unapologetic take on Seneca's Greek classic *Phaedra*, gutting society's fascinations with sex, violence and love.

Portland queer actress and visual artist damali ayo, who plays Strophe in the production, says Kane "strives to show our world through honest eyes. She is a fierce examiner of the truth and uncovers complex issues of gender, sex, power, violence, faith and struggle."

defunkt is offering a Valentine's Day special of a discounted ticket price for those who come alone, are recently divorced or are otherwise single.

Because of explicit themes of violence and sex—queer and otherwise—*Phaedra's Love* is recommended for mature audiences only.

Tickets are \$8-\$15 from 503-993-9062. J

Compiled by LISA BRADSHAW



WYM-PROV! will re-enact your first date for Valentine's Day

I'm coming out!



Goodbye to another Ellen show?

It looks like Rosie O'Donnell is finally doing it. Her new memoir, *Find Me*, due April 23, reportedly includes a discussion about her relationships with women. This is no guarantee she'll say the "L" word out loud on the air, but hey, it's something. There's also talk the comedian might turn the tome into a one-woman stage show.

In other lesbian celebrity news, *The Ellen Show* is under threat of cancellation again. The sitcom has been a big ratings flop, and production has halted. Could this be because of a crappy time slot, followed by a musical-chair leaping around on the dial? Hmm. Go to CBS.com and click on "feedback" to tell off the network execs.



We know she is, but will she say so?