

as much of a surprise as the general audience. That makes some of them a little nervous, but all are thrilled with the idea that the older gay and lesbian population is being recognized. For many, having a show celebrating who and what they are becomes a final step in a road to their personal freedom.

"I don't think a lot of people respect the older members of the community," Ewen says. "And that's sad to me. The older gay people survived a lot. They went through a great deal. We need to remember that."

On the other side, however, Clarke notes an experience when the exact opposite was true. A young lesbian came up to her at a gathering and told her how happy she was to see the elder members of the community in attendance.

"We have parties and get-togethers with people of all ages," Clarke says. "I don't always feel isolated."

Robertson realizes the sexual minorities community is not always willing to appreciate its older members and hopes *Vintage Voices* will remedy this situation.

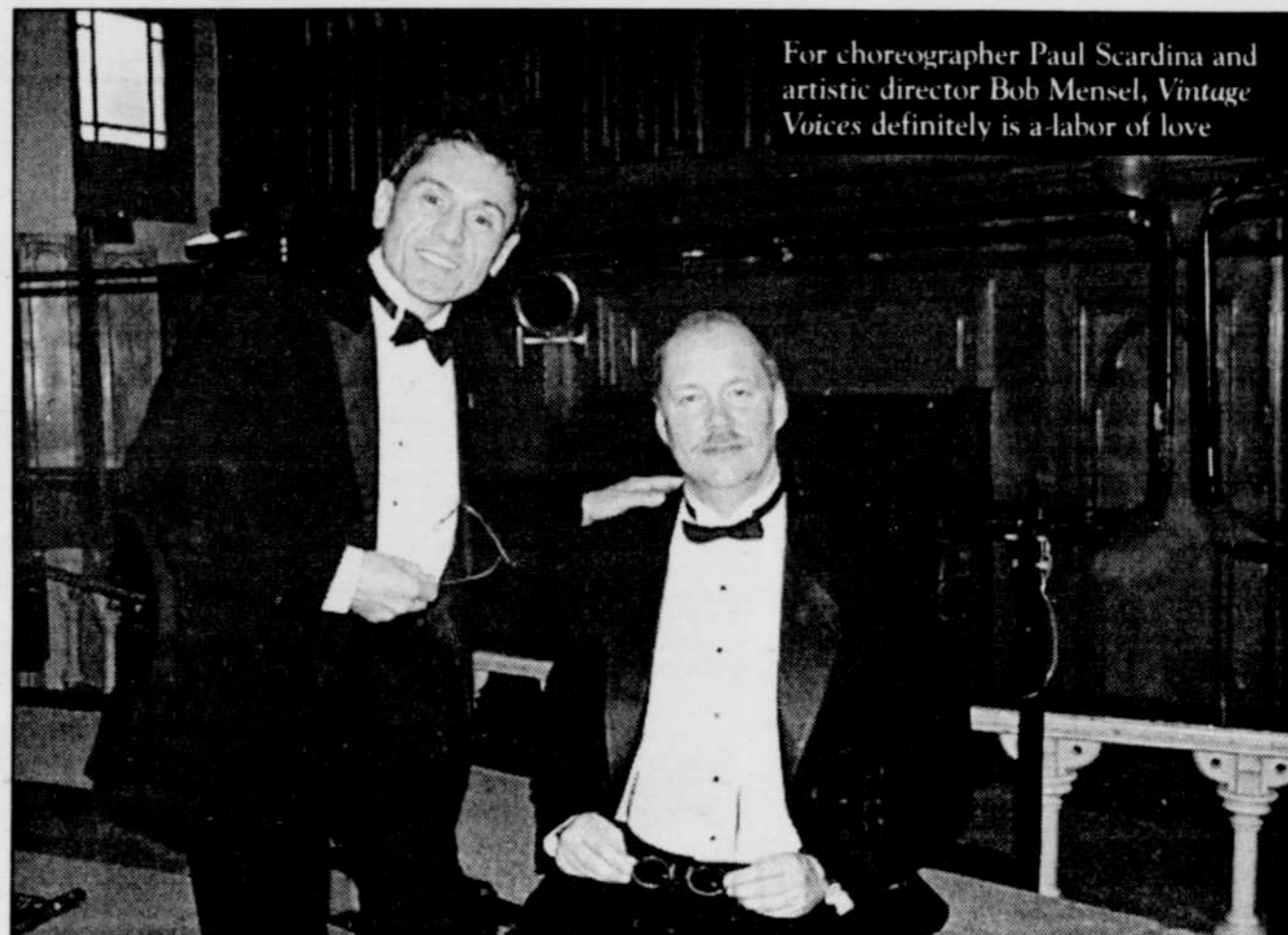
"If you subscribe to any gay periodicals, you

would be hard pressed to find a picture of anyone over the age of 30, let alone 70," he says. "We are an obsessed culture with a warped, myopic view of the gay community. Our senior gays and lesbians need to be celebrated. The gay youth of today need to be made aware of the people who helped create the climate that provides them with safety in coming out." □

VINTAGE VOICES is scheduled for 8 p.m. March 23 and 2 p.m. March 24 at Reed College's Kaul Auditorium, 3203 S.E. Woodstock Blvd. For tickets, which cost \$12-\$20, call 503-226-2588 or 503-275-8352. Seniors can enjoy refreshments and socializing with their peers during a pre-concert event at 12:30 p.m. March 24.

The ELDER GLBT OUTREACH TASKFORCE is offering low-income sexual minority seniors the opportunity to attend at a discounted rate March 24. For more information call Friendly House at 503-228-4391.

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For choreographer Paul Scardina and artistic director Bob Mensel, *Vintage Voices* definitely is a labor of love



Mary Beth Brindley (left) and Evelyn Hall met 43 years ago while playing women's softball

Mary Beth Brindley & Evelyn Hall

For nearly 43 years, Mary Beth Brindley and Evelyn Hall have been a team, which is not surprising considering where they first met.

It was a different time in a different part of the country—the South, to be specific—when they met playing women's softball. They became friends but found they had something else in common during a stint on a bowling league.

That "something else" was a topic nobody in that era or place talked about, but the two knew. And they fell in love. They started a life together. They worked through the issues that come from living in fear.

They stayed together from that time in Memphis, Tenn., through many years in Fort Worth, Texas. They say that they always had friends who were fellow members of the gay and lesbian population but that they never, ever were open.

When an acquaintance moved to Portland, they came to visit. They saw something different: a freedom they never had known. They moved out here in 1996. Today, they are celebrating an openness unlike anything they even could have dreamed about in the past. "We didn't know anything else," Hall says. "Everyone was in the closet. Everyone was facing the same thing. We did things. We had house parties, and people would have dances in their garages. But you had to be careful."

Finally being free after all these years has been an incredible experience for Brindley. She has come out to her family members and joined numerous groups. "I never felt this kind of freedom," she says. "This is wonderful."

Brindley and Hall, who are both in their early 60s, are thrilled to be a part of *Vintage Voices*. However, they admit they don't know what to expect. "We're excited to do something like this," Hall says. "For a lot of older people there is still a real fear about coming out. They are pretty invisible, which is unfortunate. They have a lot to offer."

"I never felt this kind of freedom. This is wonderful."
—Mary Beth Brindley

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