

DIVERSIONS

Enviably women at Four Wall

On a regular basis, the folks at Four Wall Cinema Collective give adventurous Portland audiences the chance to experience film as contemplation, as personal expression and as a starkly visual experience.

The term "experimental" is taken at face value here, which means the programming has been as consistently intriguing as it has been, at times, willing to challenge to the point of exasperation.

Their presentation March 4 and 5 of *The Man Who Envied Women*, however, is perhaps their least rarefied program yet. Yvonne Rainer's 1985 work is a 16-millimeter sound film about issues that could be simply described as "feminist," hung on a skeletal narrative involving a menopausal artist leaving her husband of four years. Tackled from myriad angles, the work includes frequent and provocative mention of the place of gay men and lesbians in gender politics.

Rainer depicts poststructuralism—the preferred philosophical mode of many feminist and queer theorists—as concocted by men as a sort of intellectual masturbation inadequate to real-world problems of homelessness, imperialism, class, sexuality and, Rainer's own unanswerable grievance, infidelity.

It's a work of exploration, of contradictions: She reads on the soundtrack from a treatise proposing that heterosexual sex is by definition a diminishment of the woman, only to sarcastically add, "Good grief, and here I've been thinking all these years that sex was fun." It is

this playfulness, which infuses the textual and visual components of the film, along with Rainer's ironic but joyfully cinephilic use of old Hollywood film clips, that makes *The Man Who Envied Women* such vital, enjoyable viewing for anyone of any sexual orientation interested in the paradoxes of sex and gender.

Four Wall Cinema is located at 425 S.E. Third Ave. All screenings are at 7:30 p.m. The suggested donation is \$6.

—Christopher McQuain

Canfield exits OBT

Oh, woe is Portland! Oregon Ballet Theatre founder and artistic director (not to mention the hottest queer tattooed boy ever to don tights) James Canfield has announced he will depart OBT when his contract expires at the end of June 2003.

According to a press release, he wants to pursue other creative interests. "I am proud that OBT now ranks as one of the premier repertory dance companies in the United States," the quirky artist says. "I feel it is time for a change, both for myself and for this company." Canfield has not said whether he plans to leave Oregon.

The former Joffrey Ballet dancer moved to Portland in 1985 to

take the role of artistic director of Pacific Ballet Theatre, which consolidated with Oregon Ballet in 1989, creating OBT. He has been OBT's only artistic director and has choreographed a majority of the company's critically acclaimed work.

Setting himself apart from other ballet culture, Canfield has embraced and combined an eclectic and experimental mix of styles, including hip-hop, jazz and modern dance, to create more accessible (and, let's face it, really cool) ballet theater.

OBT presents the annual *James Canfield Signatures*, a trio of contemporary rock ballets showcasing his choreography, March 2 to 9. The highlight is the world premiere of *Alta Cienega*, featuring the music of the Doors. Also offered is *Jungle*, an abstract dance experience with colorful, unconventional sets and costumes, and *Coco*, an intimate look at the life and times of fashion icon Coco Chanel. For times and tickets, call 503-222-5538.

Howie exits Echo

That queer theater mover and shaker Howie Baggadonutz has exited stage left as executive director of Do Jump! at Echo



James Canfield Signatures plays March 2 to 9



James Canfield will say goodbye to OBT next year

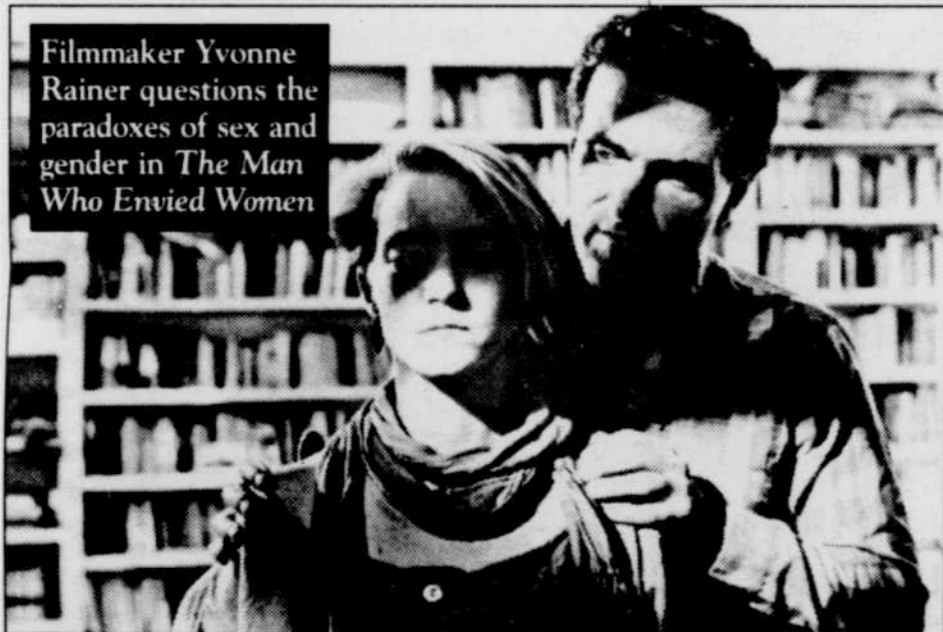
Theatre and entered front and center in the same role for Portland's Third Angle New Music Ensemble.

A fixture at Echo for the past 15 years, Baggadonutz simply decided he "wanted to do something else" and split the gig as well as his general manager position with the Portland

Symphonic Choir, all effective as of now.

Founded in 1985, Third Angle is a contemporary chamber ensemble that performs modern classical music. Baggadonutz is its first executive director. "I hope to bring my non-profit arts experience and general PR savvy and chutzpah to the job in an effort to build audiences, financial support and international exposure," he says. "All this from a 160-square-foot office!"

The exec also promises not to disappear completely from the performance art scene, noting he'll still "have some time to do my own productions now and then."



Filmmaker Yvonne Rainer questions the paradoxes of sex and gender in *The Man Who Envied Women*

Everything's coming out Rosie

And you thought "The Puppy Episode" on *Ellen* was must-see TV: Rosie O'Donnell will reportedly come out of the closet during an interview with Diane Sawyer airing March 14 on ABC. The program will center on the gay adoption ban in Florida, where the mother of four lives when she isn't filming her New York-based talk show.

She has been working with the American Civil Liberties Union since 2001 on its fight against the law. The suit was taken Feb. 14 to a federal appeals court in Atlanta, which is expected to hear arguments later this year.

Also profiled by Sawyer is Oregonian Steven Lofton, who is raising five children—including three Florida foster kids—with his partner, Roger Croteau. Although they never have known another family, they cannot be adopted by the couple because of the ban.



Rosie O'Donnell

"O'Donnell and one of the families we represent in the case talk about their lives, their families and how they are affected by Florida's law," said Matt Coles, ACLU Lesbian and Gay Rights Project director. "We are eager for America to see and hear why Florida's law prohibiting adoption by all gay people is discriminatory—and how that bigotry hurts families and children."

—Jim Radosta

Dueling Shepard Stories

HBO and NBC compete for the best Matthew Shepard movie this month. Both were originally slated to air March 16, but HBO trumped the network by changing theirs to March 9.

HBO's version, *The Laramie Project*, is an adaptation of the off-Broadway production by gay playwright Moisés Kaufman. The channel had the foresight to hire him to adapt and direct the fea-

ture, which focuses on the Wyoming town in the aftermath of the murder. Filmed in Laramie and Denver, it showcases a stellar ensemble cast, including Steve Buscemi, Clea Duvall, Peter Fonda, Janeane Garofalo (as a lesbian professor), Laura Linney and Christina Ricci. Mark Webber, recently seen in *Storytelling* as a gay teen-ager, plays one of Shepard's killers.

The NBC version, so originally titled *The Matthew Shepard Story*, counters with its own impressive cast—Stockard Channing and Sam Waterston at Matthew's parents and Shane Meier as Matthew, who is blessed with shockingly similar features. Directed by Roger Spottiswoode (*And the Band Played On*), this one plays up the emotionally effective biography angle, including Shepard in his own story.

Laramie is an exploration, in part, of why this event in this town sparked international



Partial cast of HBO's *The Laramie Project*

attention as compared to the other reported 20 to 30 queer homicides committed in the United States each year, which might help set it apart from the creepy bandwagon feel of these "sensitive issue" television projects. Still, it's hard to imagine many Americans won't take such focused attention as a kind of permission to consider Shepard an isolated incident.