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THEATER

Looking for an exciting evening of rehashing your most horrific childhood nightmares? Then Mart Crowley's *For Reasons That Remain Unclear* is for you. This script has not been performed since its first production in 1993, and it's not too difficult to understand why.

Patrick (Andy Buzan) is a young, gay actor living in Rome who was sexually abused as a child by a Catholic priest, Conrad (Joe Ivy). When the two cross paths, Patrick recognizes him immediately (Conrad does not); seeking revenge, he entices the older man to his swanky hotel room, where the entire play takes place.

The set was designed masterfully by Tim Stapleton. Also beautiful is the lighting; Jeffrey D. Woods creates an intimate ambiance that envelops the entire stage.

For Reasons That Remain Unclear is an appropriate title for this piece, as it is utterly confusing why these two characters are in the same room at all.

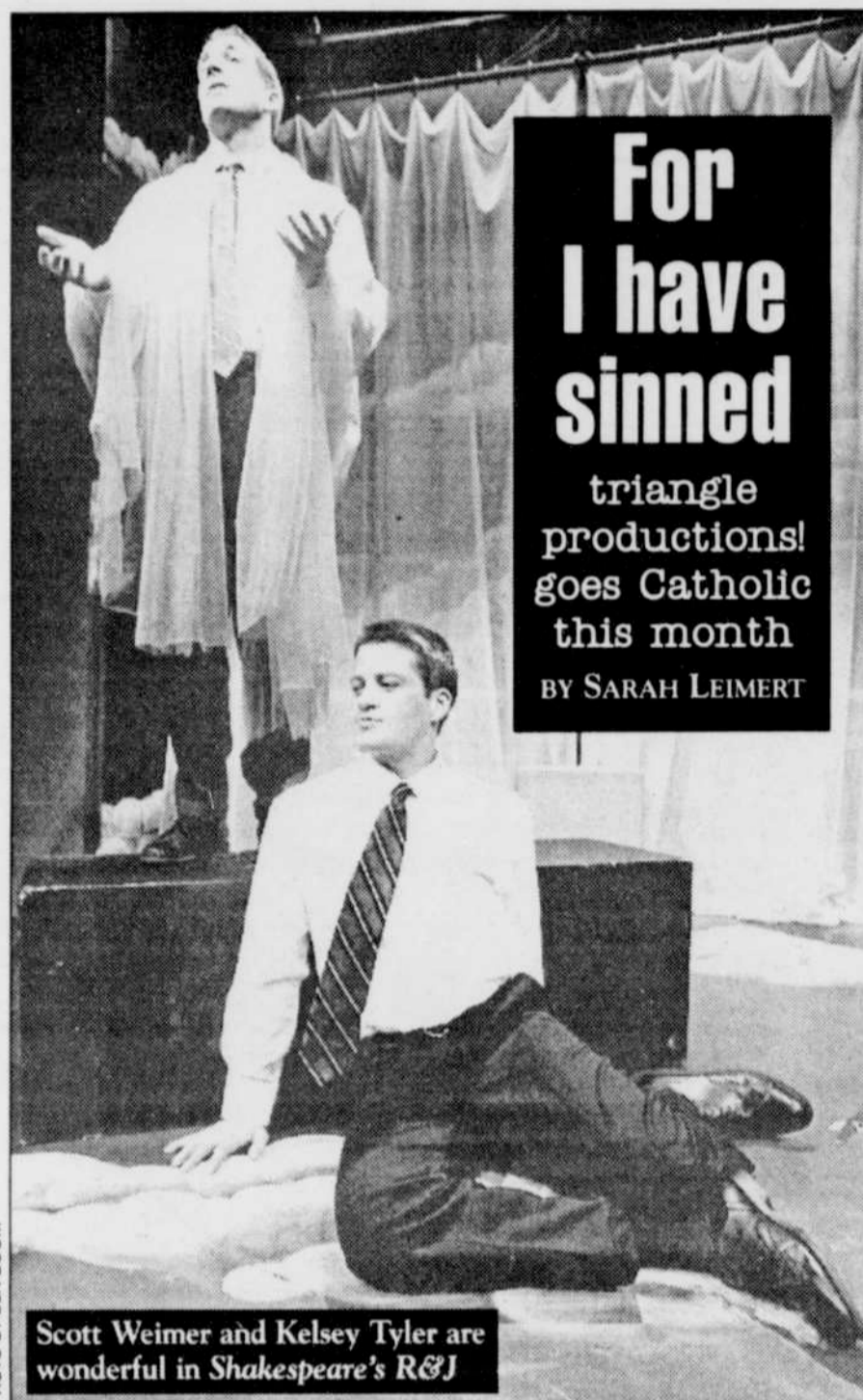
Patrick trounces about, finishing off Conrad's every sentence with cryptic innuendoes and unobscured clichés. Buzan's delivery is sneering—every line steeped in jaded sarcasm and accompanied by a meaningful glare.

When suddenly Conrad is no longer oblivious to Patrick's identity, he tries desperately to get out of the room. Screaming and physical aggression ensue until the eventual peaceful ending.

This heavy-handed melodrama by triangle productions! offers nothing hopeful whatsoever about surviving abuse. Afterward you're apt to feel like an unwilling voyeur at someone else's therapy session.

At one point, Patrick sighs to Conrad, "I'm a person who dwells on yesterday to the point of pathology." This overriding sentiment defines the dialogue, which bogs the play down with inertia.

This script was probably very cathartic for



**For
I have
sinned**
triangle
productions!
goes Catholic
this month

BY SARAH LEIMERT

Scott Weimer and Kelsey Tyler are wonderful in *Shakespeare's R&J*

PHOTO BY BEN BOOM

Crowley to write and for Don Horn to direct and produce, but, unfortunately, there is not much in it that could benefit an audience.

Shakespeare's R&J, adapted by Joe Calarco, tells the story of *Romeo and Juliet* as seen through the eyes of four Catholic school-boys, presented briskly by Tony James, Paul Susi, Kelsey Tyler and Scott Weimer. The work draws a parallel between the renowned doomed lovers and two of the students who fall in love.

With a focus on using only William Shakespeare's words to tell the story, sets and props are pared down to four blocks, a book and a sheer red cloth. Full use is made of these; the blocks are used to change scenery and levels, while the red cloth represents, among other things, a ring, a potion, clothing and blood. A large wooden cross on the wall oversees all of the action—which gets fairly steamy.

The production's choreography is clearly well rehearsed and crisp from beginning to end. All four actors have a strong grip on the language and exhibit wide versatility, as each portrays multiple characters.

Calarco has chosen to present certain key scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, and each has a slightly different feel than the one before. One of the opening sequences feels like the secret meeting in *Dead Poets Society*; later on in the evening it's more like a drag comedy, thanks to James' total transformation into Lady Capulet and Susi's interpretation of Juliet's nurse.

Although this is a commendable performance of Shakespeare's famous love story, the "boys in love" theme is somewhat contrived. Calarco has taken *Romeo and Juliet* and merely slapped two bookends on either side—making the beginning and end transitions feel abrupt.

But even though this might not be the most original or innovative adaptation of *Shakespeare's R&J*, the talented and enthusiastic cast has it well in hand and keeps the audience fully engaged. **J**

TRIANGLE PRODUCTIONS! presents *For Reasons That Remain Unclear Thursday to Sunday and Shakespeare's R&J Thursday to Saturday through March 30 at Theater! Theatre!, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. Tickets are \$15-\$19 from 503-239-5919.*

SARAH LEIMERT is a Portland free-lance writer. She can be reached at sleimert@earthlink.net.

Sowelu Theatre's candid Polaroids

BY GLENN WILLIAMS

Nick's a revolutionary—a radical activist who has just been released from prison for an assault on Jonathan, a big-time capitalist who represents everything he stands against. The world he re-enters looks nothing like the one he left.

Nick's former lover, Helen, once as rebellious as he, now works in government and wants nothing to do with him. Back on the streets, he runs across a man who is beating a woman, a topless dancer named Nadia. She's a New Age thinker who trusts that her boyfriend can transcend his abusive ways.

Nadia's best friend is Tim, a young dance club drug addict with AIDS. He is in a constant battle—with medicine, sex and attitude—that he is rapidly losing. In desperation, he hires an Internet hustler named Victor to help him enjoy his last days.

This is *Some Explicit Polaroids*, a heartbreaking, seditious tale about life in contemporary times, written by controversial gay British playwright Mark Ravenhill and presented by the



Don't take the kids: *Some Explicit Polaroids* is, um, explicit

award-winning Sowelu Theater. Its six characters guide us through explicit perspectives on activism and action, set against the backdrop of a conservative government, an evolving AIDS crisis and violent politics.

But it's "not a social issues story," director and Sowelu artistic director Barry Hunt explains. "It's a personal story about people

more complicated than a pamphlet."

Graphically sexual, unsentimental and in no way apologetic, the work reveals a dark sensibility about our current environment, particularly toward the humanity and complications of living with AIDS. Here we see the real choices people are making from day to day and the way our culture pulls against our most natural tendencies.

"The play is political, yes, but at the same time, it is very human," Hunt says. "It represents all the characters' differing points of view. And all those points of view are valid." **J**

SOWELU THEATER presents *Some Explicit Polaroids* 8 p.m. Thursday to Saturday and 4 p.m. Sunday through April 20 at Backdoor Theater, 4319 S.E. Hawthorne Blvd. Tickets are \$7-\$15 from 503-230-2090.

GLENN WILLIAMS writes prose, poetry, plays, periodica and porn in Portland.