

DIVERSIONS



Your Fall TV Queerview II

As you'll no doubt recall, I just couldn't get to the end of the long, involved process that is going over the queer TV schedule in the last issue. So this is part two—but don't worry, you didn't have to see the original to understand the sequel (kind of like *Lara Croft: The Cradle of Life*).

Moving right along, the latest news from the *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* set is the Fab Five are putting out a book of hints and tips. (Of course! Oversaturation of the audience means nothing to queens or television executives.) And they're getting sued. Remember the original culture guy, Blair? He was replaced by Jai after only two episodes and has now filed a breach-of-contract suit.

You do gotta feel a little sorry for a guy who came this close to international fanfare and million-dollar deals. The show's producers should just cough up the measly \$105,000 he's asking instead of fighting it, which they are.

You know who else should be pissed off? Christopher Lowell and Robert Verdi, two gay TV decorators who broke the ground for *Queer Eye* to headline *The Tonight Show*. OK, they're both doing absolutely fine in their own right, but are they on the cover of *Entertainment Weekly*? No.

Maybe they're not so gay, you say. Maybe they're not so over-the-top. Ha!

Both shows are on the Discovery Channel weekdays—Lowell actually has two. *The Christopher Lowell Show* finds him sitting down in intimate conversation with viewers and then showing before and afters of a room he did. In a recent episode he discussed "Creating Your Dreamscape Through the Use of Personal Icons." He encouraged us to think about "what makes you feel safe, cozy and protected." (For him, it's a fluffy white robe.) He moved on to colors. What's your favorite? His is lavender.

It's *Christopher Lowell* follows, which is a bore of a show where he plops down in front of a studio audience and goes over videos of people fixing up their own houses using design ideas he gave them. He has guests, too, but it's all low-class Martha Stewart. Skip it, but stay tuned because next up is...

Surprise by Design—a hilarious, sharp little number wherein Robert Verdi and sidekick Rebecca Cole (who actually does most of the work while Verdi sashays around giving orders) descend on a home and redo a room to surprise its owner in response to a request from a loved one or friend.

The project always has a budget of \$2,500, and family and friends pitch in to get the job done before the "victim" gets home, so it feels very down-to-earth and inclusive. The best parts of the show are when Verdi squeals about a crappy piece of furniture he found at Goodwill for \$20 (which he then turns into a stunning showpiece) and the barbs he trades with Cole, such as "I'm the Mary, you're the Rhoda."

The designs can be a little out of control, though, to the point where you think nobody but Verdi is really going to like it. Recently explaining to one homeowner that he was going to turn his kitchen into "Pee Wee's Dutch French Provincial Playhouse," Verdi is completely honest about his own self-obsession. "What's your favorite thing in this room?" he once queried Cole after a finished project. "You," she answered carefully. "Me too," he said.

Verdi also cuts quite a fashionable figure, unlike Christopher Lowell, who could use a visit from Carson Kressley if you know what I mean.

Once again I've blathered on—and before I got to talk about Showtime's new lesbian series set to air in January. I guess you'll have to tune in next time for Fall Queerview III. Ha, ha, not really, I'd probably get fired, but do keep checking *Just Out* for more info on this lesbo show. 



Surprise by Design's Robert Verdi was around before the Fab Five were a twinkle in your eye

Let's get Interactive

It's amazing what 2 Gyrz can do when they set their minds to it.

Portland's 2 Gyrz Performative Arts presents the second annual **Interactive Language Festival**, 30 days of art—performance, visual, auditory, interactive—around the theme of language in its endless and enduring forms.

The organization's queer namesakes, Lisa Newman and Llewyn Maire, have upped the number of festival offerings this year and have collaborated with even more community groups. "EL-fest is about communication and, therefore, in many ways, collaboration," explains Maire. "The artists and other groups participating...are working with the basic theme that art equals language."

Hence all events are titled with what language they are speaking: *Language of Terror*, *Language of the Ancestors*, *Language of the Body*, etc. For instance, pear gallery, a nonprofit that works with homeless youth, will be collaborating with artist/music association 36 Invisibles for *Language of Youth*.

"Those participating take the central theme of the event and create work...around it. This is not only the core of the festival, but also one of the things that make it so unique," says Maire.

Although there are several events of queer interest in the plump Oct. 30-Nov. 29 schedule, a few are of special note. *La Langue du Culte: Porno-Social Ritual* is an extreme, sexually explicit event with queer French performance artist Jean-Louis Costes, who appears to have litigation issues around his art in Europe. Expect various forms of live sex and blood (well, it looks like blood anyway) at this graphic Oct. 31 show you will probably not want to bring the kiddies to.

Language of Silence (=death), a revolutionary adaptation of the **International Transgender Day of Remembrance**, is on Nov. 20. "It's an international vigil for victims of violent murders based on being perceived as transgendered," says Maire, who will perform at the event, along with Portlanders Lori Buckwalter and Nine and San Francisco trans activist Rocco Kayiatos, also known as Katastrophe.

Language of the Paradox with noted trans activist Kate Bornstein is Nov. 21 and 22. "Obviously it's an honor to bring Kate Bornstein back to Portland," says Maire, who explains Bornstein and Kayiatos will perform with kids from the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center.

See the Nov. 7 issue of *Just Out* for an interview with Bornstein and more queer-oriented events. For a complete schedule of all events, locations and prices, visit www.2gyrlz.org.

Who's killing the lesbians of Citytown?

Just when you thought it was safe to be a dyke, Cardboard Box Theatre Company comes up with *Mister Murdery*, a new play about Citytown's poor lesbian population—stalked by murderous hands!

It's Nurse Cherry's first night at Citytown General Hospital, but will it be her last? With only a (rather disturbingly independent) radio for company, two nurses—one of them a man—attempt to



A modern-day Marquis de Sade, Jean-Louis Costes collaborates to provide *La Langue du Culte: Porno-Social Ritual*, part of 2 Gyrz Performative Arts' Interactive Language Festival

survive this dark and piercing comedy by Portland playwright Stephen Karam.

"I came out...a little over two years ago at Brown University," shares Karam, "and was overwhelmed with our country's entire perception of homosexuality.... I started to see that our society hasn't arrived at some grand notion of universal tolerance; it's come to embrace...that it's no longer legitimate to unabashedly hate gay people. And there's a huge difference."

Mister Murdery is his attempt to confront "the absurdity of accepting such glossy notions of equality" by using "an equally absurd style.... The beauty is that, in the midst of the crazy story, every little detail makes very precise and meticulous sense no matter how farcical the events become," he explains. "Contrarily, our country is skilled at taking its most absurd and farcical tendencies and making a whole lot of sense out of them."

Mister Murdery plays 10:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays through Nov. 8 at The Electric Company, 2512 S.E. Gladstone St. Tickets are \$10 from 503-232-7667 or www.cardboardbox.org.

Hedwig in Portland

The creator and original stage and screen star of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*, John Cameron Mitchell, will be in Jackpot Records, 203 S.W. Ninth Ave., at 5:30 p.m. Oct. 23 to sign copies of the just-released *Wig in a Box: Songs from and Inspired by Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

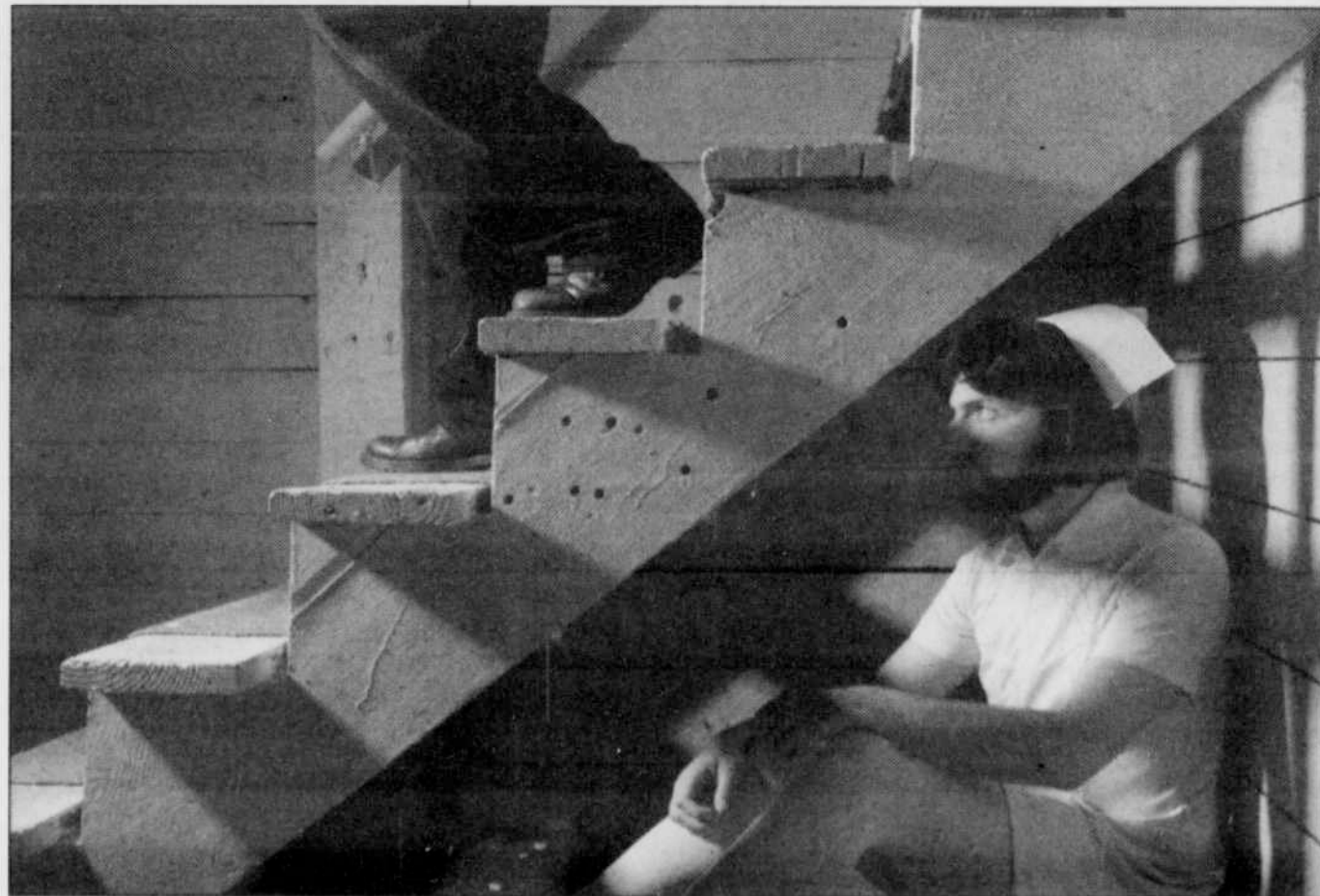
The album, conceived and produced by Chris Slusarenko, owner of Portland's Off Records and Clinton Street Video, contains the best work money can buy (except it was all donated): tracks by Rufus Wainwright, Sleater-Kinney, Imperial Teen, The Breeders, The Polyphonic Spree, Mitchell himself and many others.

The album is a fund-raiser for New York's new **Harvey Milk School** for queer students.

Slusarenko admits to not being queer (we're making him an official member anyway) but still obsessed with "the whole *Hedwig* phenomenon. I loved the show, and it was one of the first times I've ever seen rock music done right in a theatrical mode. Usually it makes me cringe."

See the Nov. 7 issue of *Just Out* for a complete story on the album and the project. 

Compiled by LISA BRADSHAW



Cardboard Box Theatre Company presents *Mister Murdery* through Nov. 8 at The Electric Company