

DIVERSIONS

Out With It!



by Lisa Bradshaw

Loving what is

About a month ago I attended a City Club forum in which three of Portland's heavy hitters in the arts—directors of the Oregon Symphony, Portland Opera and Oregon Ballet Theatre—spoke of the city's place in the larger arts community. All three are relatively new to Portland, and all emphasized wanting to take their respective organizations to the next level of excellence, putting them on par with the nation's premier companies.

Nothing wrong with that. Now let me tell you about my month. (It all comes together profoundly in the end, I promise.) On June 8 I went to see Lily Tomlin at the Schnitz. Lily certainly isn't the most out entertainer, but she did take some potshots at President Bush's proposed constitutional amendment to the uproarious delight of the Portland crowd, who she recognized as being particularly appreciative of certain, uh, more liberal aspects of her show.

Then on June 10, I went to see the world's most famous out musician, k.d. lang, again at the Schnitz. The number of older straight couples in attendance surprised me. But it didn't stop k.d. from cracking a U-Haul joke (which are only still funny when she makes them) and noting she thinks chicks look hot in Audis.

Consummate queer pianist Thomas Lauderdale opened for k.d. and took the opportunity to introduce a trio of musicians called Sneakin' Out. He announced that he met the group at "Gail's Dirty Duck, which is," he paused, "a leather bar." I don't know if the straight, over-50 crowd from the West Hills knew exactly what he meant, but they seemed to like this idea a lot, and I wanted to kiss his little face.

The pianist then indulged in a costume change to play with the all-queer band—and came out wearing a sophisticated little pink dress, complete with matching boa and kicky little heels. The crowd ate this stuff up!

Two nights later I attended Artist Repertory Theatre's world premiere of *The New House* by Portland playwright Joseph Fisher (not queer, but oft pens queer culture). A sharp ensemble production—two of the characters are lesbians who are not only way more functional than the play's other characters, but not afraid to swap tongues onstage.

The very next day found me at Panorama to assist in judging the Mr., Miss and Ms. Gay Pride Pageant, hosted by two of Portland's fave counter-culture celebrities (not just in the queer community, but in the community period), Misha Rockafeller and Poison Waters.

Down the street on the very same night Darcelle XV was bursting with enthusiasts for the Miss Gay Latina Pageant, a celebration of Latino drag and gay culture.

June 19 and 20 you can find me at one of the biggest Pride celebrations in the country for a mid-size city. Which of the four special Saturday night Pride parties will I attend? Oh, and there's one Sunday, too, after the city's third-largest parade.

At the City Club meeting Christopher Stowell of Oregon Ballet Theatre said he thinks Portland is suffering from an "inferiority complex," unfavorably comparing its arts and culture scene to other West Coast cities.

I don't know about greater Portland, but in queer Portland, we've got one world-class outfit. ☐



Miss Sweetheart Dementia Contagious and Mr. Sweetheart Joshua Davida invite you to the Drag Queen Dunk during Pride weekend

Crown me a winner!

Two queer pageants graced Portland venues June 13. Panorama hosted the Mr., Miss and Ms. Gay Pride pageant, a completely giddy event, in which Mr. Gay Pride 2003 Bennie and Ms. Gay Pride 2003 Savannah Jackson (Pride's first transsexual titleholder) waved goodbye to the crowd (Miss Gay Pride 2003 Viridia was notably absent) before the 2004 contest began.

A panel of seven judges gave points in formal wear, swim wear and creative club attire to two contestants for Mr. and Miss (a drag title) and one for Ms. The winners are: Mr. Gay Pride 2004 Kahala, Miss Gay Pride 2004 Slylyka Foxx and Ms. Pride Alexandra Paris (who gained notoriety in Portland with her cool cable dance show *Galactic Groove*).

Kahala, who is the 6-year-old pageant's first Asian American winner, ran "as a dare," he laughs. His friend said if she ran for Miss Gay Pride, he'd have to run for Mr. "I didn't think they would run, so I said sure."

His overall performance certainly didn't come across as forced. "I determined if I'm gonna do it, I'm gonna do it," he says.

Kahala did well in all three categories but especially made a splash with his brightly colored, tight-knit swim trunks, complete with snorkel and a mobile of fish dangling in front of him. The crowd went crazy as he swam around on his stomach. "Being born and raised in Hawaii, it was just one of those things...I wanted to make it more interactive, live kind of swim wear."

All three new titleholders will open Portland's Pride weekend and host a few events and fundraisers this summer.

While Gay Prides were being sashed on Stark Street, Pebbles Campbell Starr was being crowned Miss Gay Latina VII down at Darcelle XV. The competition was a little stiffer at this one, with Pebbles beating out three other "beautiful candidates," says the original Miss Gay Latina Meesha Peru. The pageant is "important to all the Latinos," notes Peru. "We just want to let everybody know we are here, too!"

Name a night you don't want to miss

The claws should certainly come out at Dante's monthly Dysfunctional Family Feud from 6 to 8 p.m. June 30. It's the return of the Oregon Bears vs. Drag Queens

in celebration of Pride Month.

The hilariously fun event is the brainchild of *Barfly* magazine publisher Jen Lane, who pairs up two teams every month: Stoners vs. Lushes, Irish vs. English, etc. "We had Jews vs. Christians for our holiday show," she chirps.

Barfly conducts surveys with normal Feud-type questions in bars around Portland. So the answers, she notes, "skew towards what drunken Portlanders think is funny. Like a typical question would be, 'Name something you eat on Sunday morning,' and the TV answers would be, like, 'An omelet!' 'Pancakes!' 'Eggs Benedict!' And on our Feud it would be like, 'PBR!' 'Pussy!' 'Eggs Benedict!'"

Last year the Bears juuuust edged out the Queens, which captain Poison Waters (naturally) attributes to their being "older and sober."

"It's the best Feud we've ever had," exclaims Lane of last year's match. "And we've had some great Feuds."

Dunk a drag queen

The Sweethearts of Portland have found a unique way to raise some money (bucket loads, I'd wager) for the Pride of the Rose Scholarship Fund during Portland Pride weekend June 19 and 20: sponsor a drag queen dunk tank.

"One dollar a ball, and people can come and dunk whichever drag queen they want," proclaims Sweetheart XV Tamra Marx, who will herself sit in the tank Sunday along with Rose Empress XXV Champagne. Saturday,



From left: Mr. Gay Pride Kahala, Miss Gay Pride Slylyka Foxx and Ms. Gay Pride Alexandra Paris will officially open Portland Pride weekend

too, should make for an eventful time with both the reigning Rose Empress Lotta Marie Liquor and Poison Waters each taking a turn.

The Sweethearts, led by Mr. Sweetheart XVI Joshua Davida and Miss Sweetheart XVI Dementia Contagious, is a nonprofit that raises money for AIDS organizations.

The best in bubble gum viewing

Don't count on two new June cable specials or the long-awaited documentary *I Can't Marry You* to serve up hearty Pride Month fare.

Showtime's *Jack* is based on A.M. Home's 1989 novel and stars Anton Yelchin (*Along Came a Spider*) in the title role as a 15-year-



Cinemax presents *Paternal Instinct* in celebration of Father's Day

old contending with his parents' divorce and his dad's announcement that he is gay. It's 1982, which may account for the dorky dialogue and retro lighting, but *Jack* is an afternoon special gone prime time, nothing more.

Meanwhile, Cinemax presents the documentary *Paternal Instinct*, which follows New York City couple Mark and Erik in their quest to become fathers. They choose the route of surrogacy and set about finding a woman to help their dreams come true. *Instinct* at least promises the poignancy of being a true story—a story that might not be new to queers but possibly will be for your straight grandparents flipping around the dial.

Meanwhile, over on PBS, the Betty DeGeneres-narrated documentary *I Can't Marry You* finally makes its debut, but without having been updated to include recent same-sex marriage rights won in Massachusetts, nor the abundance of civil actions taken by leaders in other states. Sadly, production values are low, and way too many couples were interviewed for the one-hour runtime, creating a complicated mishmash of experience, rather than deeply felt and focused profiles.

So, try to stomach this drama lite for now and keep the faith that queer TV will get past its growing pains.

Jack and *Paternal Instinct* both premiere at 8 p.m. June 20. *Jack* repeats at 1:45 p.m. June 26, and *Instinct* repeats at 6:30 a.m. July 31. *I Can't Marry You* airs on Oregon Public Broadcasting at 11 p.m. June 23.

Lambda announces winners

The Lambda Literary Foundation held its 16th annual awards ceremony for authors of queer literature June 3 in Chicago.

Top prizes went to Nina Revoyr in Lesbian Fiction for her book *Southland* and to Christopher Bram in Gay Men's Fiction for *Lives of the Circus Animals*.

One award winner, *She's Not There* by Jennifer Finney Boylan in the Transgender/Genderqueer category, drew some heat from trans activists for its decidedly lighthearted (some would say trivializing) manner of describing the author's male-to-female transition.

Other notable winners include Minnie Bruce Pratt's *The Dirt She Ate* for Lesbian Poetry; Henri Cole's *Middle Earth* and Mark Bibbins' *Sky Lounge*, which tied for Gay Men's Poetry; Lillian Faderman's *Naked in the Promised Land* for Memoir/Autobiography; and Alison Bechdel's *Dykes and Sundry Other Carbon-based Life-forms to Watch Out For* for Humor. See a full list of nominations and winners at www.lambdalit.org. ☐

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