

DIVERSIONS



by Lisa Bradshaw

Give my regards to old Broadway

I'm going to say something now that might scare you. Tigard. Calm down, calm down, I'm not saying you *have* to go there, but as you continue to read down the column, be open-minded. You're queer, remember? It's supposed to come naturally. I'll be honest: Before I was forced to attend press screenings at Tigard Cinemas, I couldn't even have told you where Tigard was. But now I can hop on the freeway (you'll want to go south) and drive right on in just like I live there. (Ha ha, as if!)

Anyway, aside from the cinema, I've found a really good reason to go to Tigard—The Broadway Rose Theatre Company.

There are three reasons Portlanders don't give much notice to the mostly musical theater troupe: They're in Tigard; their name sounds a little cheesy; they perform in a high school.

As I've come to find out, though, people who live in Tigard flock to the place (it can be scary driving into the city!), and the performances are in a high school's theater auditorium. (I don't know what I was thinking—that they'd be on a gym floor or something?)

This month Broadway Rose is doing the smash pop-rock opera *Jekyll & Hyde*. The New York director, Abe Reybold, is gay. The local musical director, Rick Lewis, is gay. Portland stage manager Mark Tynan is gay. The New York lead actor, Robert Hunt, is gay. Two of the other Portland actors—Paul Miller and Jim Crino—are gay and gay, respectively.

I know it's not much of a stretch to link gayness and the performing arts, but in Tigard it still kind of seems, I don't know...subversive.

"It's harder in the 'burbs, it really is," admits Lewis, Broadway Rose's in-house musical director and occasional actor, who also serves as director of entertainment and marketing on the Portland Spirit. But this is, he continues, "a really beautiful production...it's the type of production you're probably not going to see in most theaters in Portland."

The company has rented the entire set from the Fullerton Civic Light Opera in California. "I don't know what the Broadway Rose reputation is," says Hunt, who plays Dr. Jekyll, "but I do know that the production values of this show are pretty amazing...it's dark and mysterious and sexy and over the top."

Hunt was last in Portland about six years ago on a tour of *Forever Plaid*, and he's just come off a tour of *Les Misérables*. He gives props to the two leading ladies in *Jekyll & Hyde*. "We know the queers love to hear the divas sing, and these girls are unbelievable.... We went out to karaoke in Portland, and the two of them brought the house down." (Tigard and The Grand Café—what a priceless tour these people are on!)

Still, am I up to driving to the suburbs for theater when there's plenty within 10 minutes of my inner Southeast home?

"Yeah, get out here, for Christ's sake!" director Abe Reybold hollers at me through the phone. "It's worth the trip...they're really pushing the envelope with this show.... We're not holding back with the murders and kind of the racier things." And, he adds, lowering his voice, "Robert Hunt is incredibly attractive."

"As far as the gay audience," Lewis notes, "Robert Hunt is...." He pauses. "He's gorgeous."

"I rip my shirt open," Hunt adds. "If that helps." It helps.

But if you're still not convinced, check with your closest college lit geek friend and you'll find out that some scholars believe Dr. Jekyll's alter ego was brought on by repressed sexuality.

Now, off to Tigard with you! ☐

JEKYLL & HYDE plays at Tigard's Deb Fennell Auditorium, 9000 S.W. Durham Road, through July 11. Tickets are \$12-\$19 from 503-620-5262 or www.broadwayrose.com.



Go out to Tigard, for Christ's sake! Robert Hunt is tortured and conflicted in *Jekyll & Hyde*.

New Oregon Bear and Cub

"I'm actually kind of a small guy," says Johnney Russ, the 32-year-old new Mr. Oregon Cub. But, as he points out, being a bear is a matter of personality, not size.

"Bears are the most genuine, loving, compassionate, nicest bunch of guys," says Russ, who joined the Oregon Bears two years ago when he and his husband moved to Portland from a small town in Washington. Russ works at the bear-owned Beefy Boys food cart downtown.

Both he and Mr. Oregon Bear 2004, James "Butchy" Janik, serve on the Oregon Bears executive board. "I find it a huge honor to be representing the Bears," says Russ.

He and Janik were given their new titles at a gala event June 12 as part of Beartown 2004.

Russ says he looks forward to working with Janik. "If you go to an event and all the flowers are arranged really nicely, that's Butchy's work," he notes.

Janik also moved here two years ago with his husband; they hail from Texas. Janik was a founding member of the Houston-area bear organization. "Bear culture is almost a counterculture movement," he notes.

The 39-year-old says their jobs as Mr. Oregon Bear and Cub will be to act as ambassadors for the club to the rest of the queer community. "Bears have big hearts. We're very giving and committed to communities."

The coming year will find both men involved in all manner of warm and fuzzy bearlike activities, including trips out of town to help judge bear contests. Other duties include raising money for the Friends of People with AIDS Foundation, organizing campouts and working with the Imperial Sovereign Rose Court on various events. Oh, and don't forget the bears' important job as foster parents to an actual bear at the Oregon Zoo.

Russ, who was introduced to the bear movement a few years ago, says "being a bear is an attitude."

Triple your pleasure at Disjecta

It would be in your best cultural interest to not miss Disjecta Gallery's all-chick literary-music-art ensemble July 14. The proud space of avant-garde multigenre art at 116 N.E. Russell St. is hosting a gaggle of queer gals sure to twirl your curls.

Headlining is Michelle Tea, the punk-rock poet and memoirist whose unabashed tales of being queer, poor and female put her at the top of *Village Voice*, *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Lambda Literary* charts.

For her latest creation, the 33-year-old co-founder of Sister Spit All-Girl Roadshows has teamed up with illustrator Laurenn McCubbin on *Rent Girl*, a graphic novel about the several years Tea spent working in the sex industry.



Johnney Russ (left) and James "Butchy" Janik were sashed June 12 during Beartown 2004

Also on the docket are Portland's own Sarah Dougher and teen phenom Zoe Trope. Literary-inclined indie rocker Dougher (*The Bluff*, *The Walls Ablaze*) has most recently been at work on a cycle of 24 songs that explore the afterlife of Homer's *Odyssey*. In case you've been living in a cave, Trop is the author of the wildly popular *Please Don't Kill the Freshmen*.

This all-ages event gets going at 9 p.m. for a mere 6 bucks.

Dykes who flock together rock together

It wouldn't be summer without the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. The 29-year tradition continues Aug. 10 to 15 when thousands of women from all over the world converge on 650 private forested acres to dance, camp and bare breasts in the largest intentional women's community this—or any other—side of the Mississippi.

You may not agree with all their spelling choices or gender guidelines, but you're sure to find someone you love listening to at the fest. This year's lineup includes

The Dolly Ranchers, Tret Fure, Ubaka Hill, Magdalen Hsu-Li, Laura Love, Kate Clinton, Alix Olson, C.C. Carter, Ellis, Jill Sobule and many more.

The highlight will likely be the Aug. 12 performance of *Hothead Paisan: The Musical, Act I*, based on the comic by Diane DiMassa and directed by Animal Prufrock. The "Wholly Ensemble" includes Ani DiFranco, Ferron and Susan Powter (who is billing herself as "the female Michael Moore"). They are accompanied by "Whorchestra" members that include Toshi Reagon and Alyson Palmer of Betty.

Visit www.michfest.com for a complete schedule and ticket information. ☐



Literary-inclined Michelle Tea will headline Disjecta's all-chick literary-music-art ensemble July 14.

Compiled by MEG DALY