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According to Edmunds, Galás took the art of personal story-based performance to a whole new level. "[She] monumentalized the epidemic," she says.

Galás' current work centers around the Armenian genocide during World War I. Her Sept. 10 concert, *Defixiones: Will and Testament*, is a lament for the dead and confrontation of oppressive forces. Her Sept. 12 concert, *La Serpenta Canta*, will be songs of exiles. Of Greek Orthodox descent, Galás has once again chosen personal subject matter to confront global issues. Like concentric rings, her themes of personal loss, AIDS, genocide and exile are connected and ripple outward.

Critic Michael Flanagan wrote, "There is no question as to the similarity of the themes" between *Plague Mass* and *Defixiones*. He continues: "The remembrance of the dead that will not be forgotten, the desecration of people who are seen as tainted and marked—whether because of their sin or because they are an infidel population. Both are seen as a canker on the body of the culture they were in, to be removed and (so the surgeons of memory hope) forgotten."

Edmunds unplugged

Edmunds says artists like Galás are "interconnected to a sense of compassion. Artists move toward where that compassion needs the most attention."

The 38-year-old has emerged as one of the most influential voices in her field. She recently accepted a two-year post as artistic director of the Melbourne International Arts Festival in Australia, a job she will balance with her curatorial role at PICA.

The dual-continent life will allow both her and her partner, Ros Warby, to keep in touch with their hometowns. Warby, a celebrated Australian choreographer and dancer, recently gave birth to the couple's son, Malachi Skeet Chelan Edmunds-Warby.



PICA founder Kristy Edmunds says artists are interconnected to a sense of compassion

the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon's 1998 Freedom of Expression Award.

Like the artists she has brought to Portland, Edmunds sees her role in the world as one of a facilitator of conversations. She believes passionately in artists who employ what she calls "the use of oneself to foster compassion among strangers."

With her vision and generous spirit, fostering compassion among strangers is an art Edmunds herself has perfected. The queer community, Portland and now the world at large are the very fortunate beneficiaries. **J**

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When asked about what role her sexual orientation plays in her work, Edmunds says, "I tend to look at the world through the lens of artist first." Both she and Boberg, who is bi, downplay the issue of sexuality as it relates to their jobs.

Edmunds says, "The arts community doesn't ask people to deny their identity and love."

That one of the leading international presenting arts organizations finds its artistic direction from two queer women is perhaps a sign of what the world could be like if queers and women had the freedom to leave their sexuality and gender at the door when they stepped into the office. Edmunds says her sexuality has about as much to do with her job as it would if she were a Xerox salesman.

That's not to say she does not support the struggle for queer rights. She and Warby married at the Multnomah Building in March. Edmunds chooses to leave more direct action to others, though.

"I stand in the place where I know I have personal integrity," she says. For her that means doing her art, being a leader in the arts and, now, being a mom.

Edmunds is regularly invited to speak at national and international conferences and has served on many community boards and task forces assembled to focus on engaging new communities with the arts. She served on Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber's Task Force on Cultural Development and received

QUEER TBA: WHO, WHEN, WHERE

Khaela Maricich

The Touch Me Feeling

7 p.m. Sept. 17 to 19

Wieden+Kennedy Atrium, 224 N.W. 13th Ave.

John Jasperse Company

California

7 p.m. Sept. 10 to 12

Portland State University's Lincoln Hall, 1620 S.W. Park Ave.

David Eckard

Podium

Noon to 8 p.m. Sept. 10 to 19

For locations, go to www.davideckard.com

Richard Move

Martha

10 p.m. Sept. 12

Machineworks, 1115 N.W. 14th Ave.

Diamanda Galás

Defixiones: Will & Testament

9 p.m. Sept. 10

Newmark Theatre, 1111 S.W. Broadway

Diamanda Galás

La Serpenta Canta

9 p.m. Sept. 12

Newmark Theatre, 1111 S.W. Broadway

For tickets and information contact the PORTLAND INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART at 503-242-1419 or www.pica.org.

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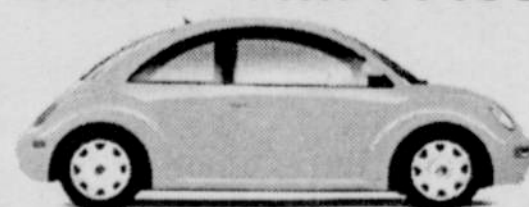


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