

## DIVERSIONS

### Happy birthday, Bears!

The Oregon Bears are celebrating their 10th anniversary as a club this month with the installation of a new nine-member board of directors.

This year's officers are president **Rick Vandercar**, treasurer **Rob Zeiser**, administrative secretary **Richard Wilde**, membership secretary **James "Butchy" Janik** and asset secretary **Larry Harding**. They join newly elected board members **Earl Case**, **Kevin Sharp-Smith** and **Doug Watson** and incumbent board member **Johnney Russ**.

Although Harding has served on various committees, he has never been on the Bears board before. As Mr. Oregon Bear 2003, he helped raise money for charitable causes and represented the club at events in Portland and elsewhere.

The other fresh face on the board is Sharp-Smith, who brings an extensive professional background working with families and children. His energy and organizational expertise will be a great asset to the Bears, according to Wilde.

One of the Northwest's largest gay social organizations, the Oregon Bears organize events and activities for the social enjoyment and camaraderie of its members and provide resources—financial and otherwise—to selected charities. Help the boys blow out their candles during **C.C. Slaughter's Double X Dance** March 25 and the **Fox & Hounds' Monthly Charity Bingo** April 3, featuring the hilarious antics of the irreverent **Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence**. (See Page 29 for details.)

—Jim Radosta

### Reclaiming rags

A play speaking to queers, feminists, Latinos and anyone with an interest in punishment for the impure opens March 18 at Miracle Theatre.

*The Adventures of Barrio Grrrl! Installment 12: Lulu's Golden Shoes* was written by New Yorker **Quiara Alegria Hudes**, whose play *Yemaya's Belly* was produced by Miracle last season and who has another script in the works with Miracle for next year.

*Barrio Grrrl!* is a coming-of-age story about Ana, a teen-age girl growing up in Philadelphia's ghetto, where the Puerto Rican playwright spent some of her formative years. The protagonist transforms herself into a superhero to mend the broken hearts and lives of women in her neighborhood, but not before seeding a crush on Lulu, the corner whore.

"It's about her sexual awakening and how it triggers her social awareness," Hudes told *Just Out*.

Our "shero" creates a complex social matrix where cops are the purity police, working like alchemists to turn everything golden. Whether the gilded sex worker of her dreams will thrive is for the audience alone to know.

Besides having hazy sex scenes with her alter ego, *Amazing Voice*, through the course of the play, Ana reclaims the word "whore" and embraces her environment as a new take on the rags-to-riches cliché.

"The alchemists start to expand their definition of what a whore is, going after women in any way possible," says Hudes. "Ana reclaims the word 'whore' in the way the word 'queer' is reclaimed. She takes back the word and begins to redefine it."

Like most of Hudes' work, the story is heavy with allusions to her Latino culture. When Ana fantasizes about Lulu, she appears as Oshun, the Yoruban goddess of rivers, honey and gold.

The show boasts props borrowed from Portland's most stylish drag queens. Those with platform fetishes or penchants for fantastic wigs should bring a wet nap.



A Philly teen develops a crush on the corner whore in *The Adventures of Barrio Grrrl! Installment 12: Lulu's Golden Shoes*.

*Barrio Grrrl!* shows 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays through April 9 at 525 S.E. Stark St. Tickets are \$14-\$17 from 503-236-7253 or [www.milagro.org](http://www.milagro.org).

—Jaymee R. Cuti

### Willing and able

Impetus Arts, a troupe that includes dancers of mixed abilities and experience levels, will stage a performance in eight movements March 26 at North Star Ballroom.

Queer instructor **Curtis Walker**, who was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of 2, uses an improvisational method created by **Alito Alessi** of Eugene.

"His goal was not to help a particular type of person but to integrate and include everyone. He believes that anyone who can breathe can dance," says Walker, 28. "There's a lot of emphasis on finding common denominators.... All of his exercises come from organic impulses and what comes from inside your own body."

The performance is the culmination of a 10-week class taught by Walker at Portland State University. Some of the dancers use chairs, some are blind, and others need no assistance. Many of the participants have never performed previously, Walker explains, so the experience "causes personal and interpersonal growth that is profound."

"We all have sensations inside our body,



From left, Jiro, Curtis Walker and Erik Ferguson demonstrate their mixed-ability moves.

even if they're different," says Walker, a graduate of Lewis & Clark College who has lived in Portland for 10 years. "All of the methods utilize people's own amazing capabilities that people are not given credit for."

The show starts 7 p.m. at 635 N. Killingsworth Court. Tickets are \$5-\$15 sliding scale from 503-493-9090 or [curtiswalker@yahoo.com](mailto:curtiswalker@yahoo.com).

Another queer mixed-ability dance instructor, **Erik Ferguson**, will present the panel discussion "Trans and Ability: Bodies, Identity, Access" to the Sexual Minority Youth Resource Center's Trans Youth Group. The American Sign Language-interpreted meeting will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. March 22 at 2100 S.E. Belmont St.

The second half of the program will include a DanceAbility demonstration as well as a 13-minute preview of *Austin Unbound*, a documentary about a deaf Portland trans guy undergoing top surgery. The filmmakers, **Greensoda Productions**, are holding a fund-raiser March 28 at Hollywood Theatre featuring ASL entertainer **Rosa Lee** and acoustic trio **Sneakin' Out**. (See Page 29 for details.)

—JR

### Bop 'til you drop

To be honest, I only know about **The Ditty Bops** because of **Tegan and Sara**.

And just as I've tried to place Tegan and Sara in the pop culture hierarchy by analyzing (and overanalyzing) who picked them as openers (Ryan Adams, Hot Hot Heat, The Killers), now I'm wondering about Tegan and Sara's

pick, **The Ditty Bops**. Are they queer? Are they folk? Are they twins? Should we care? Does it matter?

Here's a few things we do know about the duo who'll open for Tegan and Sara on March 26 at Aladdin Theater.

**Amanda Barrett** and **Abby DeWald** are the cherubic Ditty Bops. Both are from Los Angeles, city of slick. Their self-titled debut is produced by the über-talented Mitchell Froom (Sir Paul McCartney, Elvis Costello, Crowded House). And finally, the sound is folk, swing, ragtime, jug band, pop—with some vaudeville thrown in for good measure.

But really, the thing that matters the most? Tegan and Sara picked them as openers. Having caught a handful of the Quin sisters' shows in Portland during the past two years, I'd say they've earned the right to cherry-pick an odd-ball opening band that I am now forced to pay attention to. Because I trust Tegan and Sara.

That's the disclaimer. The Ditty Bops seem talented, melodic, quirky and fun. But their overproduced sound leans dangerously close to high camp, gimmickry and falsehoods. Their heartfelt innocence saves them, but the downside of such innocence is that, at times, their debut comes off like a record for kids.

The Ditty Bops' Web site and album art—with their primitive cardboard illustrations—adds to the cartoonish caricature of a folk duo packaging themselves as performance artists.

And so you must, in good conscience, fear the kitsch.

It's likely, however, that the Aladdin—busting a gut with Tegan and Sara fans on a PDX Saturday night—will give **The Ditty Bops** a warm reception. There's the two-part harmony that the ladies love (offered up in large lesbianic doses), there's the underdog factor (youth, two girls with a dream, etc.), and then there's the kitsch factor (puppets and wigs, fanciful costumes and a cabaret feel). Trust your gut, ask yourself if you trust Tegan and Sara—and then decide for yourself. Just make sure you don't show up late for the main act.

The concert begins 7 p.m. at 3017 S.E. Milwaukie Ave. Tickets are \$15 at the door or \$13 in advance from Ticketmaster.

—Cori Taratoot with Lisa McCormack



The Ditty Bops blend dreamy voices, strangely beautiful harmonies, bizarre stories and androgynously maternal reassurances for all of life's woes.