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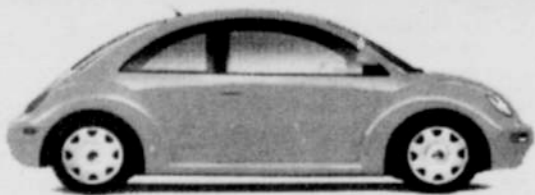
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Sorting out Triangle's Sordid Lives

For its farewell show of its 15th and final subscriber-based season, Triangle Productions says sayonara to the status quo with a comedy about speaking up, coming out and passing on.

Sordid Lives is riotous Southern-fried Americana in which playwright Del Shores roasts the most unconditional love in a most unconventional pit—red-faced Texas. Three women (Cecily Overman, Nicholette Reid and Oregonian columnist Margie Boulé—or, April 21 to 23, Michael Teufel) try to hide their recently deceased family matriarch's affair from the man's revengeful wife (KATU-TV's Helen Raptis). But more shame than mama's is put to rest when the funeral brings them face-to-face with openly gay son Ty and cross-dressing Brother Boy (Pageant beauties Ammon Morris and Timm McBride).

One sensitive yet funny tension lies between Brother Boy—committed to a hospital for believing he's Tammy Wynette—and old friend Wardell, played by retired cop and real estate broker CW Jensen.

"My character," says Jensen, "is a homophobic redneck who turned against his best friend because he found out he was gay many years before. He has to confront that moment and decide what he will do with his future. Does he make amends, or just take the easy road and go along with the status quo?"

This is his third play with director Don Horn. "He always picks me to be kind of the big, bad, dumb, straight guy who either gets his shit together or gets booed off stage," remarks Jensen. These characters, however, "start out as stereotypes but change throughout the play in some neat ways. Here in Portland, we have seen gay couples married and then rejected by a



Ex-cop CW Jensen plays a homophobic redneck in *Sordid Lives*.

vote in the most liberal county in the country. It sends a message that even Oregon liberals don't feel comfortable with equal rights for gay and lesbian couples. This play goes to that issue. What does it take to accept someone for who they are?"

Preconceptions aren't the only thing that gets shed by this large cast of 11. "Clothes do come off," promises Jensen, "if you like a little or, in my case, a lot of skin."

But it's the script's richness of "white trailer" characters that Horn loves. "It really is a gay-positive show, and it allows us to see that parents come around and love their children for who they are."

Sordid Lives runs April 8 to May 7. Performances are 7:30 p.m. Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays and 5 p.m. May 1 at Theater Theatre, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. Tickets are \$17-\$23 from 503-239-5919 or TicketsWest. (Wear your tackiest outfit to the April 10 performance, an afternoon of fun filled with prizes, food, drinks and more—all benefiting Equity Foundation.)

—Timothy Krause

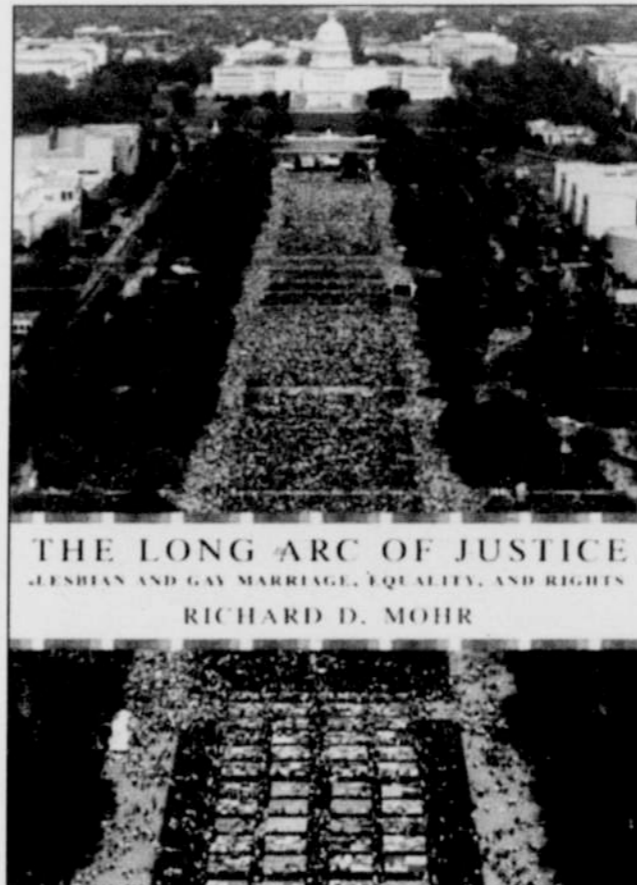
DIVERSIONS

Glimpse fresh new work right in the studio

A dancer can pack a lot of movement into eight minutes. Want proof? Check out BodyVox's *First Impressions* show.

This 70-minute showcase is composed of several short works, each no more than eight minutes long and created by a different choreographer. The tight format allows a variety of dance artists to bring their ideas to the stage, and to an audience, all in one production.

"It's a venue for our dancers who are newer to choreography to try out material in an



organized, theatrical setting," says co-artistic director Ashley Roland.

The various choreographic styles—and music choices ranging from Boccherini to Moby—make for an eclectic evening. But according to Roland, the performance as a whole is still unified.

"It's not like a recital," she says. "It flows together."

The BodyVox studio, tucked into a mazelike building with BridgePort Brewing Company, is transformed into a white box theater for the show. In this small space, the performance is definitely up-close and personal.

"The audience gets to sit almost on stage with the dancers, to see the pieces almost from the inside," says Roland. "It's a beautiful personal invitation into these new works."

This season's production—this is the fourth installment of *First Impressions*—features pieces by BodyVox members Lane Hunter, Eric Skinner and Anne Egan, plus a short film. The company's directors, Roland and Jamey Hampton, are each doing separate pieces and are giving a sneak preview of their full-length work debuting this fall, *Civilization Unplugged*.

Guest choreographers Minh Tran and Roxanne Steinberg are also contributing. Portland dance buffs will already be familiar with Tran's unique movements and Asian sensibility. Roland describes Steinberg's abstract style as full of imagery. "Her movement comes from a very internalized place," adds Hampton.

First Impressions gives the BodyVox dancers a chance to demonstrate their versatility.

"Our dancers are amazing," says Roland. "They work in every choreographer's genre with great ease and maturity, while managing to have a lot of fun."

First Impressions vol. 4 will be performed 7:30 p.m. April 13 to 17—with a late-night show 10 p.m. April 15 and a matinee 2 p.m. April 17—at 1300 N.W. Northrup St. Because tickets are going fast, BodyVox just added performances 7:30 p.m. April 22 and 23. Tickets are \$25 from 503-229-0627 or

www.bodyvox.com.

A collection of BodyVox photo images by Blaine Truitt Covert is on display through April 11 on the concourse level atrium at Pioneer Place. Visitors to the exhibit can enter to win a pair of tickets to *First Impressions*.

—Rebecca Ragain

Mohr than meets the eye

Richard D. Mohr has been watching Portland like a hawk. The University of Illinois-Urbana philosophy professor believes same-sex marriage is the hottest issue in the queer rights movement, and he can't wait for the Oregon Supreme Court to decide if the unions performed last year are legal.

Mohr, who grew up in Eugene, discusses same-sex marriage, gays in the military and other subjects in his new book, *The Long Arc of Justice: Lesbian and Gay Marriage, Equality and Rights* (Columbia University Press, \$22.95 hardcover).

An engaging and challenging blend of politics, ethics and philosophical discourse, *Arc* is a must-read for anyone who's even remotely interested in where the queer rights movement is going and where it has been. Mohr swings through town April 14 to promote the book.

Asked about the tricky topic of queer nuptials in a recent phone interview, Mohr said, "We're going to see a dividing of our nation over gay marriage." He supports civil union legislation as a stepping stone to full marriage rights and believes all the blue states will embrace civil unions. No such luck with the red states, he said.

Frequent references to pop cultural candy like *The L Word* and *Six Feet Under* help make *The Long Arc of Justice* reader-friendly. Naming some highs and lows for queers in the media, Mohr said *Tarnation*, Jonathan Caouette's revealing autobiographical film, should be mandatory viewing for everybody.

But he laments the motif in television commercials where two men freak out when they realize they are having an intimate moment with one another. "This implies that being gay is horrifying," Mohr said.

In his book and in the interview, Mohr said the most harmful stereotype about gay men depicts them as predatory child molesters. He's happy to say, however, that the Catholic Church sex scandal has switched the spotlight from queers to priests.



Melissa Ferrick calls her fans "lifesaving" for supporting her through a drinking problem and a panic disorder.