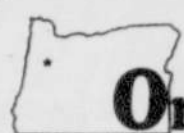


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DIVERSIONS

Words of wisdom

Featuring spoken word luminaries **Ivan E. Coyote** and **Tara Hardy**, Oratrix Productions' Write Off Tour will be rocking the mike 7 p.m. April 24 at Fez Ballroom.

The tour promises to challenge and inspire its audience with passion, politics and poetic fury. Inspired by the work of artists such as Michelle Tea, Sini Anderson and bell hooks, Write Off is committed to creating a record of marginalized history with a unique view of class, race, gender and sexual-

Seattle's 2002 Grand Slam Champion, Hardy is committed to creating space for traditionally marginalized people to tell their stories. As founder and director of Bent, the Seattle Queer Writers Institute where she has been teaching and mentoring queer artists for more than four years, she acknowledges the debt that spoken word owes to hip-hop and punk-rock in its marriage of poetry, theater, music and narrative.

"Every form of art that has crossed cultures has had the potential to explode systems that keep people apart, isolated and dis-

Passover observes the ancient Hebrew flight to freedom from slavery in Egypt. The Haggada is the text recited at a Seder, the traditional Passover feast. Keshet is not alone in altering the Haggada to reflect the spiritual and political interests of the group; it is a flexible document and is often adapted.

"Some years back, a Haggada was created for gay men that relates the story of Passover to the personal journey for gay people searching for identity and community," says **Mike Winer**, co-leader of the Seder, who has revised the Haggada. "We are now expand-



Clockwise from left, Write Off Tour participants Tara Hardy, Soul Childe, Lane Stroud, Amy Mahoney, Katinka Kraft and Ivan E. Coyote will speak out April 24 at the Fez.

ity. The artists involved in the tour have graced the stages of Seattle's Bumbershoot Festival, the Vancouver Folk Fest and the Vancouver International Hip-Hop Film Festival as well as Sister Spit's Rambling Road Show.

Oratrix co-founder **Katinka Kraft** speaks about her motivation as a performing artist: "I am terrified of being silent...as a spoken word artist, I think it is my responsibility to use the stage as a means to speak out against our government.... We are queer, female, male, mentally unstable, brilliant, open hearted, dykes, femmes, working class, middle class, American, human."

A natural-born storyteller, Coyote spins yarns about growing up in the Yukon and her experience of living "in between genders." Her personal experiences have resulted in two successful collections, *Close to Spider Man* and *One Man's Trash*, both published by Arsenal Pulp Press in Vancouver, British Columbia.

"Ever since I can remember, people have been asking me whether I'm a boy or a girl. I have been trying to identify my gender my whole life, and I'm beyond it now," Coyote says.

empowered," Hardy says. "I believe in replacing addiction with creation—I believe that art will be at the center of the next social movement in this country and that spoken word will be part of that upheaval."

Also performing is **Glam Star Burlesque**, a group of sexy queers dedicated to the art of striptease. Using camp, satire, kink and interpretive dance, they raise awareness about sexuality, gender, body size positivity and queer visibility.

Additional performers include **Lane Stroud**, **Amy Mahoney** and **Soul Childe**. The Fez is located at 316 S.W. 11th Ave. Cost is \$7-\$10 sliding scale.

—Jodi Darby

Seder for the people

Sexual minority Jews in Portland have built upon Passover traditions to include themselves.

Keshet, Portland's queer Jewish group, is holding its third annual Passover celebration with a traditional Seder and a revised Haggada, intended to include sexual minorities.

ing that to include all sexual minorities to make it more inclusive and to highlight areas that really touch on the personal journey."

Laney Kibel, the group's founding member, adds, "This is a service about escape to freedom and sexual minorities finding their path to freedom."

According to Kibel, parts of Keshet's Seder are traditional and others are unique.

"The Haggada is a long service and complicated ritual. Many of the prayers, rather than just being about Jews, are very specific prayers for gays, lesbians and sexual minorities," she says.

The Seder plate was also altered to make a statement.

The Jewish expression "There's as much reason for a woman to be a rabbi as there is for an orange to be on the Seder plate" is turned on its head, and an orange finds itself on Keshet's Seder plate, reflecting the group's consensus on the subject. Traditional items include hard-boiled eggs, bitter herbs and horseradish—foods symbolizing various aspects of the historical flight from Egypt.

All are welcome to Keshet's Seder, and those attending can expect to find a warm, festive and interactive ritual.

Keshet's Seder costs \$25 and will be held at 4:30 p.m. April 24. Call David at 503-226-7079, ext. 14, for reservations. Kosher and vegetarian diets can be accommodated. For more information visit www.gayjewishportland.com.

—Jaymee R. Cuti

No vacancy

Fans of the Dolly Ranchers shed a collective tear in their beer last year, when the popular all-girl circus/punk/country foursome decided to call it quits after five years, two records and several thousand miles of