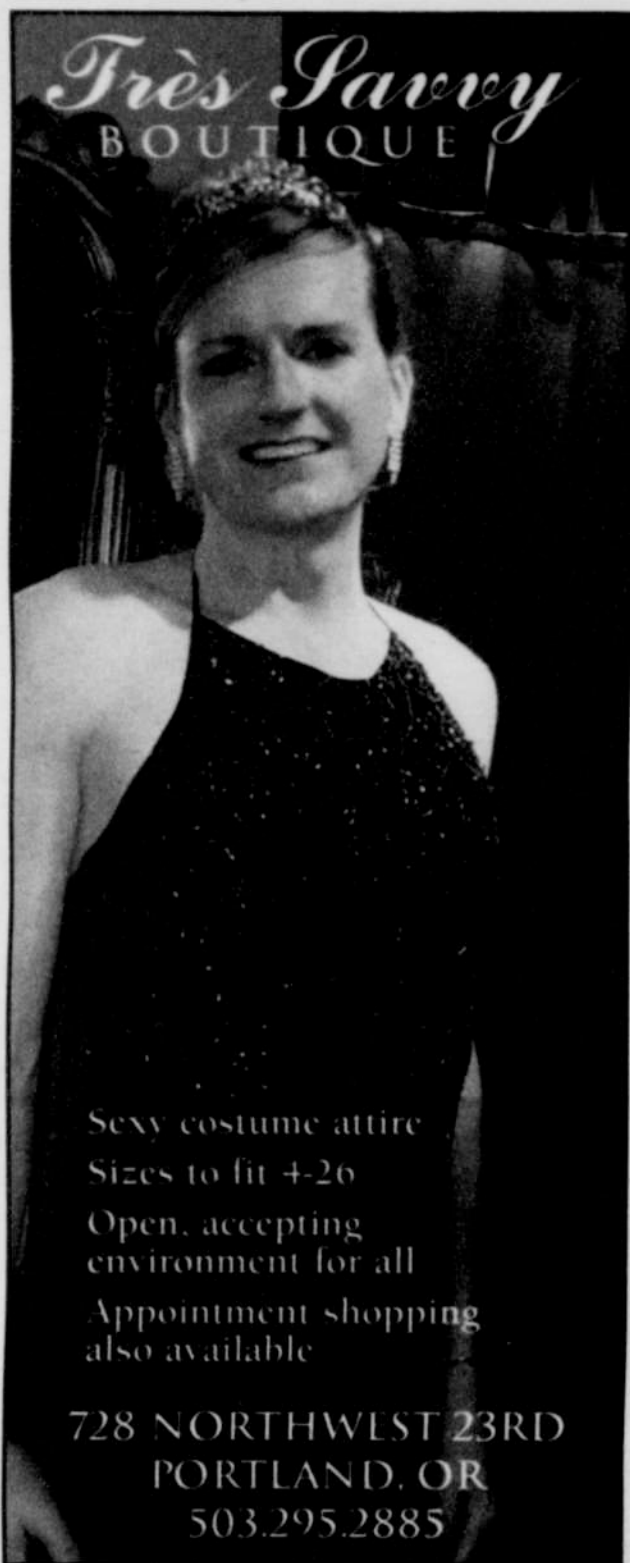


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## Celebrate life, laughter and a hero in heels

Wild. Campy. Hilarious. Descriptions of *The Rocky Horror Show* do not usually include the word "hopeful." Yet that's how Triangle Productions managing director **Don Horn** wants the audience to feel at the end of the company's upcoming Pride performance.

"I need people to come to the theater and say: 'You know, we're still a community, we're still strong, and we still have vitality. Whatever comes our way, we're going to make it,'" says Horn.

This show marks a turning point for Triangle Productions, which will slow to one production a year. After 15 years as managing director, Horn is taking a step back to "re-invent" the role of the company and to take a little more time for himself.

Background significance aside, *The Rocky Horror Show* is about having fun, being surprised and glorying in all-around raunchiness. Audience members should expect all this and more—including a live band and a real elevator descending to the stage.

Don't worry if you're a *Rocky Horror* virgin; props for audience participation will be on hand at the theater. (Please, no hot dogs or rice.) Surprises are planned for the show to make it more interactive.

Horn assures the audience: "If you don't know [about *Rocky Horror*], you're surprised. If you do know, you're there, too. It's going to be fun."

**Wade McCollum** of *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* fame plays a sexy Frank-n-Furter. His creation, Rocky, is acted by the newly blond **Steve Brian**. To shake things up a little, Columbia is played by a man, **Jerik Hoffer**, and **Julianna Jaffe** takes on the traditionally male roles of Eddie/Doctor Scott.

Horn acts as the Narrator, providing a few modern twists to the script. Usually he prefers to stay behind the scenes, but his good friend **Dennis Bigelow** convinced him to participate. Sadly, Bigelow, the original director of the performance, passed away in April. This show is in his honor.

Horn chose *Rocky Horror* because the show celebrates life and new beginnings. Brad and Janet could be two women or two guys, and it would be the same to him.

"Even though they've gone through this hell...they look at each other, and there's hope. I believe in that—that a couple can weather some storms and come out on top. I think that's like our lives," says Horn.

*The Rocky Horror Show* runs 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays from June 10 to July 9 at Theater Theatre, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. Tickets are \$35 at the door or \$30 in advance from 503-239-5919 or TicketsWest.

—Rebecca Ragain

## Star bursts

Who needs a telescope when you can see dozens of stars up close and personal? From June 9 to 11, a veritable galaxy of local talent lights up Winningstad Theatre in the musical revue *Night of 100 Stars*.

The two-hour show features renowned songs from Broadway musicals. **Nadine Stanton** of *Pepe* and the Bottle Blondes struts her stuff to "Big Spender" from *Sweet Charity*. **Scott Weimer**, Mr. Gay Pride Portland 2001-2002, channels The King with his rendition of "A Little Less Conversation" from *All Shook Up*. In deference to more recent compositions, **Addair Chappell** croons "There's a Fine, Fine Line" from the 2004 Tony-winning musical *Avenue Q*.

## DIVERSIONS

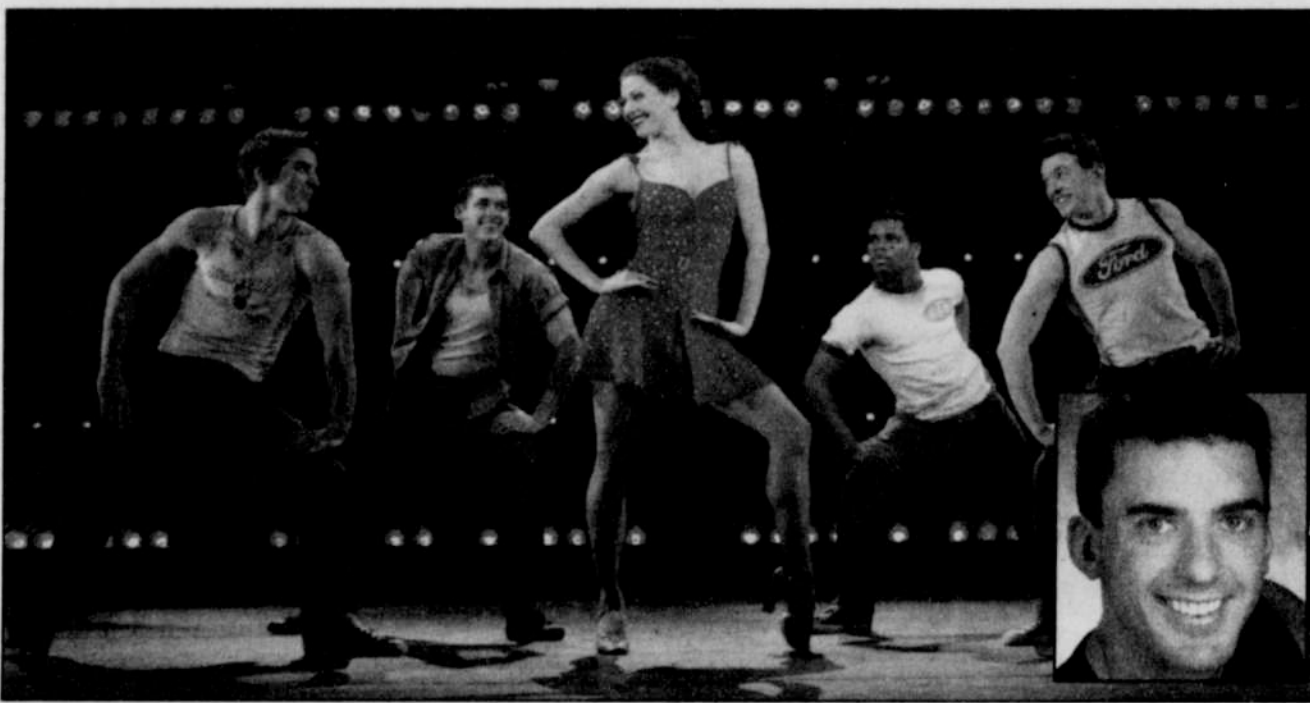
Event producer **John Oules** heaps extra praise on singer **Julianne Johnson**. "Any number she does is a show-stopping number," he says. She'll perform a sultry rendition of "Twenty Four Hours of Lovin'" from *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. The show concludes with "Thank You for the Music" from the Abba extravaganza *Mamma Mia*.

*100 Stars* first appeared in 1996 as a benefit for the **Rob Buckmaster Fund**. Buckmaster was a popular Portland actor who died of an AIDS-related illness in 1995. Oules, **Susannah Mars** and other members of Portland's theater community launched *100 Stars* as a tribute to him and as a way of raising money to support select companies.

ances and playful sense of humor. "With a voice as strong as thunder and a message powerful as a surge of lightening," *Independent Songwriter* raves, "Ellis pours out her heart and soul into every single word."

She will showcase songs from her fifth solo release, *Evidence of Joy*. In twist of irony, while major labels are scrambling to make records that sell, the independently minded Ellis invited eight of her fans from across the United States to make the CD they wanted. These guest producers were chosen from more than 50 applicants who completed essays and vied for the chance to work with Ellis one on one.

In one compact weekend, the eight fans converged on Minneapolis to listen to raw



Gay dance captain **Sean Kelly** (inset) puts his foot down for *Movin' Out*.

Despite the event's popularity, Oules says it did not yield big boons for theater companies.

The annual show ran from 1996 to 2000 and has been resuscitated this year by **Live on Stage**, a theater production company started by Oules in 2004. His mission is to allocate money from the Rob Buckmaster Fund for high school students seeking theater experience. Oules, a sucker for *Evita*, hopes the still-blooming Live on Stage will become a full-time operation. The company's aesthetic goal, he says, is to "add concert and pop cultural elements to musical theater." Apart from producing the *100 Stars* gala every year, he plans to stage rock operas such as *Hair*.

The show starts 8 p.m. at 1111 S.W. Broadway. Tickets are \$19.95-\$29.50 from Ticketmaster.

—Stephen Blair

## Joy to the world

Award-winning Minneapolis acoustic folk rock musician **Ellis** will be performing June 4 at Mississippi Pizza Pub.

Five-time *Lavender* readers' choice winner for Best Musician in Minneapolis/St. Paul, she continues to win fans nationally with her charismatic stage presence, powerful perform-

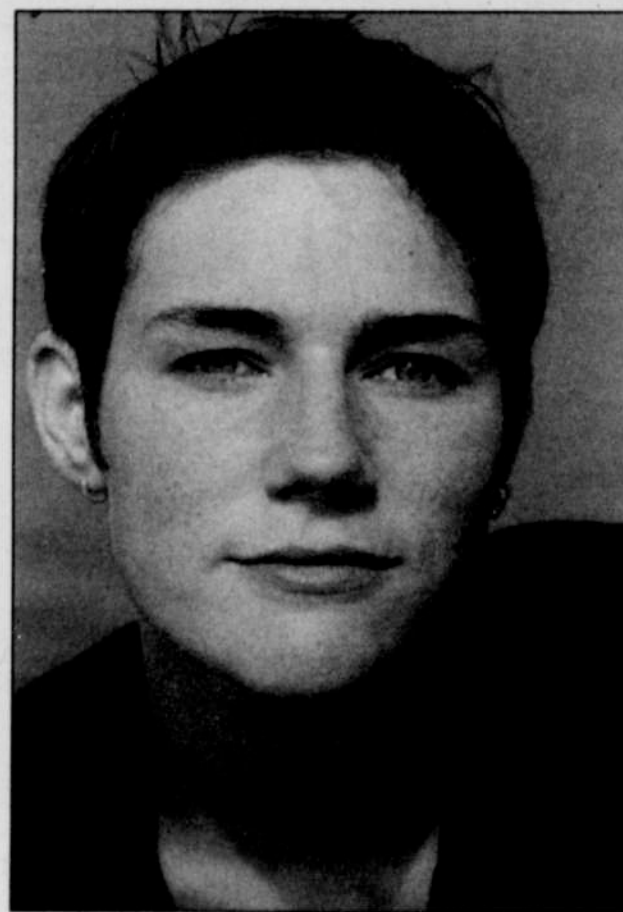
ances, choose songs, edit tracks, determine the sequence and brainstorm titles and artwork.

Ellis and her drummer, **Jennifer Jones**, offered stellar performances that gave her producers a plethora of quality material to work with. Recorded almost entirely in one evening, the songs are clean and high-quality, the performances are smooth and inviting, and Ellis' energy and laughter are infectious. *Evidence of Joy* features many old favorites and four previously unreleased songs, including a raw and powerful version of "Grace," one of the newer songs in Ellis' repertoire. The recording flows like a live show and highlights her passionate, soulful lyrics as well as her relaxed and informal stage banter.

Ellis developed her unique blend of folk rock music during her six-year tenure as lead singer of the regionally renowned rock band **Bobby Llama**. When the possibility of a major record label deal surfaced after it won a 2000 contest for Best Unsigned Band in America, Ellis was determined to remain an independent artist. She left the band soon after and went on to record a critically acclaimed solo album, which was rated one of the top independent releases of 2001 by *Music Connection*.

The show starts 9:30 p.m. at 3552 N. Mississippi Ave. Cover is \$6.

—Jodi Darby



*Evidence of Joy* was produced by eight of Ellis' fans from across the United States.