

on stage

Actors from the London Stage present Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, a brilliant parable for our time on the consequences of religious hatred, through March 18 at Portland State University's Lincoln Hall. (8 pm. 1620 SW Park Ave. \$6-\$19 from 503-725-3307.)

Artists Repertory Theatre presents *Frozen*, in which the lives of three strangers are connected through the disappearance of a child and the search for answers from a killer in custody, March 28-May 7. (Call for times. 1516 SW Alder St. \$15-\$40 from 503-241-1278.)

The Vermont-based **Bread & Puppet Theater Company** presents its brand of papier-mâché counterintelligence in *How to Turn Distress into Success: A Parable of War and Its Making* March 17 and 18 at Waverly Heights United Church of Christ. (7:30 pm. 3300 SE Woodward St. \$8 from 503-351-0550.)

Broadway Rose Theatre Company presents Wade Willis' *Letting Go!*, a cabaret based on his search for love, peace and happiness, April 1 at Tigar Community Friends Church. (3 and 7 pm. 15800 SW Hall Blvd. \$12 from 503-620-5262 or www.broadwayrose.com.)

Cirque du Soleil presents *Varekai*, another astonishing spectacle of athleticism and artistry set against a baroque and operatic backdrop, through April 16. (Call for times. Southwest Moody Avenue. \$24.50-\$70 from 800-678-5440 or www.cirquedusoleil.com.)

Classic Greek Theatre of Oregon presents the world premiere of *What Mad Pursuit*, about the disconcerting events of an evening with famous archeologists Heinrich Schliemann and Sir Arthur Evans and their remarkable wives, through March 26 at West End Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 4 pm Sunday. 1220 SW Taylor St. \$10-\$20 from 503-258-9313.)

Gunhappy Theatrical Ensemble presents *After School Girlfight! Kill! Kill!*—four mini-plays about drug abuse, telepathic devil children, teen pregnancy, runaway meteors from hell, futuristic locomotives and homicidal go-go dancers—through March 25 at Miracle Theatre. (8 pm Friday and Saturday. No show March 11. 525 SE Stark St. \$12 from 503-258-1681.)

Hand2Mouth Theatre presents *City of Gold*, a theatrical performance about the mad search for gold in the Americas, from the time of the conquistadors to the 49ers to the present day, through March 26 at Goldsmith Building. Too big for just one storyline yet too small to be a full-on spectacle, this punch-drunk drama-club history pageant wanders all over the map, missing its mark (not to mention the sophisticated spark that has characterized more recent H2M explorations) largely because its gilded motives never quite pan out. (8 pm Thursday-Sunday. 20 NW Fifth Ave. \$8-\$15 sliding scale from 503-235-5284; Thursdays are "pay what you can.")

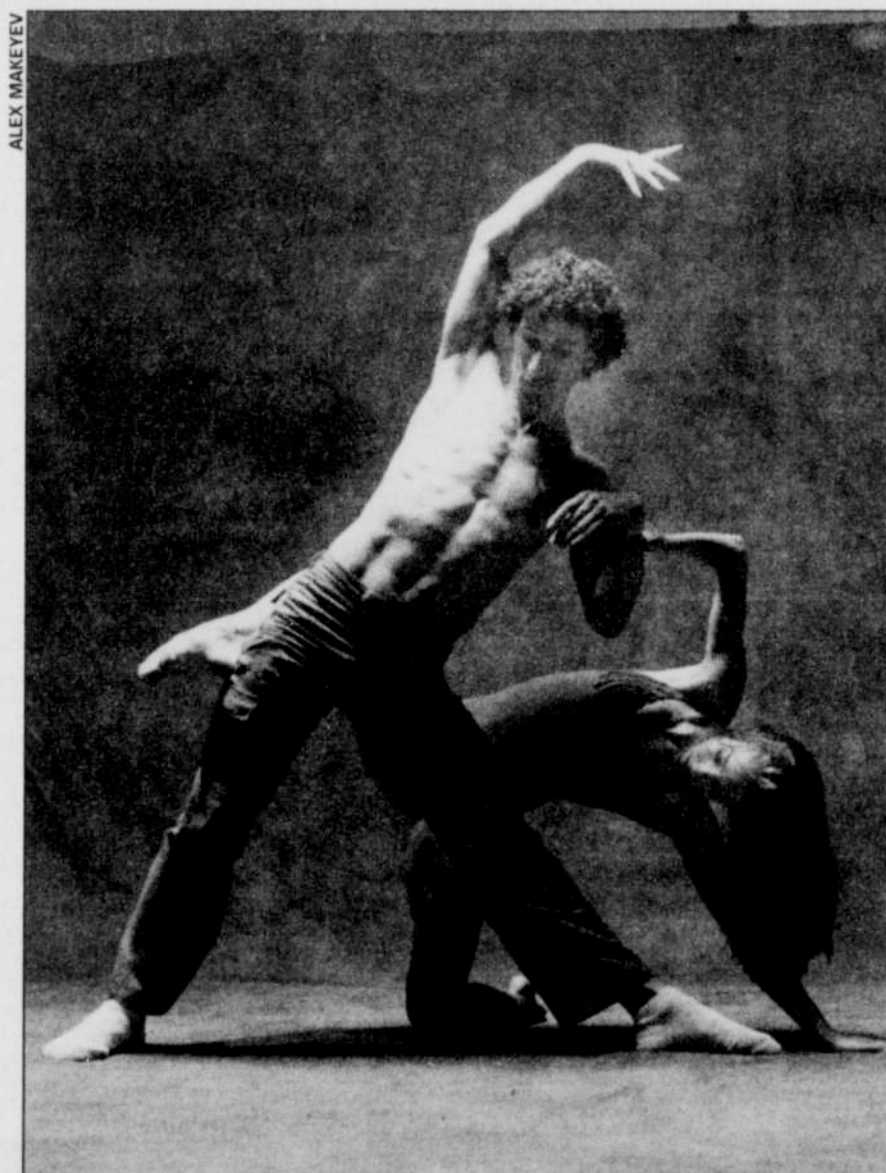
Imago Theatre presents *Hit Me in the Stomach*, in which off-beat music, loopy narratives and inventive visuals collide, March 23-April 8. (7:30 pm

Thursday, 8 pm Friday and Saturday. 17 SE Eighth Ave. \$10-\$16 from 503-231-9581 or TicketsWest.com.)

Integrity Productions presents *Going to St. Ives*, a psychological drama about the mother of a ruthless African dictator seeking treatment from a prominent British ophthalmologist, through April 2 at Theater Theatre. What's interesting is that these two actors have a certain something—something that one would like to see in some other shape or form because this, as a whole, doesn't work. What's missing from the slow, dull, lifeless bickering is a communication of *Why this story? Why now? What's at risk? What are the consequences?* And, ultimately, why one should care. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 4 pm Sunday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$15 from 503-286-3456; Thursdays are \$5-\$15 sliding scale.)

Lakewood Theatre Company presents the spoofy and spiffy whodunit *The Musical Comedy Murders of 1940* through April 9. Where this intentionally convoluted corn (not a musical, by the way) might have effortlessly tickled one to death, there is instead a strenuous last gasp for laughs mired in tiresome accents delivered at a deafening tone amid directionless puttering. (Call for times. 368 S State St., Lake Oswego. \$22-\$24 from 503-635-3901.)

Gay choreographer **Mike Barber** celebrates the 10th installment of *10 Tiny Dances*—a fabulous lineup of brave performers doing short dances on a small stage—March 17 at Wonder Ballroom. (8 pm. 128 NE Russell St. \$15 from box office or Ticketmaster.com.)



White Bird presents the Portland debut of Australia's electrifying Leigh Warren & Dancers March 23-25.



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Miracle Theatre Group presents *Ardiente Paciencia* (*Burning Patience*), based on the novel that inspired the 1995 film *Il Postino* (*The Postman*), which imagines Chilean poet Pablo Neruda befriending a love-struck postman, April 7-29. Performed in Spanish with English supertitles Thursdays and Sundays. (7:30 pm Thursday, 8 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 525 SE Stark St. \$14-\$18 from 503-236-7253.)

Northwest Children's Theater presents *Bugsy Malone*, a tongue-in-cheek tribute to 1920s gangster flicks, March 18-April 16 at Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center. (Call for times. 1819 NW Everett St. \$12-\$20 from 503-222-4480 or www.nwcts.org.)

Northwest Children's Theater presents *The Wrestling Season*, in which eight young people struggle with the destructive power of rumor, March 31-April 8 at Artists Repertory Theatre. (7 pm Thursday-Saturday. 1516 SW Alder St. \$12 from 503-222-4480 or www.nwcts.org.)

Pixie Dust Productions presents *The Full Monty*, a gay playwright Terrence McNally's musical about six buddies whose desperate plan to get their lives back together requires them to triumph over their fears, their nerves and their clothes, through April 15 at World Trade Center Theatre. A proficient cast of local musical theater all-stars succeeds in making this an amusing evening, even if McNally's undistinguished, anticlimactic book and David Yazbek's cleverly worded but tone-deaf score are less than revealing. (8 pm Friday and Saturday, 8 pm April 6 and 13. 121 SW Salmon St. \$33-\$60 from 503-624-0403.)

Portland Center Stage presents *Crowns*, a wildly popular new play that lovingly evokes the lives and stories of black women who are captured in the hats they wear to church each Sunday, through April 9 at Newmark Theatre. (Call for times. 1111 SW Broadway. \$15-\$56 from 503-274-6588.)

Portland Center Stage presents the world premiere of *Celebrity Row*, a thought-provoking comedy that asks, "If four of the world's most notorious convicted criminals had just one hour each day to communicate with each other, what would they talk about?" March 24-April 16 at Winningstad Theatre. (Call for times. 1111 SW Broadway. \$15-\$56 from 503-274-6588.)

Portland Civic Theatre Guild's First Tuesday Readers Theatre presents Noel Coward's frothy comedy *Fallen Angels* April 4 at The Old Church. (10:30 am. 1422 SW 11th Ave. \$5.)

Portland Opera presents John Adams' *Nixon in China* March 25 and 30 and April 1 at Keller Auditorium. (7:30 pm. 222 SW Clay St. \$37-\$133 from 503-241-1802 or Ticketmaster.com.)

Portland Opera's Broadway in Portland presents *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's uplifting musical about the trials and triumphs of Israel's favorite son, April 4-9 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$20-\$62 from 503-241-1802 or Ticketmaster.com.)

Portland Opera's Broadway in Portland presents the silver anniversary of America's favorite musical, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*, March 21-26 at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. (Call for times. 1037 SW Broadway. \$25-\$70 from 503-241-1802 or Ticketmaster.com.)

Profile Theatre Project continues its Lanford Wilson season with *Redwood Curtain*, in which a young Vietnamese-American piano prodigy in search of her biological father encounters a homeless Vietnam veteran who has retreated from society, April 6-May 14. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$13-\$28 from 503-242-0080.)

Reed College presents two short plays by Maria Irene Fornes: *Dr. Kheal*, a satiric representation of a vacuous, venomous academic lecture, and *Red Burning Light*, a Broadway-esque musical skewering Western militarism and cultural imperialism, March 31-April 8 at Mainstage Theater. (7:30 pm Thursday-Saturday. 3203 SE Woodstock Blvd. \$1-\$5 from 503-777-7284.)

Slocum House Theatre presents *Proof*, about a troubled young woman caring for her brilliant but unstable mathematician father, through March 26. (Call for times. 605 Esther St., Vancouver, Wash. \$8-\$10 from 360-696-2427.)

Sowelu Theater Ensemble presents *The Water Principle*, a metaphorical play about forgotten landscapes and aggressive land grabs, March 18-April 22 at Back Door Theater. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 4 pm April 9 and 16. 4319 SE Hawthorne Blvd. \$8-\$15 from 503-230-2090.)

Stark Raving Theatre presents *The Mark*, in which three actors play multiple characters whose lives intertwine through three poetic dramas, March 24-April 22. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 7 pm Sunday. 2257 NW Raleigh St. \$10-\$20 from 503-232-7072; gala fund-raiser March 25 is \$35 a seat; Thursdays are "pay what you can.")

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 Reviewed by TIMOTHY KRAUSE. Read more and comment at followspot.blogspot.com.

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