

A Star Is Born

A new diva at Portland Opera

My mom always said I was special. And now I'm super—a supernumerary. In other words, I'm an extra in Portland Opera's production of *Faust*, which plays Nov. 4 to 11 at the Keller.

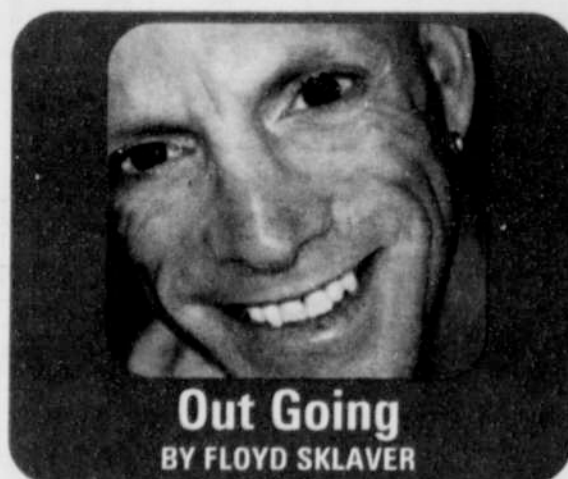
Assistant stage manager **Jon Wangsgaard** calls us "thuper thupers." (Thankth for athking!) The hours are long, there's no pay, and we're essentially movable scenery. But sitting in the rehearsal hall hearing those glorious voices up close is among the greatest thrills of my life.

In this production the supers play wandering medieval minstrels, mincing about like the cast of *Cats*. We begin each rehearsal with 10 minutes of stretching. "I can see your bellies," chorus master **Rob Ainsley** exclaims as we lean back, adding, "but I'm not saying whose I like."

Everyone's a critic.

During the first rehearsal, we're assigned masks. A female super and I fight over a silver one with sequins until I graciously choose another. **Paul Arensmeyer** and his partner, **Jonmarc Ross**, wear white bird masks with pointed beaks, which elicits a number of comments about their long peckers.

Perhaps it's the tedium, but dirty jokes abound. Maybe that's because our main task is manipulating



Out Going
BY FLOYD SKLAVER

asleep. But I've still got social obligations, including the 10th anniversary gala for the Portland Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. Kudos go to **Gabriel Mendoza** and **Debbie Caselton** for organizing a fantastic festival and a peachy party, where I met Pride Northwest president **Stef-Anie Wells**. Painter **Leiv Fagereng** was there after the successful opening of his show at **Charlie Froelick's** gallery, which also features **Paul Arensmeyer**. **Stephen Marc Beaudoin**, a freelancer for *Willamette Week* who relocated to Portland from Boston (where he wrote for *Bay Windows*), was there. Stephen directs a December production of *La Boheme* at Oregon Lyric Opera in Gresham.

(Diva that I am, I told him I was unavailable.) **Carlee Smith**, a go-go dancer for *Basic* and member of *Rose City Show Girls* burlesque troupe, was hanging out with Seattle filmmaker **Chris Diani**. And I hung out with (and hit on) a beautiful young boy named **Martisse Markley**, who finally informed me she's actually a beautiful young girl.

Speaking of beautiful girls, **Gwenn Baldwin** and **Judith Gray** recently tied the knot in Victoria, British Columbia, and then celebrated with a hundred friends at the

Oaks Park Dance Pavilion. **Timm McBride** and his partner, **Dan Kelley McBride**, were there. Dan has a new job to go with his now legally changed name. **Gillian Leichtling** sat with partner **Susan Remmers**, who has a new career with the Community Cycling Center. At the same table, fiery Frenchwoman **Nadine Bauthamy** sat with girlfriend **Kim Sang**, who was visiting from Paris. "I came all the way to America," laughed Nadine, "and ended up with a French wife." Also present were **Byron Beck** and **Juan Martinez**, **Sam Adams**, **David Martinez**, **Bob Speltz**, **Doug Mendenhall**, **Tim Healea** and a host of other politicians.

Which reminds me: DON'T FORGET TO VOTE, particularly if you live in East Multnomah County. After all, we want to make sure Oregon House Speaker Karen "Menace" Minnis is Out Going. 10

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Floyd and partner Marc Acito congratulate newlyweds Gwenn Baldwin and Judith Gray.

a giant lavender doll that represents carnal pleasures. The director calls it the Purple Puppet Palace of Love, or the Orgasmatron. It takes 13 of us to move its enormous head, huge hands and 10 legs. We have to audition for our roles, and I'm assigned one of the legs. I guess I didn't give good enough head.

Paul gets a hand job, which is accomplished by wrapping a harness around his waist and placing a giant pole into a holster secured near his crotch. "Paul, what a big pole you have," I say to him, just as assistant stage manager **Carla Jimenez** yells: "Keep it up! Keep it up!"

The Orgasmatron's head and hands are connected by several yards of purple satin. At one point, the wandering minstrels wander underneath, and then exit through the voluminous mound. But I can't find the hole. "Put your finger in the slit," one of the female supers says. I don't have the heart to tell her I'm gay.

All that prancing is hard work, and during our finale, when I'm supposed to fall to the floor as if dead, I'm not acting. Within seconds I could be

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