

on stage

Artists Repertory Theatre presents a world premiere adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *Vanya* starring Academy Award winner William Hurt that transplants the setting from 19th century Russia to Depression-era America, through Feb. 25. In this production that's saturated with color, longing and regret, a powerhouse cast expertly sustains a languid, dreamy tone. Time stops and the stage expands to accommodate beautifully constructed Chekhovian moments in which absolutely nothing—and yet everything—is happening in front of us. (Call for times. 1516 SW Alder St. \$24-\$64 from 503-241-1278.)

Arts Equity presents *Hot 'n' Throbbing*, a button-pusher that boldly asks, "Which is more obscene, pornography or domestic violence?" through Feb. 25. This is theater you won't see on most Main Streets. In Vogel's stylized world of pornography and violence, disembodied voices become characters who hold our feet to the national fire of commercialized lust. There are some challenges with pacing, and the soundtrack is at times too loud, but overall a probing, energetic show. (7:30 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Feb. 25. 606 Main St. \$8-\$24 from 360-695-3770.)

Blue Monkey Theater Company presents a rock 'n' roll take on Shakespeare's classic love story *Romeo & Juliet* through Feb. 25 at West End Theater. (7 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Saturday and Sunday. 1220 SW Taylor St. \$10-\$20 from 503-777-4506.)

CoHo Productions presents *Chateau Joyeaux*, a tale of a family divided during post-war France, through Feb. 24. From words and wit, gay playwright William S. Gregory fashions a universe all his own. Not cutting edge, but at times something even more elusive—delightful. Fed on a rich diet of verbal bonbons, we watch our French friends argue, flirt, complain and dream. Despite several strong performances, however, the show falls short of potential. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 2257 NW Raleigh St. \$20-\$23 from 503-220-2646.)

CoToP Productions presents *The Skriker*, Caryl Churchill's experimental work about a shape-shifting spirit who tries to win the attention of two sisters in England, Feb. 22-March 10 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Wednesday-Sunday, 3430 SE Belmont St. \$10-\$15 from 971-235-4550.)

Fever Theater presents *Billum Bay*, a ghost story, a puppet show and a tale of darkness and beauty, March 1-31 at Goldsmith Building. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 20 NW Fifth Ave. \$10-\$15 sliding scale from 503-715-2656; Thursdays are "pay what you can.")

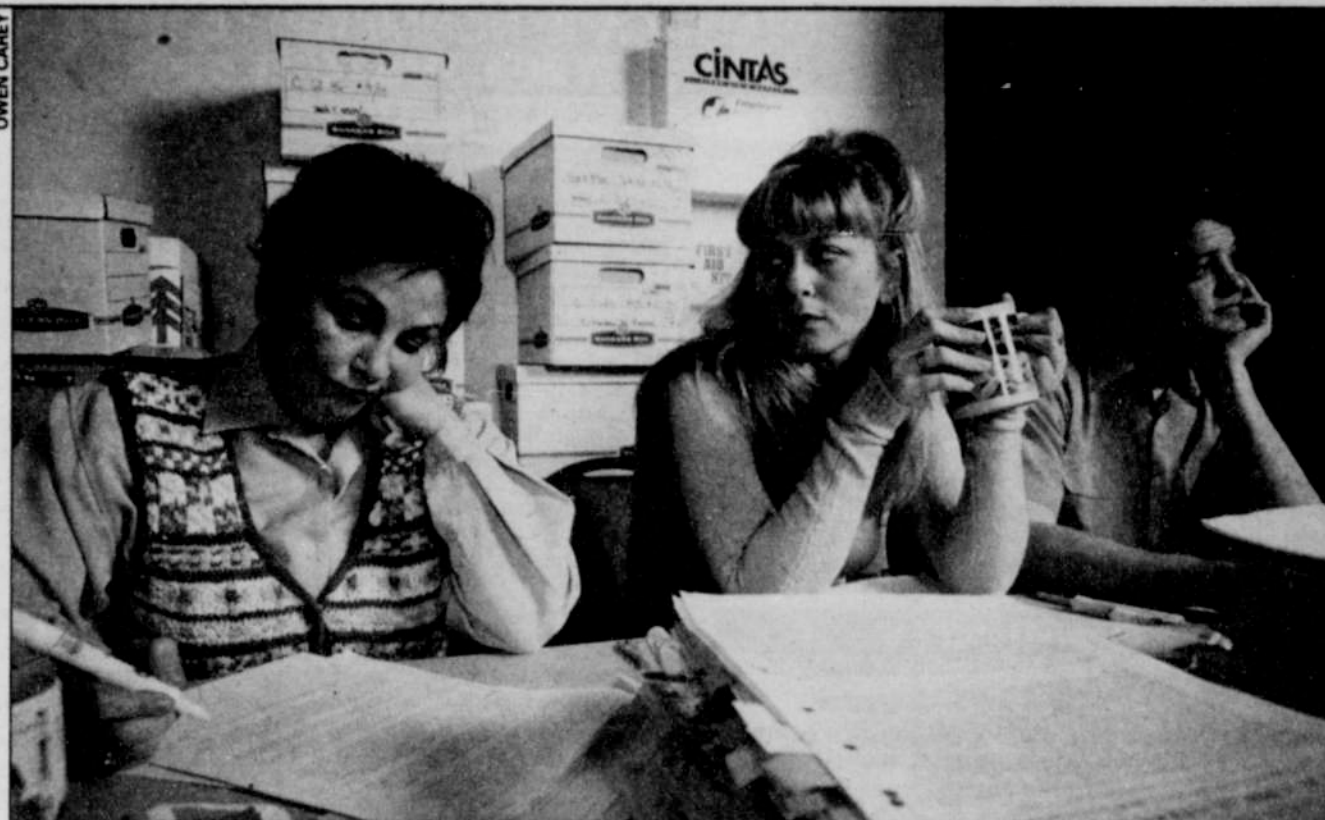
Integrity Productions presents a new take on Noel Coward's *Private Lives* Feb. 22-March 18 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 4 pm Sunday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$12-\$15 from 503-286-3456; Thursdays are \$5-\$1,000 sliding scale.)

Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center presents *No Strangers Here Today*, a compelling new work by acclaimed performer Susan Banyas based on Underground Railroad diary entries, through Feb. 18. (8 pm Friday and Saturday, 4 and 7 pm Sunday. 5340 N Interstate Ave. \$10-\$20 sliding scale from 503-239-7107.)

Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center presents *Facets of Africa*, featuring some of Portland's most vibrant storytellers sharing tales from several African cultures followed by an open conversation about the diversity within African cultures, through March 15. (10 am Thursday, 2 pm Saturday. 5340 N Interstate Ave. \$5-\$10 from 503-823-9455, ext. 1.)

Lakewood Theatre Company presents *Where's Charley?*—a Tony-winning musical packed with Frank Loesser hits—through Feb. 18. (Call for times. 368 S State St., Lake Oswego. \$23-\$25 from 503-635-3901.)

Lakewood Theatre Company presents *Arcadia*, Tom Stoppard's play about a country house's mysterious links to poet Lord Byron, March 2-April 7. (Call for times. 368 S State St., Lake Oswego. \$23-\$25 from 503-635-3901.)



Watch your back! Gay actor Kelsey Tyler (right) steals the show as one of the law firm temps terrorized in *The Thugs* through March 10 at Portland Center Stage.

Madison's Grill presents the dinner theater musical *Who Stole My Dead Husband* through March 31. (7 pm Saturday. 1109 SE Madison St. \$57-\$67 from 800-966-8865.)

Miracle Theatre Group presents *Sonia Flew*, a moving account of a Cuban-American woman whose half-Jewish son enlists in the war against terror in Afghanistan in the weeks following 9/11, through Feb. 24. Several uneven performances prevent this ambitious story from truly taking flight. Start and stop American living room realism of Act 1 yields to deeper, more continuous emotions in Cuban second half. Sudden plot turns, reveals and time travel occasionally distract. Jon St. Nicholas and Courtney Davis provide needed energy and presence. (7:30 pm Thursday, 8 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 525 SE Stark St. \$17-\$20 from 503-236-7253.)

Northwest Children's Theater presents the Portland premiere of *Junie B. Jones* and *A Little Monkey Business*, a musical based on the popular book about a kindergarten who is delighted to learn that her new baby brother is a "real, alive monkey!" through Feb. 26 at Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center. (Call for times. 1819 NW Everett St. \$16-\$20 from 503-222-4480.)

Oregon Ballet Theatre presents premieres by three of America's most distinguished choreographers March 3-10 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$16-\$105 from 503-2-BALLET.)

Portland Center for the Performing Arts presents *Menopause: The Musical*—four women at a lingerie sale with nothing in common but a black lace bra, memory loss, hot flashes and night sweats—extended through March 25 at Winningstad Theatre. (Call for times. 1111 SW Broadway. \$33 from box office or Ticketmaster.)

Portland Center Stage presents *Act a Lady*, gay playwright Jordan Harrison's gender-bending farce about three middle-American men who decide to stage a French melodrama in drag, through March 11 in Gerding Theater Studio at the Armory. Like refreshing sparkling cider, this gentle comedy is sweet and bubbly, finishing with an innocent touch of tang. An incredibly endearing, in-the-moment ensemble holds the clever script on even-heel, stabling well its mix of golly and folly amid some of the most outlandish costumes in Portland history thanks to designer Jeff Cone. Half of the ticket price Feb. 28 benefits Basic Rights Oregon! (Call for times. 128 NW 11th Ave. \$15-\$30 from 503-445-3700.)

Portland Center Stage presents *The Thugs*, a humorous tale of paranoia and tedium in the lives of a group of law firm temps, through March 10 in Gerding

Theater Studio at the Armory. Dead-on caricatures crafted with super-extreme meticulousness (Sharonlee McLean above them all) lead us through an oddly amusing yet all-too-familiar scenario before collapsing in a confusing climax. Funny while it lasts. (10:30 pm Friday and Saturday. 128 NW 11th Ave. \$21.50 from 503-445-3700.)

Portland Center Stage presents Tony nominee *The Pillowman*, Martin McDonagh's macabre, dire yet humorous modern classic in which art and artist are on trial, Feb. 23-March 18 in Gerding Theater at the Armory. (Call for times. 128 NW 11th Ave. \$16.50-\$59.50 from 503-445-3700.)

Portland Metro Performing Arts presents *Flashbacks*, the long-awaited sequel to the hit musical *Hot Flashes*, showing women embracing the challenges of aging and celebrating the second half of their lives, through Feb. 24. (Call for times. 9933 SE Pine St. \$20-\$24 from 503-775-8017.)

Portland Opera presents Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma*, renowned as the quintessential Bel Canto masterpiece, Feb. 17 at Keller Auditorium. (7:30 pm. 222 SW Clay St. \$39-\$140 from Ticketmaster.)

Portland Opera's Broadway Across America presents America's most beloved musical, *Annie*, Feb. 20-25 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$23-\$68 from Ticketmaster.)

Portland State University presents a staged reading of *Cielo*, the story of a family that enters the United States illegally with the assistance of a borderland coyote, Feb. 18 and 19 at Lincoln Performance Hall. (7:30 pm. 1620 SW Park Ave.)

Portland State University presents *Hedda Gabler*, the story of a fierce free spirit terrified of being trapped in a life of mediocrity, Feb. 23-March 3 at Lincoln Performance Hall. (7:30 pm Wednesday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 1620 SW Park Ave. \$3.50-\$9.50 from 503-725-3307; Wednesday is Pay-What-You-CAN Affair in conjunction with Oregon Food Bank.)

Portland State University Women's Resource Center presents *The Vagina Monologues* through Feb. 18 in Room 355 of Smith Center. Proceeds benefit the Portland Women's Crisis Line and Sexual Assault Resource Center. (8 pm. 1825 SW Broadway. \$9-\$12 from 503-725-3307.)

Portland Story Theater presents *And Then the Bed Broke*, a seamless collection of stories, from the heartwarmingly tender to the deliciously dark and cynical, about finding love by any means possible, through Feb. 17 at Brooklyn Bay Performance Space. (8 pm. 1825 SE Franklin St. \$15 from 503-793-5484; includes one complimentary beverage and light snacks.)



The Divided returns Feb. 17 at the Red Room.

Slocum House Theatre presents *Sherlock's Last Case*, in which the greatest detective on earth must solve the case of his life, March 2-25. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 4 pm Sunday. 605 Esther St., Vancouver, Wash. \$8-\$10 from 360-696-2427.)

Spring 4th Productions presents *Loop: An Original Workplace Comedy* about all of your worst co-worker nightmares come to life, written and performed by gay actors Tobin Gollihar and Ian Sieren, extended through Feb. 23 at Shoe Box Theatre. (10 pm Friday. 2110 SE 10th Ave. \$12 at the door, \$10 in advance from 503-235-2633.)

Stumptown Stages presents *Grease* with a twist—featuring an all-star Portland cast resurrecting their roles in the musical 30 years later—Feb. 23-March 24 at Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center. (8 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 5340 N Interstate Ave. \$22-\$25 from 503-381-8686.)

Tabuki Theatre presents *Goa: A Ghost's Story*, a tale of clashing cultures about two couples (one straight and one lesbian) who fall under the spell of a backgammon-playing guru at a backpacker hostel in India, through March 3 at Back Door Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday. 4321 SE Hawthorne Blvd. \$10 from 503-284-6392.)

Triangle Productions presents the Northwest premiere of *Bark!*—a sometimes funny, sometimes poignant musical about man's best friend, as told and sung from the doggie point of view—through March 10 at Artists Repertory Theatre. You might howl at the premise or growl that the score is mathematically derived to please, but canine lovers will find no fault with the precise delivery of this well-trained ensemble that's happily dogged by both the powerful pipes and the personal panache to make this a winning revue of musical bones. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 1516 SW Alder St. \$30 at the door, \$22-\$28 in advance from 503-239-5919 or www.tripro.org.)

White Bird presents the West Coast debut of Vietnamese choreographer Le Vu Long and his dance company, Together, March 2 and 3 at Imago Theatre. (8 pm. 17 SE Eighth Ave. \$15.)

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

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