

on stage

Arts Equity presents Steve Martin's *Picasso at the Lapin Agile* extended through Aug. 11. (Call for times. 606 Main St., Vancouver, Wash. \$10-\$24 from 360-695-3770.)

Broadway Rose Theatre Company presents *Singin' in the Rain*, a zany, lighthearted romantic comedy about the early days of sound film, through July 15 at Deb Fennell Auditorium in Tigard. (Call for times. 9000 SW Durham Road. \$19-\$26 from 503-620-5262.)

Modern Garage Movement presents *This Dance Is Called Gree. It Is from BedStuy*, through July 9 at various venues in and around Portland. (For times and locations visit www.myspace.com/moderngaragemovement. \$8 donation.)

New Century Players presents *Steel Magnolias*, a skillfully crafted, lovingly evoked picture of eccentricity concerning a group of gossipy Southern ladies in a small-town beauty parlor, July 12-21 at Rex Putnam Blackbox Theatre in Milwaukie. (7:30 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Saturday. 4950 SE Roethe Road. \$8-\$12 from 503-367-2620.)

New Moon Productions presents free outdoor performances of *The Wizard of Oz* July 12-28 at Washington Park Amphitheatre. (6:30 pm Tuesday-Sunday. 400 SW Kingston Blvd.)

Portland Actors Ensemble presents a free neo-Gothic version of William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* through July 21 at Lovejoy Fountain Park. (8 pm Friday and Saturday. For directions visit www.portlandactors.com.)

Portland Center Stage presents free public readings of new work for the stage, including queer playwright Matt Zrebski's *First Beard*, during the ninth annual JAW Playwrights Festival July 13-22 in Gerding Theater at the Armory. (128 NW 11th Ave. For a complete schedule visit www.pcs.org.)

Portland Opera's Broadway Across America presents the scamming, scheming, double-crossing hit musical *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* July 10-15 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$23-\$70 from Ticketmaster.)



CAROL ROSEGG

Portland Opera's Broadway Across America presents *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* July 10-15.

Broadway Rose Theatre Company presents *Cole*, a fresh musical revue about the queer king of musicals, Cole Porter, July 20-29 at Deb Fennell Auditorium in Tigard. (Call for times. 9000 SW Durham Road. \$19-\$26 from 503-620-5262.)

Lakewood Theatre Company presents *Noises Off*, a hilarious comedy about the backstage antics of a touring theater troupe in England, July 13-Aug. 19. (Call for times. 368 S State St., Lake Oswego. \$23-\$25 from 503-635-3901.)

Portland Opera's Broadway Across America presents the scamming, scheming, double-crossing hit musical *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* July 10-15 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$23-\$70 from Ticketmaster.)



Queer actor Noah Jordan co-starred with Val Landrum in *The Listener* at last year's JAW Playwrights Festival.

Talk About a Power Play

The genesis of great theater often begins with that magic "what if?" For example: What if Ted, a young bad boy lost in primal rage, meets Davey, an intellectual with dreams as big as his heart? What if Davey's subsequent death triggers a campaign of secrets between his mother and his boyfriend that leads all the way to the White House? What if what begins as an artistic response to Oregon's Measure-36 prohibition of same-sex marriage ends up less cut-and-dry commentary on inequality and more an imaginative, messy backstory behind the biggest what-if of all: a gay presidency?

In *First Beard*, a new script from Portland playwright Matt Zrebski, President-elect Thomas Hewitt and wife Marion are moments away from making acceptance speeches when the truth behind the dream duo is pressured to come out. But what makes this Fox News revelation so interesting is that it's not just another gay-skeleton-in-the-closet trick. Let's just say keep your eye on the first lady when *First Beard* gets its first hearing this month at Portland Center Stage's ninth annual JAW Playwrights Festival, a staged reading that will feature Jan Powell (*Live at the Rose Garden*) in the title role surrounded by three of Portland's hottest homo-thespians: suave Gary Norman (*Tango*), adorable Kurt Conroyd (*The Yellow Boat*) and rising star Ben Buckley (*Singin' in the Rain*).

"The story involves the big what-if of a gay presidency," says Zrebski, once Stark Raving Theatre's artistic director, who's been out since before he could vote, "but that's really just the context to discuss bigger issues of power and corruption—and the life of a woman who would choose to be his 'beard.'"

It's political theater personified, and Zrebski says he is prepared for backlash from Pollyannas unwilling to allow for a gay man who's more villainous than virtuous—in other words, a flawed human being who succumbs to a voracious hunger for power that ultimately transforms him into a man he never was. Like its author, *First Beard* seeks to spur conversation, invoke questions and encourage us to look below the surface of both far-fetched realities and day-to-day fantasies. It's just that kind of post-play chin-wagging that should be the evening's ultimate nightcap, says Zrebski, where inhibitions are loosened through intoxicating what-ifs.

JAW presents *First Beard* as one of 13 free public readings of new work for the stage—including three full-length plays by local writers and four curtain-raisers by area students—July 13 to 22 in Gerding Theater at the Armory, 128 N.W. 11th Ave. For a complete schedule visit www.pcs.org.

—Timothy Krause



LAKE OSWEGO PHOTOGRAPHERS

Lakewood Theatre Company stages *Noises Off* July 13-Aug. 19.

eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout eatingout

the press club

Eat the Crêpes, Drink the Wine, Read the Magazines...Repeat.
Lunch, Brunch, Dinner & More
2621 SE Clinton St. 233-5656

Quality Food & At Your Service
Comfortable Atmosphere

Everything's made from scratch including the ketchup!

Breakfast and Lunch

FRANCIS RESTAURANT

2338 NE Alberta
503-288-8299
www.francisrestaurant.com

WEST CAFE

simply inspired food

12th & Jefferson • 503.277.8189