

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.)

Back Door Theater presents 6 *Short Comedies* by Christopher Durang, the gay playwright of "For Whom the Southern Belle Tolls" and "Desire, Desire, Desire," hot summer parodies of hot summer Tennessee Williams classics, through July 28. (9 pm Thursday-Saturday, 4319 SE Hawthorne Blvd. \$6-\$8 from 971-275-7004.)

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

Broadway Rose Theatre Company presents *No Way to Treat a Lady*, a musical-comedy thriller about a publicity-crazed actor turned killer who'll go to any lengths to get a *New York Times* review, Aug. 3-19 at Deb Fennell Auditorium in Tigard. (Call for times. 9000 SW Durham Road. \$19-\$26 from 503-620-5262.)

Conduit Dance presents Alenka Loesch's *Into the Dark Unknown: Dream of a Blue Girl*, a collaboration with queer neo-folkie Holcombe Waller, and Michael Sakamoto's solo work fusing Eastern and Western influences, historical depth, absurd humor and intense, minimalist imagery July 28 and 29. (8 pm. 918 SW Yamhill Ave. #401. \$13-\$15.)

Conduit Dance presents the West Coast debut of Gerald Casel Dance with *The Scheme of Things*, a collection of three contemporary pieces from the award-winning former Stephen Petronio dancer, Aug. 3 and 4. (8 pm. 918 SW Yamhill Ave. #401. \$13-\$15 from 503-221-5857.)

Home Planet Productions presents *Almost, Maine*, a "charming midwinter night's dream" about a small, mythical town where residents are falling in and out of love at an alarming rate, through Aug. 12 at CoHo Theater. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday, 2257 NW Raleigh St. \$10-\$15 from 888-287-6318.)

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

Masque Alfresco presents a free performance of *The Misanthrope*, Molière's social satire updated for modern audiences, July 27-29 on the Beaverton Library lawn. (6:30 pm. 12375 SW Fifth St.)

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, through July 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* through July 28 at Washington Park Amphitheatre. (6:30 pm Tuesday-Sunday, 400 SW Kingston Blvd.)

Northwest Classical Theatre Company presents a free production of William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* July 28-Aug. 11 at Terry Schrunk Federal Plaza and Aug. 18 at Willamette Park in West Linn. (3 pm Saturday. For directions visit www.nwctc.org.)

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. For directions visit www.portlandactors.com.)

Portland Actors Ensemble presents a free production of William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* July 28-Sept. 3 at a different park each weekend. (3 pm Saturday and Sunday, 3 pm Sept. 3. For locations 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 through July 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 revives *Mamma Mia!*—the hit musical based on the songs of Abba—July 25-29 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$28-\$73 from Ticketmaster.)

Portland State University presents *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett's absurdist slapstick comedy about two tramps' existential dilemma while waiting for a mysterious man who might never come, through July 29 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Wednesday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday, 3430 SE Belmont St. \$1.)

Sowolu Theater presents *The Hero*, a haunting tale of a soldier's final battle with his demons, July 26-28 at Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center. (8 pm. 5340 N Interstate Ave. \$10-\$12 from 503-730-9066.)

Theater Theatre presents the premiere of lesbian playwright (and recent Portland State University graduate) A.R. Jackson's *Lipstick and Other Cosmetics*, a spoken word/performance art piece that includes songs and monologues to describe the journey of female sexuality in today's society, Aug. 1-4. (8 pm. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$7-\$10 from 971-235-4550.)

The Tragedies present *...And the Horse You Rode in On!*—a sketch show that parodies everything from serial killers and MySpace to caveman politics and big pharmaceutical companies—through Aug. 5 at Crimson Theater. (8 pm Friday and Saturday, 700 NE Dekum St. \$10 from 503-367-2100.)



Myshkin's Ruby Warblers raise environmental awareness Aug. 3 at the *Aladdin*.



Broadway Rose Theatre stages a musical revue about Cole Porter through July 29.

Get a Kick Out of Cole

Cole Porter was my first. Fresh out of college and green as a soybean, I left my naive farmboy past behind to set sail into the sea of professional theater as a stagehand on a summer-stock production of this American composer's naughty nautical. Eight shows a week, I was pushing scenery on and off stage, helping chorus boys in and out of costume, and quickly coming of age: The minute I heard "Blow, Gabriel, Blow," I knew *Anything Goes* indeed.

Night and day, Cole's bubbly urbanity was so easy to love. His early 20th twang was delightful, delicious and, yes, even de-lovely. Moreover, his craft exemplified the essence of musical theater: "Words and music must be so inseparably wedded to each other that they are like one."

But the maestro and I shared something else much more personal than appreciation for high Cs and tap-dancing sailors.

For at least parts of our lives, we both were to one degree or another "openly closeted," he in his international playboy Ivy League and me in my backwater hayseed hollow. We both knew tricks for putting up a front and dealing on the side. And I knew men like Cole (usually a generation my senior) who felt the pressure to wive in order to survive. But Cole's sexual variances were more or less public knowledge even before his glamorously guiltless marriage-of-convenience in 1919 to a socialite divorcée. From street to elite, the low-down was that Cole was more than not on the down-low, often amusing himself with love for sale and enough double-entendres to make everyone happy.

Will Porter's baggage survive the trip to the 'burbs when a musical revue of his life opens at Broadway Rose Theatre? Straight up in press release terms: "While the revue concentrates on Mr. Porter's professional life, his personal life is discussed, including his friendships and his marriage of 34 years to Linda Lee Thomas. His homosexuality is referred to and is treated as a matter of fact."

Which makes me personally a bit ambivalent: Surely, Cole's music is what should be treated as sensational, not his sexuality. But a biography that relegates this inseparable part of his life to mere incidence diminishes its artistic relevance and leaves Cole—not unlike many artists then and now—"openly closeted." The trick—as much now as it was then—will be to read between the lines.

Cole: A Musical Celebration of Cole Porter and His Music plays through July 29 at Tigard's Deb Fennell Auditorium, 9000 S.W. Durham Road. Tickets are \$19-\$26 from 503-620-5262 or www.broadwayrose.com.

—Timothy Krause

National Artist Auditions
semi-finalists

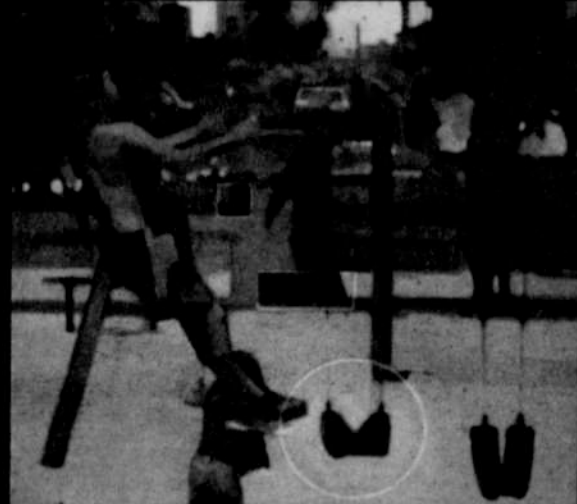
Show runs:
July 1st - 31st, 2007

Opening reception:
Friday, July 6th, 6-9 pm



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