

TBA:07

Time Out

Locals join in the festivities, too

With all the out-of-town talent flocking to Portland for TBA, let us not forget the hometown favorites who will also be gracing the stage for our most sophisticated contemporary arts festival.

First on the list is bearded elfin prodigy **Holcombe Waller**, who seems destined for the stars if he isn't among them already. Waller moved to Portland from San Francisco in January 2005 (of his former home he says, "Somehow that city never treated me right") and has been busy since. Within just the past two years he has self-released his third album, *Troubled Times*; taken part in raucous and raunchy Sissyboy shows; performed in Wade McCollum's *One: The Musical* and an experimental theater piece called *Tao Soup*; and performed his own theatrical multimedia show—the full title is *Mihael Sagalovesky and the Tragic Torments of Patty "Heart" Townes*—locally as well as in New York and Philadelphia.

When I spoke with this ambitious rising talent, he had just wrapped up a waterfront performance at The Bite of Oregon and was gearing up for three presentations at TBA titled *Into the Dark Unknown: The Hope Chest*. This evolving work, predicated on the need to find hope in hopeless situations, showcases 12 new songs from Waller's forthcoming album. Although grounded in his alluringly androgynous vocals, it considers movement, video, costume and character to be equally important ingredients of a musical composition. The show's themes, in the author's own words, include "love, loss and how to keep a perky attitude about it." And if you thought politics couldn't be sexy, check this: Additional highlights include "a striptease dance to a war protest song." Yes, please!

Next on our list of local lovelies is Mirah Yom Tov Zeityln, more simply known as **Mirah**. Now one of the leading ladies of the Northwest indie music scene, Mirah has released five albums on the tragically hip K Records label, beginning with 2000's *You Think It's Like This but Really It's Like This*. Born in Philadelphia, she moved to Olympia, Wash., at age 18 and attended Evergreen State College, further augmenting her Northwest-indie credentials. She is funny (when an interviewer asked several years ago, "What would you do if your music got really popular?" her first answer was, "I might try to do something about my hair") and prefers meeting in person to answering questions over the phone. She and her main musical collaborator, Phil Elverum of fellow K Records outfit The Microphones, have been described as "the Missy Elliott and Timbaland of independent rock."

Mirah has teamed with Lori Goldston and Kyle Hanson (formerly of Black Cat Orchestra, now of Spectratone International) to create a multimedia performance and song cycle called *Share This Place* for TBA. Conceptually based on insects, and partly inspired by the work of French entomologist and poet Jean-Henri Fabré, the original music will be set to stop-motion films by Seattle-based filmmaker Britta Johnson featur-

ing insects—created from corks, ashtrays, old balloons and other bits of domestic detritus—singing, hatching, rolling balls of dung and otherwise fulfilling their diminutive destinies.

Sarah Gottesdiener is another name that should be familiar to *Just Out* readers. (That's you.) She's here, she's queer (or, if not, she probably won't mind my saying so), and her band is called **The Gay Deceivers**. Urban lore has it that the band was formed after a 1986 dance competition in Hartford, Conn., where Gottesdiener tied with Haley Weiner for first place. "When me and [Haley] first laid eyes on each other 20 years ago, it was magic. It's almost like we're sisters." Of their music, Gottesdiener waxes poetic on the group's MySpace page: "These sounds are not for the uninitiated, so bend over, bitch."

For TBA 2007, The Gay Deceivers will play alongside Pash(ly) and Sarah Shapiro. For their performance, Gottesdiener and Weiner have rounded up a bevy of their sisters in the music community to engender a spiritual drum circle that they envision as a culturally healing experience. "One of our songs, 'Invocation,' is like a modern version of a drum circle, harkening back to second-wave feminism with its chants, rituals and spells," Gottesdiener says with palpable excitement. "The point of the circle is to end the war, for us to end the violence and heal."

We also love Michael Barber, creator of **10 Tiny Dances**, an ongoing conceptual dance piece that confines its performers to a 4-by-4-foot space. Barber stumbled onto the idea in 2002, when it struck him that such a confinement could actually enhance creativity by forcing performers to solve a problem. The first 10 *Tiny Dances* took place at the popular gay-owned bar Crush back when it was just one tiny room (now the smoking space). "It started as an idea for a fund-raiser, and when it was successful and the idea started to present itself, I decided to keep exploring it with different artists," Barber says. To date, more than 80 artists have taken part; the TBA 2007 performance will be the 14th example of how much kinetic energy can be contained within 16 square feet.

Barber has been dancing for nearly 25 years, including stints on Broadway. For the past 15 he's been a choreographer as well, splitting his time among the usual creative hot spots: New York, Seattle and Portland. Barber says the Rose City, as a center for contemporary dance, "kind of rocks. It's great as a performer because you have an avid audience that's smart and ready to be challenged." He's no stranger to TBA; in fact, except for 2005, 10 *Tiny Dances* has been part of the program every year since its inception. 10

HOLCOMBE WALLER performs 8:30 p.m. Sept. 13 to 15 at *Someday Lounge*, 125 N.W. Fifth Ave. Admission is \$7 for PICA members or \$10 for nonmembers.

TBA's late-night revue, *The Works*, presents MIRAH Sept. 9, THE GAY DECEIVERS Sept. 12 and 10 TINY DANCES Sept. 15. Shows start 10:30 p.m. at *Wonder Ballroom*, 128 N.E. Russell St. Admission is \$8 for PICA members or \$10 for nonmembers.



The Gay Deceivers are gathering a spiritual drum circle that they envision as a culturally healing experience.



Holcombe Waller's *Into the Dark Unknown* is predicated on the need to find hope in hopeless situations.



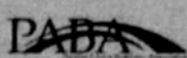
Mike Barber created 10 *Tiny Dances* to force performers to find creative solutions in a confined space.

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