

patriotism, the modern-day parallels of which are startling. "Never in my life, except in the past six years or so, has [nationalism] had such a personal impact on my personal life. Never has it mattered so much. It affects my day-to-day existence, from finances to quality of life."

For Cliff, Sally and Berliners at the dawn of the Third Reich, often what felt safe was sticking with what they knew up until the point when change was suddenly too late to stop. "It's about people dancing on the edge of a cliff and not quite falling over," Ebb has said about *Cabaret*, to which Lewis questions, "How do you know when you're standing on the edge of the cliff?"

For David Hampton, the real-life con man who inspired John Guare's play *Six Degrees of Separation*, the search for identity and belonging led him to persuade more than one Manhattan elite that he was the son of famous actor Sidney Poitier, shrewdly deceiving his way into not only their homes, but also their lifestyle.

Just as when Cliff meets Sally in *Cabaret*, a fascinating sequence of chance events tie Paul (Dennis Mosley)—black, gay, self-educated and poor—with the Kittredges (Karen Mason and David Bodin), wealthy WASPs in a cocoon overlooking Central Park. He shows up at their door claiming to have been mugged. Duped into believing Paul is a college classmate of their children, they invite him to stay the night until his father arrives the next morning. When the startling truth about their houseguest is revealed, the three begin what is described by Profile as a roundelay of acceptance and rejection, joy and fear and the degrees by which people connect and easily disconnect from others.

Mosley sees his character of Paul as an astute showman wrapped in his own imagination. That is



Playwright John Guare will attend opening night for Profile Theatre's *Six Degrees of Separation*.

partly what gets Paul off—spinning his knowledge, his cunning and his wit through an otherwise open, genuine candor. "If you truly believe something, you can make someone else believe it," says Mosley, adding some of his charm is being such a polar opposite from his prey. "He knows they view him as different, and there's a charge to that."

A charge, but with his own, strange yearning for connection, for which Ouisa Kittredge becomes Paul's open door to another world. In the play she says: "I read somewhere that everybody on this planet is separated by only six other people. Six degrees of separation: It's a profound thought." And following those seemingly impossible paths of connection can lead to a fascinating story, one in which truth is stranger than fiction. **JO**

*CABARET* plays through Nov. 4 in Gerding Theater at the Armory, 128 N.W. 11th Ave. For details call 503-445-3702 or visit [www.psc.org](http://www.psc.org).

*SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION* plays Oct. 13 to Nov. 11 at Theater Theatre, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. For details call 503-242-0080 or visit [www.profile.org](http://www.profile.org).

TIMOTHY KRAUSE is marketing director of Miracle Theatre Group.



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