

on stage

Artists Repertory Theatre presents gay playwright Tennessee Williams' timeless Pulitzer-winning masterpiece *A Streetcar Named Desire* through May 18. (Call for times. 1516 SW Alder St. \$20-\$47 from 503-241-1278.)

Artists Repertory Theatre presents gay playwright Alan Bennett's Tony Award winner *The History Boys*, which uses staff room rivalry and the anarchy of adolescence to provoke insistent questions about history and how you teach it, April 29-June 8. (Call for times. 1516 SW Alder St. \$20-\$47 from 503-241-1278.)

Barnaby King presents his one-man clown show *Flawed Genius*, a heart-achingly funny story of lost love and frustrated ambition, through April 25 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Thursday, 9:30 pm Friday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$8-\$12 from 646-673-3014.)

BodyVox presents the world premiere of *Horizontal Leanings*, a blend of energized dance, unexpected storytelling, original cinema and human comedy, including a performance by Third Angle New Music Ensemble, May 1-4 at Newmark Theatre. (Call for times. 1111 SW Broadway. \$12-\$40 from 503-229-0627.)

Defunkt Theatre presents playwright and Czech President Vaclav Havel's *The Garden Party*, a fast-paced farce in which language is a weapon for making it to the top of a bureaucratic nightmare, April 25-May 31 at Back Door Theater. (8 pm Thursday-Sunday. 4319 SE Hawthorne Blvd. \$10-\$15 from 503-481-2960; opening Friday and Saturday are free; Thursdays and Sundays are "pay what you will.")

Gallery Theater in McMinnville presents *Sordid Lives*, a comedy about a dysfunctional family in small-town Texas (including a grandson trying to find his identity in West Hollywood and a Tammy Wynette impersonator) preparing for the funeral of their matriarch, through April 19. (7:30 pm. 210 N Ford St. \$11-\$13 from 503-472-2227.)

Insight Out Theatre Collective presents *For Give*, inspired by William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in which several women find themselves face to face with their personal demons in the midst of a powerful storm, May 1-17 at Mississippi Ballroom. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm May 17. 833 N Shaver St. \$10-\$15 from 503-493-8070.)

Lakewood Theatre Company presents Tony Award winner *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, a murder mystery musical based on Charles Dickens' unfinished novel in which the audience will decide whodunit, May 2-June 8. (Call for times. 368 S State St., Lake Oswego. \$23-\$25 from 503-635-3901.)

Live on Stage presents the musical *The Wild Party*, a dark tale of lust and passion about a pair of jealous lovers throwing the party to end all parties, May 2-31 at World Trade Center Theatre. (8 pm Friday and Saturday. 121 SW Salmon St. \$30 at the door, \$27 in advance from 503-280-LIVE.)

Miracle Theatre presents *Oyá: Call the Storm*, a bilingual dance theater production

about a feminine warrior of the Afro-Cuban Yoruba tradition who controls destructive forces of nature, through April 26. (7:30 pm Thursday, 8 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 525 SE Stark St. \$15-\$20 from 503-236-7253.)

Nomadic Theatre Co presents *Running into Walls*, a poignant and raucously funny look at two eccentric friends whose daily lives are cast into disorder by a sudden encounter with mortality, through April 27 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Friday and Saturday, 3 pm Sunday and Sunday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$8-\$12 from 971-219-5781.)

Northwest Children's Theater presents *Sleeping Beauty*, a musical retelling of the classic fairy tale about an enchanted princess waiting for a handsome prince to save her with a kiss, May 2-25 at Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center. (Call for times. 1819 NW Everett St. \$10-\$20 from 503-222-4480.)

Northwest Classical Theatre Company presents condensed versions of William Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* and *Timon of Athens* through April 20 at Shoebox Theater. (7 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 2110 SE 10th Ave. \$12-\$18 from 971-244-3740.)

Oregon Ballet Theatre presents a tongue-in-cheek tribute to vaudeville and the enduring legacy of Broadway—including a revival of

gay choreographer Trey McIntyre's "Just"—through April 27 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$14-\$120 from 503-2-BALLET.)

Oslund + Co./Dance presents *Bête Perdue*, an original work whose strange beauty and sudden forces touch on belief and disenchantment in the everyday world, through April 20 at Imago Theatre. (8 pm. 17 SE Eighth Ave. \$14-\$16 from 503-234-3557.)

Pendulum Aerial Dance Theatre presents *Dawn*, inspired by the athleticism and idealism of its pre-professional youth company, the Pendulum Flyers, whose ambitions and dreams are focused toward the future, May 3 and 4 at French-American International School. (7:30 pm. 8600 NW Johnson Ave. \$15-\$25 from www.pendulumdance-theatre.org.)

Performance Works NorthWest presents *Cabaret Boris & Natasha*, a long-running arts salon of theater, dance and music featuring gender-bending video installations, May 3 and 4. (8 pm. 4625 SE 67th Ave. \$12-\$15 sliding scale.)

Portland Center for the Performing Arts presents *Too Much Coffee Man Opera: The Refill*, the world's first opera based on a comic book, about an idealistic hero's quest to win the affections of a barista, through April 20 at Brunish Hall. (Call for times. 1111 SW Broadway. \$23.75-\$28.75 from

box office or Ticketmaster.)

Portland Center Stage presents the world premiere of *Sometimes a Great Notion*, based on Oregon author Ken Kesey's wild and wooly portrait of an Oregon coastal logging community, extended through May 4 in Gerding Theater at the Armory. (Call for times. 128 NW 11th Ave. \$16.50-\$61.50 from 503-445-3700.)

Portland Center Stage presents gay playwright Douglas Carter Beane's *The Little Dog Laughed*, a social satire about a closeted young movie actor who wants to tell the world about his affair with a rent boy, April 29-June 15 in Gerding Theater at the Armory. (Call for times. 128 NW 11th Ave. \$16.50-\$43.50 from 503-445-3700.)

Theatre Uber Alles presents Cheeseburger Dinner Theatre's *Pinnocchio Exposed! The Blue Fairy Tells All!*—which adds in some karaoke and queer gender-bending to make up a new tale of a magical piece of wood learning the difference between good and bad—May 2-18 at East Portland Eagles Lodge. Followed by Portland Theatrical Society's cabaret with song, dance, comedy and underwear dancing. (7:30 pm Friday-Sunday. 4904 SE Hawthorne Blvd. \$5-\$7 from 503-285-6786.)

Theatre Vertigo presents *The Long Christmas Ride Home*, Pulitzer Prize winner Paula Vogel's "puppet play with actors" about a

troubled family of five careening near the edge of oblivion, through May 17 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$15 from 503-306-0870; Thursdays are "pay what you will.")

Third Rail Repertory presents the audacious comedy *Nobody Here but Us Chickens*, three short plays that look at disabilities and our perceptions with them, April 25-May 24 at Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 5340 N Interstate Ave. \$16-\$25 from 503-235-1101.)

Triangle Productions presents the Northwest premiere of *The J.A.P. Show*, in which three Jewish female comics salute the trail-blazing and treasured pioneers of comedy with their own zany stories and hilarious standup, extended through April 26 at CoHo Theatre. (Call for times. 2257 NW Raleigh St. \$18-\$23 from 503-239-5919.)

Vox: A Spoken-Word Chorus presents Portland's Actors Reading America's Poetry, including works by gay writers Allen Ginsburg and Walt Whitman, through April 26 at Waterbrook Studio. (8 pm Friday and Saturday. 2127 N Albina Ave. \$5-\$10 sliding scale.)

White Bird presents the West Coast debut of Holland's internationally renowned Scapino Ballet Rotterdam April 30 at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. (7:30 pm. 1037 SW Broadway. \$20-\$50 from box office or Ticketmaster.)

From Hallmark to Hell and Back

"It's difficult for me to be a son," reveals actor Gary Norman as he sits in 3 Friends Coffeehouse detailing remarkable similarities between his childhood and that of Stephen, the character he's rehearsing for Theatre Vertigo's production of the poetic ghost story *The Long Christmas Ride Home*.

The situation, he says, is all too familiar: divorced parents, alcohol and abuse...a distant family without much love. Like Stephen, he wasn't always sure how to handle the estrangement of his parents. And like Stephen's siblings, it was the loss of a brother that only recently led Norman to hope of reconciliation with members of his family. Onstage and off, he says there is, in the end, a sense of "absolute hope."

In the play, Pulitzer Prize winner Paula Vogel (*How I Learned to Drive*) spins a family of five out of control after an emotional Christmas Eve meltdown with the grandparents. From that precipice, time suddenly tips forward and—in an homage to her gay brother, Carl, who died of AIDS in 1988—Vogel shows how Stephen's ultimate separation continues to influence the other children's futures.

It's a free-flowing script known for commingling the austere integrity of American icon Thornton Wilder (*Our Town*) with the magical qualities of Japanese Noh theater. On a practically bare stage, for example, the three children are portrayed by Bunraku puppets, here created and manipulated in collaboration with Portland's Tears of Joy Theatre. With sticks at their elbows, hinged joints and heads that almost bobble, the puppets—each designed in the childhood likeness of its corresponding adult actor—bring innocence to the play's mature themes, including grief and neglect.



Children are portrayed by Bunraku puppets in *The Long Christmas Ride Home*.

"All the writing is so lyrical," says Norman, last seen onstage in Theatre Vertigo's *Where's My Money?* "It has a unique way of storytelling in which every person becomes a narrator."

The Long Christmas Ride Home runs through May 17 at Theater Theatre, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. Tickets are \$15 from 503-306-0870 or www.theatreverto.org; Thursdays are "pay what you will."

—Timothy Krause

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