

on stage

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, through June 8. (Call for times. 1516 SW Alder St. \$20-\$47 from 503-241-1278.)

CoHo Productions and Cygnet Productions present the one-woman show *9 Parts of Desire*, a conversation across time and space among women of Iraqi heritage, through June 14. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 2257 NW Raleigh St. \$20-\$23 from 503-220-2646.)

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, through May 31 at Back Door Theater. (8 pm. 4319 SE Hawthorne Blvd. \$10-\$15 from 503-481-2960.)

Do Jump revives *iEntusiasmo!*—the true story of Gaviotas, a Colombian village that is an exemplar of sustainable culture—through May 31 at Newmark Theatre. (Call for times. 1111 SW Broadway. \$25-\$35 from 503-231-1232.)

Fever Theater presents *New Believers*, a look at the philosophy of belief, the ethics of belief and the different kinds of relationships that humans have with belief, June 12-July 5 at The Casket. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday. 403 NW Fifth Ave. \$10-\$15 sliding scale from 503-381-6814; Thursdays are "pay what you can.")

Hand2Mouth Theatre presents *From a Dream to a Dream*, which explores the "in between" time when we are neither awake nor asleep, through June 8 at Artists Repertory Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 1515 SW Morrison St. \$12-\$18 sliding scale from Brown Paper Tickets.)

Imago Theatre presents the premiere of *The Dinner*, in which unexpected guests crash a party for an unnamed "famous writer," through June 14. (7:30 pm Thursday, 8 pm Friday and Saturday. 17 SE Eighth Ave. \$18-\$22 from TicketsWest.)

Integrity Productions presents *Eloise & Ray*, a lyrical, bittersweet tale about a 16-year-old girl who figures out who she is and where she stands in the scheme of things, through June 28 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 4 pm Sunday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$15 from 503-286-3456; Thursdays are "pay what you will.")

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, through 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, through May 31 at World Trade Center Theatre. (8 pm. 121 SW Salmon St. \$30 at the door, \$27 in advance from 503-280-LIVE.)

Miracle Theatre presents the world pre-

miere of *The Labyrinth of Desire*, a who's who comedy of romantic intrigue that explores the delightful and essential mystery of love, through May 31. (7:30 pm. 525 SE Stark St. \$15-\$20 from 503-236-7253.)

Miracle Theatre presents *iGaytino!*—a one-man show about Chicano history and the gay experience—June 6 and 7. (8 pm. 525 SE Stark St. \$22-\$28 from 503-236-7253.)

Northwest Classical Theatre Company presents *Much Ado About Nothing*, William Shakespeare's comedic masterpiece on the war between men and women, through June 16 at Shoe Box Theater. (7 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 2110 SE 10th Ave. \$12-\$18 from 971-244-3740.)

Oregon Ballet Theatre concludes its Grand Tour season with a Russia program—including "Tolstoy's Waltz," a new ballet by gay choreographer Christopher Stowell set to the music of such unlikely composers as author Leo Tolstoy and choreographer George Balanchine—June 6-8 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$14-\$120 from 503-2-BALLET.)

Portland Ballet presents its spring program—including "Reverie du Soir," a tribute to lesbian modern dance pioneer Loie Fuller—June 6 and 7. (7:30 pm. 6250 SW Capitol Highway. \$35 at the door, \$25 in advance from 503-452-8448 or Brown Paper Tickets.)

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,



A nun has her suspicions about a charming new priest in *Doubt* through June 15 at Portland Center Stage.

through June 15 in Gerding Theater at the Armory. (Call for times. 128 NW 11th Ave. \$16.50-\$43.50 from 503-445-3700.)

Portland Center Stage presents Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winner *Doubt*, a provocative play about a by-the-book nun accusing a laid-back priest of inappropriate behavior toward a student, through June 15 in Gerding Theater at the Armory. (Call for times. 128 NW 11th Ave. \$16.50-\$43.50 from 503-445-3700.)

Portland Opera's Broadway Across America presents *High School Musical*, a *Romeo and Juliet* comedy in which peers exert more pressure than parents, through June 1 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$23-\$68 from box office or Ticketmaster.)

Portland State University presents Tony Award winner *Dancing at Lughnasa*, in which five unmarried Irish sisters reacquaint

themselves with their priest brother returning home from 25 years as a missionary in Africa, through May 31 at Lincoln Hall. (7:30 pm. 1620 SW Park Ave. \$3.50-\$9.50 from 503-725-3307.)

Profile Theatre Project concludes its John Guare season with *The House of Blue Leaves*, an antic farce that posits that the family home and the mental institution are more alike than we might think, through June 15 at Theater Theatre. (Call for times. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$10-\$28 from 503-242-0080.)

Stumptown Stages presents *The Last Five Years*, a compelling musical about a nice Jewish boy and a good Irish Catholic girl who fall in love, get married and grow apart, through June 28 at Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center. (8 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 5340 N Interstate Ave. \$25-\$27 from 503-381-8686.)

Questionable Year for Queers

Another local theater season is coming to its dramatic conclusion, with all but the fanfare of an awards ceremony remaining. But how have sexual minorities been reflected onstage this season? Good question.

In *As Is*, Key Productions rediscovered relevance of a milestone-drama-turned-period-play about two partners dealing with the onset of AIDS. HIV also redirected the lives of a gay son and dysfunctional family in Theatre Vertigo's sad but hopeful production of *The Long Christmas Ride Home*. And Sowelu's *Streamers* reignited tension over close-quartered diversity as if it were today's headlines.

Just as sobering as these "how far we've come, how far we have to go" dramas were the "the more things change, the more they stay the same" comedies.

For example, Renaissance romantics of Portland Center Stage's *The Beard of Avon* and *Twelfth Night*, as well as bittersweet endings to Miracle Theatre's *The Labyrinth of Desire*, engendered affections as if they were flaky flings from Craigslist, while PCS' omnisequal *Cabaret* tentatively revisited hedonistic escape from war. Also at the Armory (where PCS is arguably the contender for gayest season in town), *The Little Dog Laughed* reminded us that even in 2008 some guys still find it hard to own up to their identity while rumors of being gay still have power to threaten queers and careers.

Then there were the potentially more interesting antagonists, such as the dubious impostor in



Could Portland Center Stage—the theater with perhaps the gayest season in town—walk home with both a durable Drammy Award and a shiny new PAMTA statuette for its omnisequal production of *Cabaret*?

Profile Theatre's *Six Degrees of Separation*, the dabbling priest/therapist in Third Rail Rep's *Shining City* and diddling academics of *The History Boys* at Artists Rep. We're not all angels by any means, but were these questionable characters really as thought-provoking as they were provocative? With few exceptions (Action Adventure's intrepid *Fall of the House 2*, for example), queer theater this season seemed unsettling. Or, perhaps, unsettled.

But in the accolade business, the biggest question may be what to make of a cryptic announcement of Portland Area Musical Theater Awards promising prizes for excellence in every gay man's favorite genre. Unlike the Drammy Awards, however, unspecified judges from outside the industry (unknown even to each other) vote by secret ballot without deliberation. Some assert that this vets conflict of interest and bias, while others have reservations about credibility when even the organizer is unidentified. In the end, the question might be moot, as insiders at three of the region's largest producers of musical theater report they had been unaware of the event.

The 29th annual Drammy Awards ceremony begins 6 p.m. June 9 at Crystal Ballroom, 1332 W. Burnside St. For details visit www.drammy.info.

The Portland Area Musical Theater Awards ceremony begins 7 p.m. June 23 at Winningstad Theatre, 1111 S.W. Broadway. For details visit www.puflet.com/pamta/pamta.html.

—Timothy Krause

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