

on stage

Artists Repertory Theatre presents *Blackbird*, a powerful drama in which a man is confronted by the woman he seduced when she was 12, radically changing both their lives, Sept. 2-Oct. 12. (Call for times. 1516 SW Alder St. \$20-\$47 from 503-241-1278.)

Arts Equity presents *21A*, in which one man plays all eight of the people on a Minneapolis bus, extended through Aug. 30 at Theater Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 3430 SE Belmont St. \$20 from 360-695-3770.)

Blue Monkey Theater Co. revives *Disney High School Musical on Stage* through Aug. 31 at Hinson Annex. (7 pm Friday and Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 1315 SE 20th Ave. \$16-\$20 from 503-593-2466.)

Broadway Rose Theatre Company presents *Nite Club Confidential*, a stylish musical comedy spoof that crosses *Sunset Blvd.* with an evening at the Copacabana and mixes in a lot of camp, through Aug. 17 at Deb Fennell Auditorium in Tigard. (Call for times. 9000 SW Durham Road. \$20-\$30 from 503-620-5262.)

Classic Greek Theatre of Oregon presents *Antigone*, Sophocles' unflinching indictment of human obstinacy, Sept. 6-28 at Reed College's Cerf Amphitheatre. (Call for times. 3203 SE Woodstock Blvd. \$10-\$20 from 503-258-9313.)

CoHo Productions presents *The 24-Hour Plays*—in which 30 actors and four writers are locked into CoHo Theater for 24 hours to cast, direct and

perform four original one-acts—Aug. 23. (8 pm. 2257 NW Raleigh St. \$20 from 503-220-2646.)

David Mamet School for Boys presents *Dutchman*, a symbolic Adam and Eve story in which a white seductress murders a black man, through Aug. 23 at Shoe Box Theatre. (10:30 pm Wednesday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 2110 SE 10th Ave. \$10 from 503-781-2156.)

Hand2Mouth Theatre presents *Project X: You Are Here*—filled with stories, testimonies and myths about life, legacy and immortality—through Aug. 24 at Milepost 5. (Call for times. 900 NE 81st Ave. \$6 from 503-235-5284.)

Lakewood Theatre Company presents the Oregon premiere of a fresh, fast-paced and funny adaptation of *The Three Musketeers* through Aug. 24. (Call for times. 368 S State St., Lake Oswego. \$26-\$28 from 503-635-3901.)

Northwest Professional Dance Project presents its fifth annual *Showing by Dance Makers*, including a world premiere by beloved choreographer and living legend Donald McKayle, through Aug. 16 at Portland State University's Lincoln Hall. (8 pm. 1620 SW Park Ave. \$28 at the door, \$25 in advance from 503-828-8285.)

Performance Works NorthWest presents its sixth annual *Richard Foreman Mini-Festival*, in which a scintillating array of performers (including queer performance artist Kajanne Pepper) create a piece in 10 days adapted from the avant-garde

writer/director's online notebooks, through Aug. 16. (8:30 pm. 4625 SE 67th Ave. \$15-\$50 sliding scale from 503-777-1907.)

Portland Actors Ensemble presents the second of its two Shakespeare in the Park productions, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, through Sept. 1 at a different park each weekend. (3 pm Saturday and Sunday. For directions visit www.portlandactors.org.)

Portland Ballet presents *Masters Workshop Performance*, the culmination of a 12-day advanced workshop taught by three world-renowned luminaries, Aug. 23 at Portland State University's Lincoln Hall. (7:30 pm. 1620 SW Park Ave. \$10-\$15 from 503-725-3307.)

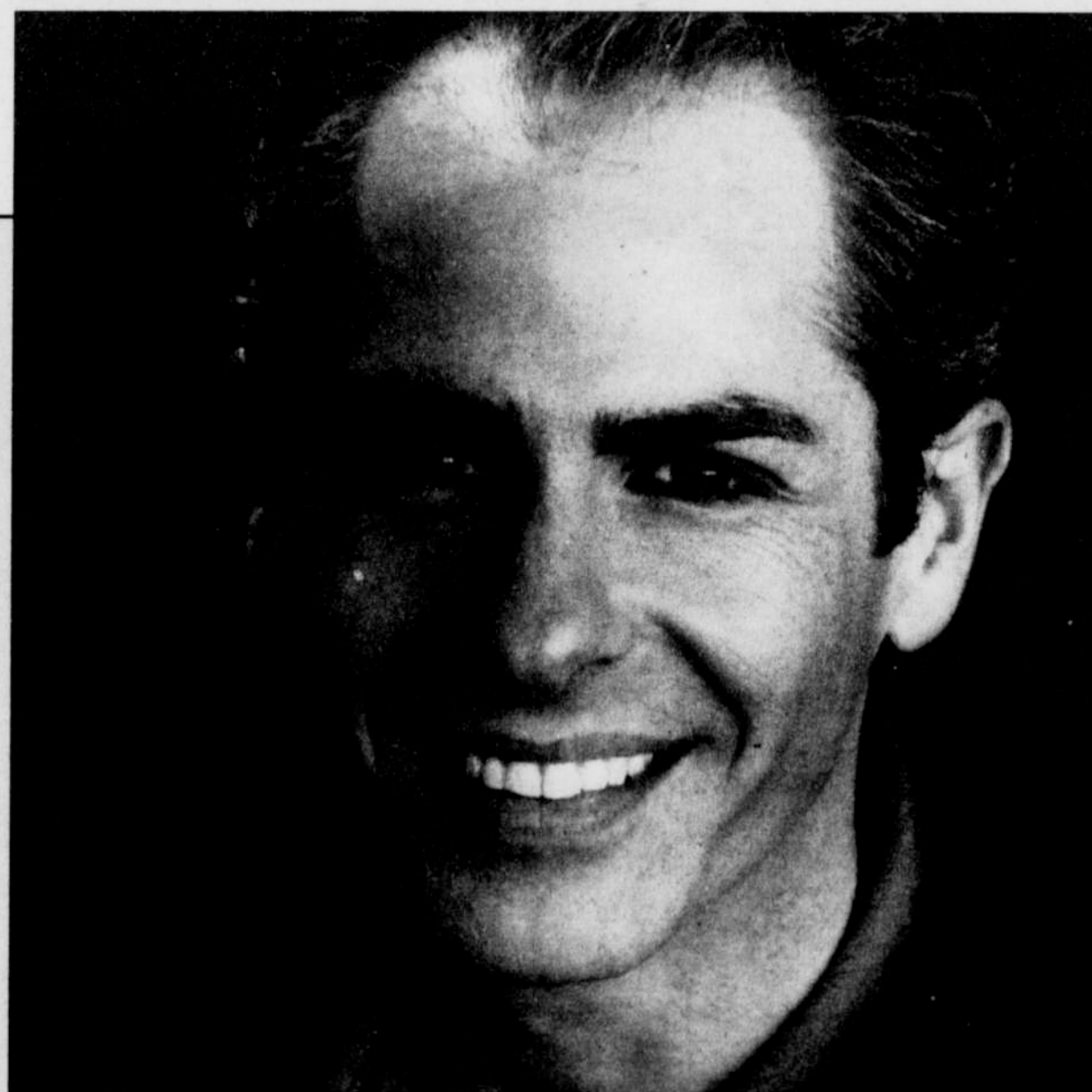
Portland Ensemble Theatre Company presents *Pylon*, in which three men look back six years and wrestle with how a girl turned their friendship upside down, through Aug. 31 at Firehouse Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday, 2 pm Sunday. 1436 SW Montgomery St. \$12-\$15 from www.portlandetc.org.)

Portland Opera's Broadway Across America presents Andrew Lloyd Webber's award-winning *The Phantom of the Opera*, the longest-running show in Broadway history, through Sept. 7 at Keller Auditorium. (Call for times. 222 SW Clay St. \$23-\$73 from box office or Ticketmaster.)

Third Eye Theatre presents *Cannibal! The Musical*, based on the cult film by *South Park* creator Trey Parker about the only person convicted of cannibalism in the United States, through Aug. 23 at Back Door Theatre. (8 pm Thursday-Saturday. 4319 SE Hawthorne Blvd. \$15 from 503-970-8874.)



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Gay actor Michael Mendelson will appear in gay playwright Marc Acito's *Holidazed*, among other shows this season at Artists Repertory Theatre.

Artists Rep Forms Ensemble Company

Michael Mendelson feels things very deeply. He says plenty of smart things over his healthy scramble on a Sunday morning: about the new ensemble company he will be a part of at **Artists Repertory Theatre**, the significance of Artists Rep "opening itself up to the community conversation" with this decision and how Portland is "moving toward becoming the large city it thinks it is."

But the moments that stick with you are the times when the membrane between Mendelson's interior life and the external world turns to wet tissue paper. Discussing how much he values teaching, his eyes redden and swell instantaneously, and his normally ultrasharp gray eyes fog over. When he regains himself, his pupils pull into a vertigo-inducing focus and the intensity of his gaze pours from him once again. This "human face," as he puts it, that the ensemble will provide for Artists Rep, will be...Mendelson's.

The gym-sculpted 45-year-old is a full-time empath, both as professional actor and Meisner Technique teacher at the Interstate Firehouse

Cultural Center. Already a well-known actor in Portland throughout the '90s, Mendelson's four years of study in New York City led to the teaching career he now treasures.

This year, Mendelson will appear in *Eurydice*, *Holidazed* and *Three Sisters*. For Artists Rep, this marks the second time since 1982 that the theater has employed a roster of actors who will appear throughout the season. Additional roles in Artists Rep shows will be cast on a project-by-project basis. Artistic director **Allen Nause** plans to grow the resident acting company to eight actors who will play most of the principal roles during each season, and the theater plans to eventually incorporate designers and playwrights into the ensemble.

The move is a bold one, given that the repertory model has all but died out in theater nationwide. But for Mendelson, it is even more than that. "We're now part of the creative counsel. We'll read scripts, give input on how to grow the institution. We're not just jobbed in." It's the kind of commitment that can make an actor weep.

—Jessica Wallenfels

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