

## theater

## Let's Talk About Sex

Portland thespians explore open relationships, female fantasies

## Like Sand Through the Hourglass...

For the purposes of brevity, *Fall of the House* can be described as a "late-night hipster soap opera," but it's so much more than that.

Just Out theater critic Timothy Krause has called it "one of the most exciting, refreshing and damn funny things happening on Portland stages." Under the guidance of director Tamara Carroll, each "season" of *House* runs for four consecutive weekends, with a new "episode" presented each week. What makes it different—besides the consistently topical content, realistic characters and witty banter—is that it's mostly improvised.

"Tamara...is willing to let us experiment, shape and create our characters and their involvement with the other characters. Then she and her magic writers come up with a simple structure of plot points that need to be covered," says Bobby Ryan, who is joining the cast this season with his husband, Tyler.

The actors, who have been together for five years, recently relocated to Portland from Boulder, Colo. When Bobby bought tickets to a performance of *House* last season, Tyler admits neither knew exactly what to expect.

"I found myself at the edge of my seat, holding my breath often," he says. "There's something so exhilarating about watching performers improvise—

it's not so safe! The scene can go any which way, like harnessing the wild energy of a madman."

The Ryans will be portraying a couple who are in an open relationship: Trigg likes to occasionally date women, and Jacob prefers to date other men. Their relationship is introduced to contrast with Sam and Betsey, a lesbian couple who are also entering into an open relationship because Betsey wants to explore being with men again. Meanwhile, another character named Addison, who was just discovering his sexuality last season, decides that he would like to continue dating men.

This isn't the first time the Ryans have portrayed a fictional gay couple together: They starred in and directed *Beautiful Day*, an award-winning play written by Bobby for the Boulder International Fringe Festival. This time around, he reveals, they're definitely pushing their boundaries.

"It has been a very intimate process for me, and at times it becomes difficult to see where the line is between fiction and nonfiction," Bobby says. "This is exactly why I am fascinated."

Action/Adventure Theatre presents *Fall of the House* (Season 4) Jan. 29 to Feb. 22 at Theater Theatre, 3430 S.E. Belmont St. Tickets are \$12 from 503-425-9176.

—Jim Radosta

## Between the Sheets

Inviting Desire:  
A Theatrical Aphrodisiac

is a collaboration by an ensemble of actresses that explores the terrain of sexual fantasy.

With a deep résumé in theater and a keen interest in the study of human sexuality, Eleanor O'Brien took a summer workshop about creating new theater from a central idea and got really excited about directing a piece that could bring all of her talents together.

"I put out an audition notice for women to do a piece [about sexual fantasy] from one of the Nancy Friday books or to write one of their own," she says. "I was really surprised by the number of people who auditioned and blown away by what they did. Most wrote their own pieces; it was a really exciting experience."

The show's cast of seven actresses, including O'Brien, have spent the past couple of months generating material and putting it together for a show of primarily monologues but also some group scenes.

"There are no cliché fantasies like getting pulled over by a cop," says O'Brien. "They're honest. Lots of different and sometimes hard themes come up."

There's a wide variety of experience repre-



Inviting Desire covers a wide variety of women's sexuality, including lesbian and bi content.

sented in the show, including lesbian and bisexual content.

"Other people don't have the same fantasies I do," says O'Brien. "We honored all persuasions. I think it was Susie Bright that talked about there being a downside to privacy about sexuality—the whole 'I don't want to know what they do in the bedroom' thing. They said that about gay people. Private sexuality is really limiting."

To allow for dialogue between the actresses and the audience, a talkback will follow each show.

"The show is not for everyone. We hope to foster an openness and a gentleness and a lack of judgment for others' sexuality," says O'Brien. "There's a lot of taboo, but the show is surprisingly sweet and intimate."

Inviting Desire, a part of the citywide new works festival Fertile Ground, runs through Feb. 1 at Temple Alexandria, 602 N.E. Prescott St. Tickets for this 18-and-older show are \$20 from PDX Ticket Network.

—Kristin Steele (JO)

Portland Gay Men's Chorus  
Presents  
**Venus Eclipsed...**  
Adults Only Show

Sun, Feb. 8, 2009 6pm  
Kaul Auditorium, Reed College

Comedy will be in orbit with campy, irreverent, and "Adults Only" fun in PGMC's much anticipated evening cabaret, **Venus Eclipsed...** This cosmic event is full of bawdy humor and adult situations, so leave the kids behind and experience a night of poor taste and gut splitting laughter for this inelegant evening of crass.

Tickets \$35, \$30 and \$25  
available at [pdxgmc.org](http://pdxgmc.org)  
or call 503-226-2588

Student, Senior,  
Group Discounts Available -  
Call 503-226-2588



Our Season Sponsors

PortlandTribune

justout  
newsmagazine

### Beat the Winter Blues at Hip Chicks Do Wine

Those winter blues getting you down? Come on down to the winery for a little wine, appetizers and music. The FABULOUS Beth Willis will be performing 6pm-9pm. Admission is \$15 and includes a tasting flight of 6 wines, appetizers and live music. The event is held at our Portland Winery and Tasting room located at 4510 SE 23rd Avenue, Portland, OR 97202. For more information, call 503-234-3790.

HIP CHICKS DO WINE, NEWBERG TASTING ROOM  
602B E. First Street • Historic Downtown Newberg  
Open Daily 12 noon-7 pm • 503-554-5800

4510 se 23rd ave. portland • 503-234-3790

[www.hipchicksdowine.com](http://www.hipchicksdowine.com)

(see our website for directions & events)

## JUST IN TIME FOR VALENTINE'S DAY!

### SAME-SEX COUPLES WORKSHOP Make Your Relationship Styles Work for You

Saturday, February 7th  
at McMenamins Kennedy School

For information and preregistration:  
[www.GLBTCounseling.com](http://www.GLBTCounseling.com)  
(503) 227-5278

Sponsored by Emmeagram Portland