

umphs, and me, imagining myself to be one of his friends.”

Malán began to realize how similar these letters were to the stories of some of the working professionals she had interviewed for *American Sueño*.

“Since 1930, not that much had changed in the world of working professionals who live a closeted life, always working to be ‘normal,’” says Malán.

Portland-based actor/musician Rory Stitt plays Lorca. Though he wasn't very familiar with Lorca's work prior to auditioning for the role, his own life as a young gay artist has helped inform the characterization.

“I think I was drawn to the idea of portraying an artist because it is something I felt I could do truthfully and with integrity,” explains Stitt. “As I read Lorca's work, I found a fascinating character full of conflict, passion, darkness and a deep love for the beauty of the natural world. His poems are hot-blooded, articulate, lonely and revelatory. The chance to try and bring the voice behind the words to life excited me.”

Director and sound designer Matthew Zrebski—himself an accomplished playwright and composer, in his first collaboration with Teatro Milagro—says he'd always admired Lorca's rhythmic language and his place in the world of surrealism. Still, and like Stitt, he admits that prior to this project, he had little knowledge of Lorca's life.

“Having the chance to explore that was incredibly appealing,” relates Zrebski. “Rather than approach the project as a biopic with a straight-forward narrative, Dañel Malán has crafted a piece that attempts to project Lorca's mental state onto the stage through the use of highly theatrical moments. In this way the play has moments of naturalism and then—often quite suddenly—the characters are propelled into a dream world with dream logic, sometimes nightmarishly so. It's a wild ride.”

Malán—who also portrays six different

women, a butterfly and a cat in the play—found parallels between herself and Lorca and utilized those to mold *Duende* into a much more personal creation.

“Because of the work I have been doing with the LGBTQ community, I found Lorca's life so compelling and tragic,” says Malán. “That's when I realized I was on the right path in telling his story.”

With a cast of just four actors rehearsing since early December, the creation of this new piece of theater has proven a bonding experience for the crew.

“The cast is both excited and nervous—as is every cast at this point!” exclaims Zrebski. “Premieres are always tricky; you are literally offering the audience something no one has seen. It's a huge obligation. But that obligation and responsibility is also a privilege.”

“There is a genuine excitement to be creating a new work together,” says Stitt. “The sense of ensemble is intimate and tight, which I think will be perfect to take on the road.”

Summing up the play would be impossible seeing as how it's never been staged. But who better to attempt to convey the essence of the production than its lead actor?

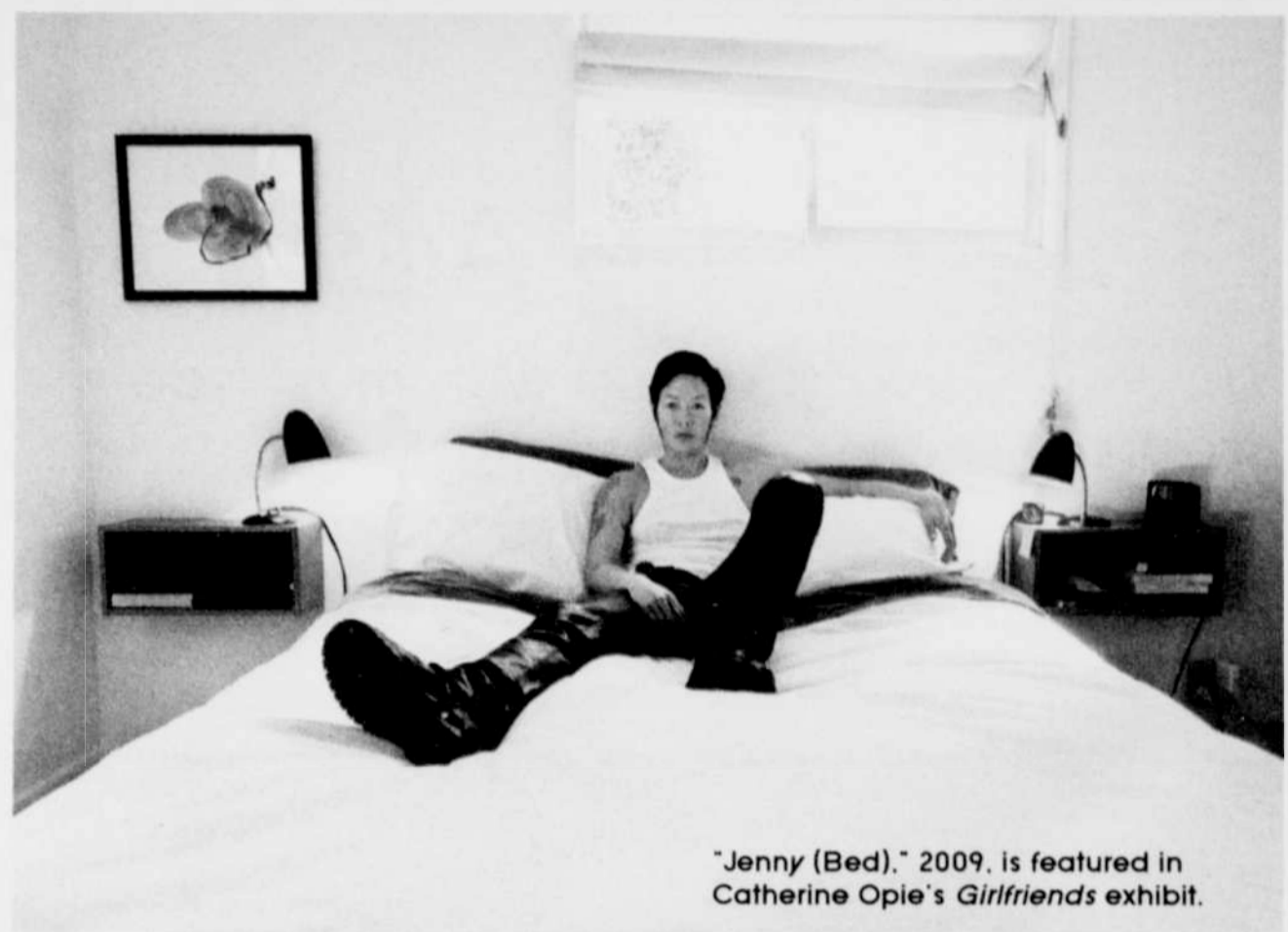
“I think ultimately the play is about identity and the struggle to communicate with others,” muses Stitt. “Lorca certainly struggled with his sexuality and identity as an artist and spent his life finding ways to express that conflict. In the end, you only have yourself, and I think this play tries to illuminate the importance of expressing who and what you are to the world.”

“There is only one of you. Share it.”

DUENDE DE LORCA opens Fri., Jan. 14 at 8 p.m. at 525 SE Stark St. and includes a complimentary post-play reception catered by Pata Negra restaurant. The play runs through Jan. 22. Tickets, \$12-\$23, may be purchased by calling 503-236-7253 or online at milagro.org.

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—MATTHEW ZREBSKI, DIRECTOR



“Jenny (Bed).” 2009. is featured in Catherine Opie's *Girlfriends* exhibit.

Opie's Butch Opus

A Q&A with renowned queer photographer Catherine Opie

BY WAYNE BUND

Lesbian royalty is about to grace Portland. Catherine Opie, world-famous photographer known for intimate portraits of individuals in the LGBT and S/M communities, has an exhibit, *Girlfriends*, at the Portland Art Museum on view until February 6. Opie pays a visit to Portland Thursday, January 27 to discuss her work (6 p.m., PAM's Mark Building, 1219 SW Park Ave.).

As one of America's most formidable photographers, she has turned her lens from portraits of the queer community to quiet Gerhard Richter-inspired landscapes to social documentation of high school football players and an upcoming book of street photography documenting President Obama's inauguration.

Just Out caught up with Opie via telephone on a cold December morning a few days before the new year. What follows is an edited version of that almost hour-long conversation; visit blogout.justout.com for a complete transcript.

Just Out: When did you start taking photographs?

Opie: When I was 9, actually.

Just Out: What kind of camera did you use?

Opie: It was a Kodak camera my dad got me. I proceeded to photograph everything in my neighborhood and all of my friends—pretty much the work that I do now. It's kind of ironic, it's become more sophisticated. I was very serious about it. I wrote a book report on Lewis Hine. I announced to my parents that I wanted to be a social documentarian. So they did that, they got me a camera for my ninth birthday. I pretty much never put it down.

Just Out: How did studying in San Francisco, and then eventually Los Angeles, influence your work?

Opie: San Francisco was perfect in the '80s. It was amazing to be there. I got to come out.



Acadia
1303 n.e. fremont
portland, or 97212
ph: 503.249.5001
www.creolapdx.com