

BY AIMEE GENTER

In Theater...

In the land of current runs, the "little theater that could," Portland Playhouse, has extended its production of August Wilson's **Ma Rainey's Black Bottom**—and with good reason. Audiences have been cramming into the tiny church-turned-theater since opening night. (Through May 29, Portland Playhouse, 602 NE Prescott, \$20-\$25, 503-205-0715, portlandplayhouse.org). **The Cherry Orchard**, a Chekhov adaptation with modern implications, continues to run over at Artists Rep, (Through May 22, Artists Repertory Theatre, 1515 SW Morrison, \$20-\$42, 503-241-1278, artistsrep.org), while [title of show] (no, really, that is the title of the show) keeps it sassy (Through May 29, The Sanctuary@Sandy Plaza, 1785 NE Sandy, \$15-\$35, 503-239-5919, tripro.org).

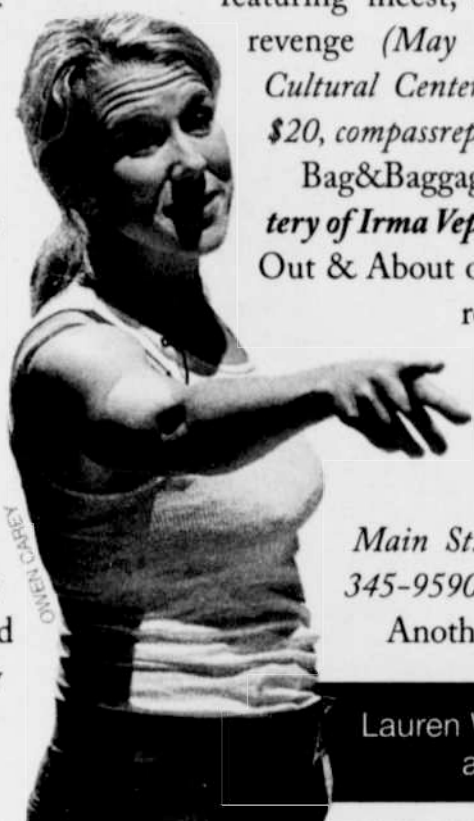
As for new openings, Portland Center Stage's production of **BUST**, a one-woman show featuring former *Daily Show* faux correspondent (and total lesbian-bait) Lauren Weedman has opened to rave reviews. And while Weedman has often been praised for her funnilydness, the story behind **BUST** packs a surprisingly powerful punch (Through June 19,

Portland Center Stage, 128 NW 11th, \$20-\$50, 503-445-3700, pcs.org).

On May 6, Milagro opens yet another dazzlingly original, bilingual production with **Lazarillo**, the story of a young beggar forced to lie, cheat and steal to survive. An interpretation of a classic novel, **Lazarillo** integrates hip-hop, circus and comedy in a night suitable for all ages (May 6-28, The Milagro Theatre, 425 SE Sixth, \$16-\$25, 503-236-7253, milagro.org). Opening the same weekend is **'Tis Pity She's a Whore**, Compass Repertory's adaptation of a controversial 17th century piece featuring incest, subterfuge and semisweet revenge (May 6-29, Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate, \$15-\$20, compassrep.org).

Bag&Baggage's production of **The Mystery of Irma Vep** opens a week later. Turn to Out & About on p. 25 for more about director Patrick Spike's production of the Charles Ludlam "tour de farce." May 11-29, Bag&Baggage, 253 E. Main St., Hillsboro, \$12-\$23, 503-345-9590, bagnbaggage.org).

Another May 11 opening is Pro-



Lauren Weedman stars in **BUST** at Portland Center Stage

file Theatre's ghostly and comedic **Fortinbras**, beginning where Shakespeare's *Hamlet* left off. At a time when Prince Fortinbras is determined to rewrite history, how will the truth unfold? (May 11-June 5, Theater! Theatre, 3430 SE Belmont, \$12-\$28, 503-242-0080, profiletheatre.org)

CoHo opens **Reasons to Be Pretty** on May 13, a drama described as "a love story about the impossibility of love." My reason to see it? Actor Casey McFeron, a local favorite of mine. What will your reason be? (May 13-June 8, Cobo Theatre, 2257 Raleigh, \$20-\$25, 503-205-0715, coboproductions.org)

In Dance...

BodyVox continues its very popular run of **a thousand little cities**, a dance performance with a multimedia bent (through May 21, BodyVox Dance Center, 1201 NW 17th, \$36-\$49, 503-229-0627, bodyvox.com), as relative newcomer TopShakeDance premieres its latest work, **Gust**, drawing inspiration from the eerie influences of the wind (May 19-28, Conduit Dance Inc., 918 SW Yamhill, \$12-\$25, topshakedance.com).

In Performance...

Portland Taiko brings out the, well, big drums for **Ponta & The Big Drum**, the story of a trickster badger and the disaster he hopes

to orchestrate (May 7-8, PCPA, 1111 SW Broadway, \$16, 800-745-3000, portlandtaiko.org). Portland Story Theater returns for a third year with **Singlehandedly!**—and storytelling like you've never seen before (Through May 13, Hipbone Studio, 1847 E. Burnside, \$15, 503-793-5484, portlandstorytheater.com). And **ScratchPDX** has its last performance of the season. If you haven't yet experienced this oddly intriguing goulash of performance art, here's your last chance (May 14, 9 p.m., Hipbone Studio, 1847 E. Burnside, \$10, scratchpdx.com).

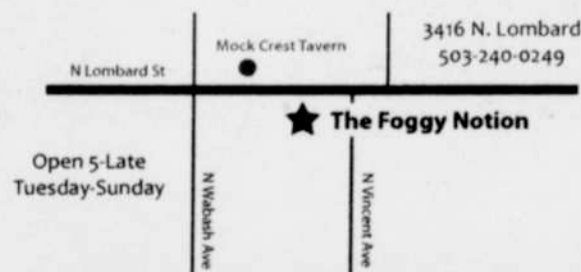
A benefit for Cerimon House and Stumptown Stages, **"Songs of Sondheim: A Concert for Peace on Our Streets"** aims to create peace through musical theater, with some of Portland's favorite voices. A silent auction to benefit these organizations will take place an hour before each performance. Turn to p. 28 for more information (May 17-18, 7 p.m., Alberta Rose Theatre, 3000 NE Alberta, \$40, 503-381-8686, stumptownstages.com).

Rounding things out, Portland's own trickster badgers, the Unscriptables, keep us laughing with **UTV**, a fast-paced improv show based on (you guessed it) television shows. And because it's off-the-cuff, you're in the driver's seat (May 13-21, 1121 N. Loring #111, pay-what-you-will, 503-309-3723, theunscriptables.com). ☪

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