

# On The Surface

Portland folk prince Holcombe Waller debuts new multimedia performance BY RYAN J. PRADO

Sure, a multimedia hybrid of music, storytelling and imagery isn't the usual fodder for Nightlife. But Holcombe Waller isn't an artist you can exactly pigeonhole, either. For his next feat, the man behind February's full-length album *Into the Dark Unknown* turns his attention toward *Surfacing*, a multidisciplinary exhibition premiering Friday, December 2 at BodyVox.

A notorious workaholic, Waller gathers together most of the branches of his oeuvre—music, theater and video—and melds it to create an immersive performance piece treading both realism and fantasy. As described by Waller, the all-sung performance takes the au-

dience "on a journey through time and place, invoking subjects as far-reaching as Catholic beautification, anarchist communist revolution, health care activism and the history-in-the-remaking of contemporary performance art."

As is the case with his most recent collection of folk-lite ruminations, Waller paints in wonderfully broad strokes, and *Surfacing* ought to showcase the full extent of his palette.

"Thematically, *Surfacing* dwells on the illu-

sory and complex way that we form loving connection as a kind of wall or boundary—or literally a surface—that can as much define ourselves as it can create an isolating divide between us and the true oneness of all things," says Waller. "Within this broad area, I'm focusing on songs, performances and imagery that reveal little ways that we can fall apart as we brush up against this surface."

*Surfacing* follows up on Waller's 2007 folk-opera *Patty Heart Townes*, as well as his

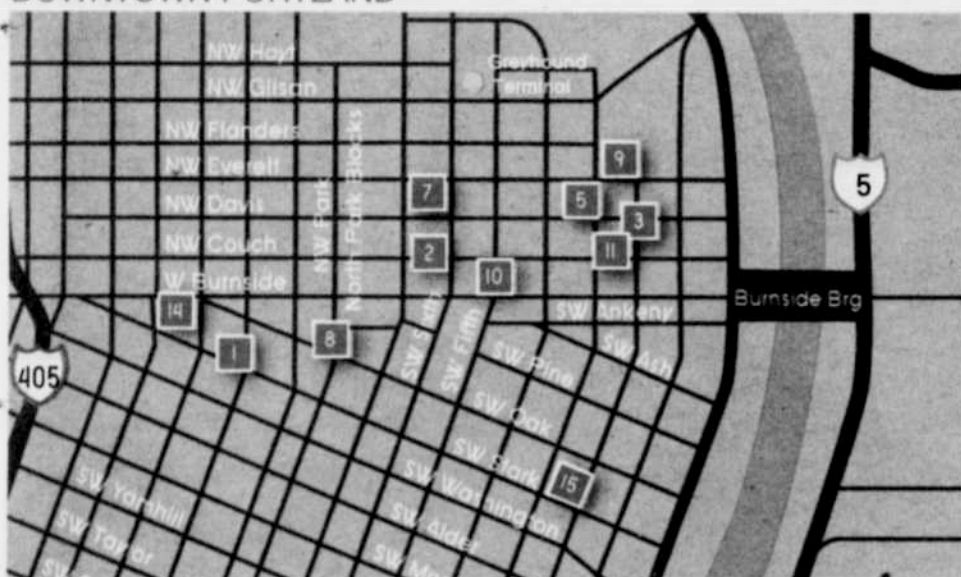
2009 show *Into the Dark Unknown: The Hope Chest*, commissioned and presented by the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art at the Imago Theatre. Funding for *Surfacing* was made possible by a grant from the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC) in December 2010, as well as a co-commission by Helena Presents (Helena, Mont.) and Out North Theater (Anchorage, Alaska) with funding from the National Performance Network. JO

Dec. 2, 9 p.m. and Dec. 3, 7 and 9:30 p.m.; BodyVox, 1201 NW 17th Ave.; \$12-\$26; 800-838-3006 or [brownpapertickets.com/event/207493](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/207493).

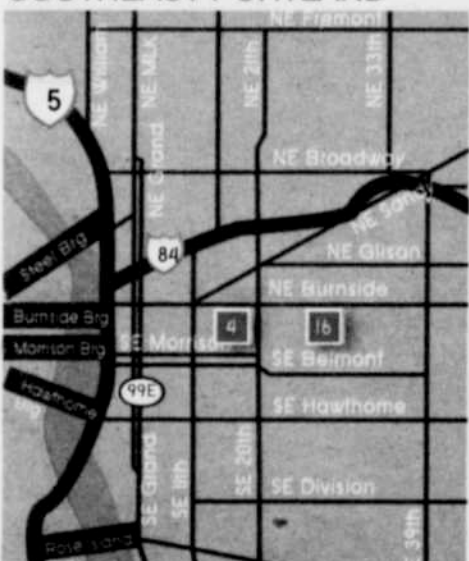


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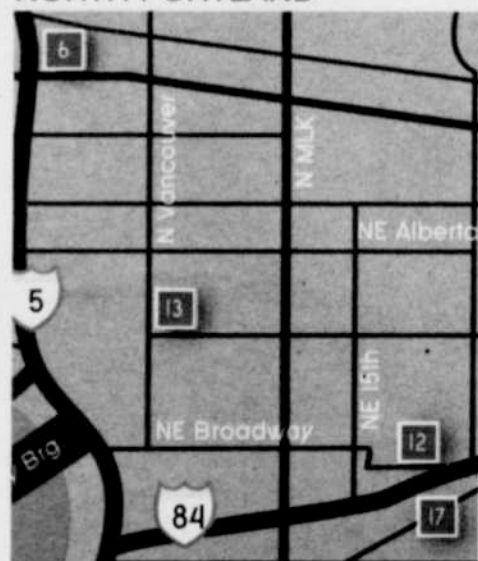
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