

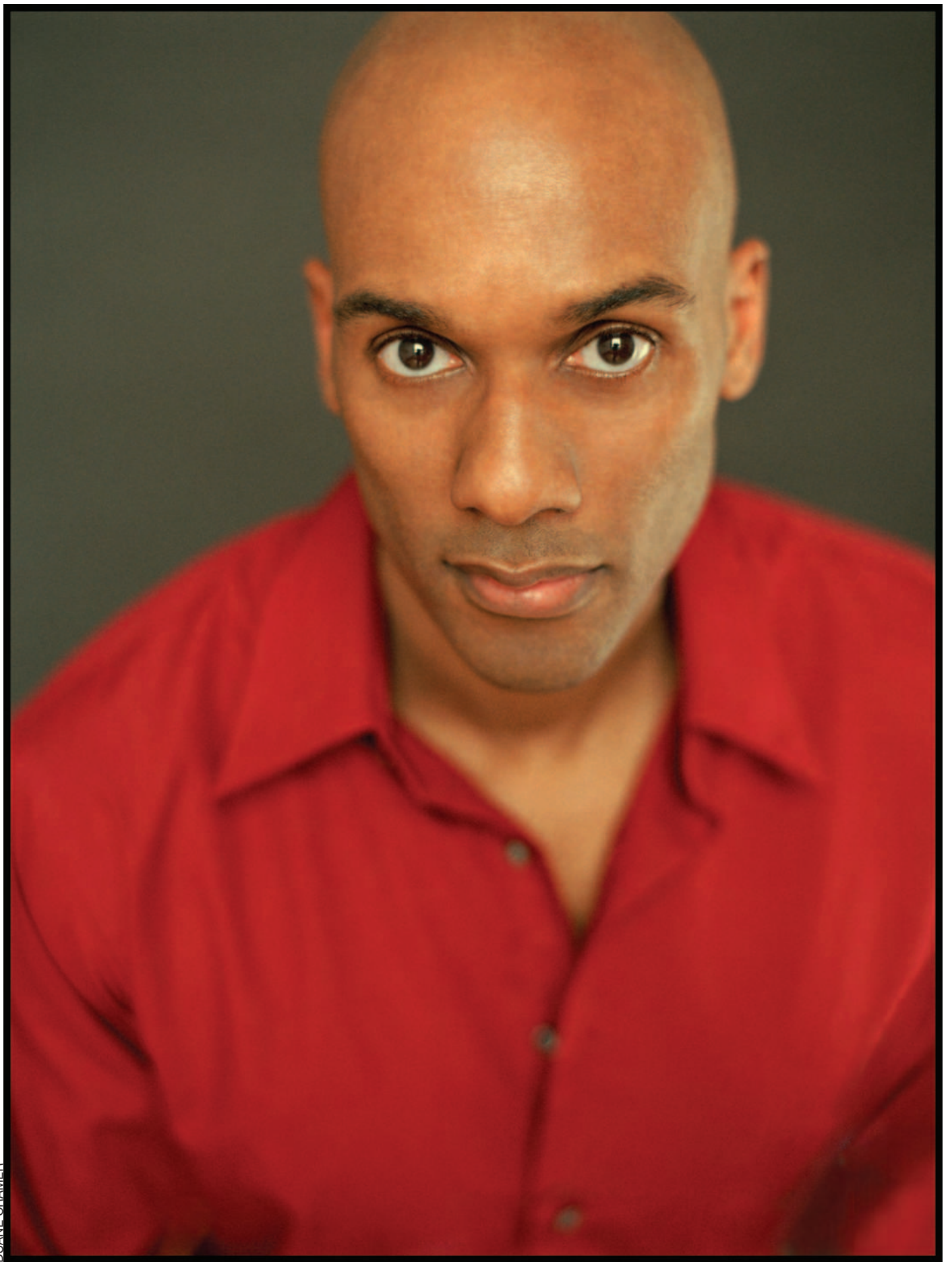
A & Q

Working for What's Good and Right

Keith Boykin talks about mobilizing the Democratic base, Larry Craig on the down low, why civil rights doesn't mean owning a Bentley — and how to bring America together

BY SUZI STEFFEN

DUANE CRAMER



Trying to cross the divides of identity politics and heal the rifts between communities — it's not a prescription for a quiet life. Keith Boykin is on TV. He's on the radio. He founds social justice organizations. He writes books, produces movies and speaks all over the U.S. Oh, and after he talks to Hewlett-Packard employees about diversity in the workplace, he's stopping by OSU for National Coming Out Day on Oct. 11 before popping in to speak at the UO the next day.

The 42-year-old former aide to President Bill Clinton, a Harvard Law School grad (whose classmate was Barack Obama), got into national politics early in his life and brokered the first meeting between a sitting president and representatives of the gay and lesbian community in 1993. His first book, *One More River to Cross: Black & Gay in America*, came out in 1996. Boykin has been working to build coalitions and to raise awareness of the black LGBT population for a long time.

But he knows a lot about, well, a lot of things. A few weeks ago, he flew to Boulder to speak about HIV and AIDS; then he was talking

about political campaigns at American University; then he spoke about LGBT concerns in the workplace at the Out and Equal conference; then he spoke at the Congressional Black Caucus conference; next, he flew to Indiana to speak about black male retention in college at one university and LGBT youth issues somewhere else. "There's a wide range of things to talk about," he says. "I get to meet different people in different communities and I see the intersection."

LGBT people in the U.S., he says, need to see all of those intersections. "It troubles me when they think that gay America should sequester itself away from the rest of society," he says. And that's part of why he's coming to the Willamette Valley: to give voice to those intersections. Boykin speaks at National Coming Out Day festivities at 7 pm Thursday, Oct. 11, in the Milam Auditorium on the OSU campus, and his speech "One More River to Cross: The Bridge Between Race and Sexual Orientation" starts at 5:30 pm Friday, Oct. 12, in the EMU Ballroom on the UO campus.