

Arts

A Celebration of Female Friendships with Steel Magnolias

The Maggie Theater Company is thrilled this year to be back and opening its 2000-2001 season with Robert Harlings' well-known play "Steel Magnolias." Filled with the spirit of life and teeming with laughter, this warm and witty celebration of female friendships is sure to bring a smile and a tear.

A memorable favorite, "Steel Magnolias" wholeheartedly embodies the mission of The Maggie Theater Company; To produce quality works of art that simply tell the stories of women. We are committed to themes that are universal coming of age themes for women. Identity, family, girlfriends, mentors and heroes. Themes that present the truths of our own experiences as women without defining us as anything but real people. Simply telling the stories of all kinds of women: rich, poor, awkward, and sophisticated, housewives and lawyers, artists and world leaders, athletes and scientists and laughter. We're hoping that everyone who steps through the doors of this production feels as if they are

coming back to a familiar place where a good cup of coffee, friendly conversation, laughter and even tears are enough to warm the soul.

In a quaint well-kept Louisiana Hamlet, a local group of women congregate at Truvy's Beauty Salon where "anybody who's anybody" comes to have their hair done. They gossip and giggle while preparing one another for life's tragedies and terrific triumphs. Aided by her young assistant Annelle, whose peculiar past is enough to gain her acceptance into the cliquish coffee klatch, the outspoken, wise cracking Truvy dispenses shampoos and free advice to the ladies of the town. There is the rich curmudgeon, Ouiser, an eccentric millionaire ("I'm not crazy, I've just been in a bad mood for 40 years"); Miss Clairee, the town's former first lady; and M'Lynn, the local social leader. Lately, the talk of the town has been about M'Lynn Eatenton's daughter Shelby and her upcoming wedding to one of the "good ole boys". Brimming with comedic dialogue and many acerbic

but humorously revealing verbal collisions, the play moves toward tragedy when Shelby who is a diabetic risks her life to become pregnant and this sudden realization of mortality affects all and draws on the underlying strength and love of its characters. By making them truly touching and real, Robert Harling's memorable play definitely brings the powers of love, friendships, and laughter to the stage.

The Maggie Theatre Company's showing of "Steel Magnolias" will be at the Firehouse Theater, 1436 SW Montgomery from Friday and Saturdays at 8 p.m. throughout November until Dec. 9. Sunday matinees begin at 2 p.m. For more information, call 503/708-8554.

As a special holiday event, if you bring an unwrapped new toy to either the Nov. 19 or Dec. 3 Sunday matinee 2 p.m. performances, Ms. Truvy will welcome you with open arms and a free seat! The Maggie Theater Company will donate the toys throughout the city to children of all ages!

Cygnnet Spotlights WW I Poets in Fall Production

Cygnnet Productions presents a literary cabaret reading of "Not about Heroes," Stephen MacDonald's intimate exploration of the friendship between Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, two of England's most lauded World War I poets, brought together by the shared horror of war.

Directed by Jon Kretzu, "Not about Heroes" will run through Nov. 19. Newcomer to Portland Jeffrey Szusterman will play Wilfred Owen and Portland veteran Grant Byington will play Siegfried Sassoon. Set design is by Tim Stapleton, and lighting design is by Jamie Rea.

The play unfolds when Siegfried Sassoon, most famous for "Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man," finds himself stuck in a mental hospital after refusing to lead his troops into what he has come to believe is a senseless war. There he meets Wilfred Owen, a budding poet later made famous for his "Anthem for Doomed Youth," who has been hospital-

ized for an aggravated case of shell shock.

First tolerant author and adoring fan, then teacher and pupil, and finally friends of a deeply passionate and passionately reserved nature, Sassoon and Owen discover in each other a shared commitment to telling the unpopular truth about the "Great War". This fragilely built communion is ultimately torn apart when both betray their pacifist convictions to return to the front in fruitless attempts to confront private ghosts of fear and nihilist desire.

All performances will be taking place at The Russell Street Theater, located at 116 NE Russell St. in Portland. Show times are Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$6 for Preview, \$12 Thursdays and Sundays, and \$15 Fridays and Saturdays. Student and Senior rates are available. Tickets may be reserved by calling 503/295-3555.

The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions

The School of Fine and Performing Arts at Portland State University is proud to host the Oregon District auditions for the Metropolitan Opera.

The auditions are at 1 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 19 in Lincoln Performance Hall. Admission is free. The district winner from Portland move on to the Northwest regional auditions in Seattle on March 4. Oregon is one of five districts that comprise the Northwest Region.

"It's always exciting to have the MET auditions here on campus," said Prof. Ruth Dobson, Director of PSU's Opera Theater Program. "PSU is always well represented at the auditions. Our Kelly Nassief won in Portland and went on to be a National Awards winner a couple of years ago, and last year's winner was PSU alum Angela Neiderloh, who went on to win in the Seattle Regionals and got to perform on stage at the MET

with full orchestra. It was a tremendous experience, and was an important beginning to her professional career."

Since graduating from PSU and the MET competition, Niederloh has performed with the Oregon Symphony, the Choral Arts Ensemble, New York's Chautauqua Opera, Opera Southwest in Albuquerque, NM, and Opera Omaha.

The goal of the Metropolitan Opera's National Council Auditions Program is to find exceptionally talented opera singers, aged 19-33, and to assist them in their development, to discover new talent for the Metropolitan Opera and to search for possible participants in the Young Artist Development Program of the MET.

Applicants must have a voice with operative potential: exceptional quality, range, projection, charisma, communication and natural beauty. Voice training

and musical background is a requirement. They must demonstrate an ability to sing correctly in more than one language and give evidence of artistic aptitude. Applicants must be prepared to sing five operatic arias in the original languages and keys and in more than one language and contrasting styles. Arias should be commensurate with the singer's age and level of ability and may be no longer than eight minutes each in length. The applicant will be permitted to sing an aria of his/her choice; the judges may then request another aria (or arias) for the purposes of comparison.

The Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions program began in Minneapolis/St. Paul in 1954. Over the years, these auditions have expanded to 17 regions, which include the United States, Canada, Australia, and Puerto Rico.



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