

### Live Music Every Night

- Kick off your week with live jazz every Sunday at 9 p.m. at The Blue Monk (3341 S.E. Belmont).
- Participate in a mixed-media open mic night each Monday at the Back-to-Back Café (614 E. Burnside).
- The Thorn City Improv, featuring members of Old Dominion, Quivah, The Chosen and The Black Notes, perform at Conan's (3862 S.E. Hawthorne) every Tuesday at 10 p.m.
- Celebrate Hump Day at The Red Sea (381 S.W. 3rd Ave) after work on Wednesdays, from 5 to 9 p.m.
- Inch toward the weekend at the Candlelight Room (2032 S.W. Fifth Ave) with the Black Notes, performing each Thursday.
- Celebrate Friday with Mel Brown, who plays jazz at Salty's on the Columbia every Friday and Saturday, and Jimmy Mak's on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Round off your week with live Reggae on Fridays and Saturdays at Montego Bay, (1239 S.W. Jefferson).

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# FOCUS

## 'I Am My Own Wife' at Portland Center Stage

### Historic Armory becomes theater showcase

BY SARAH BLOUNT  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Center Stage celebrates its 2006-2007 season in its new home at the freshly renovated, 1891 First Regiment Armory along the brewery blocks of northwest Portland. The 115-year-old building is enjoying the renaissance of a \$36 million transformation thanks to the Portland Development Commission and the interest of city leaders.

In the past, the armory has served as housing for troops during the Spanish-American War, presidential visits, venues for professional wrestling, tennis and boxing matches, and now as Portland Center Stage's Gerding Theater.

Saved from demolition a few years ago, the renovated performance house actually contains two theater venues—the 599-seat main stage and orchestra pit for larger productions, like the venue's de-



Wade McCollum plays Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, and several other characters in the one-man show "I Am My Own Wife" at Portland Center Stage.

but "West Side Story," and this spring's production of "Fences," chronicling the African American experience of the 20th century.

In the basement, the Armory houses the 200-seat Black Box Stu-

dio Theater, with an adjustable stage and flexible seating for more intimate performances.

The smaller studio currently features the one-man performance of "I Am My Own Wife," a true story

of the relationship between an American playwright and an East German transvestite who not only survived the Nazi regime, but Communist rule as well.

The relationship between these two principal characters — playwright Doug Wright and the sweet but controversial Charlotte von Mahlsdorf — develops over the course of years, as we learn how she survived the brutality of her own father, Nazi thugs, the Stasi (East German police) and eventually the relentless ploys of worldwide media who sought to defame her image.

Hop-scotching between America and Germany, Wright becomes so fascinated with Mahlsdorf that the entire second act highlights his tortured conflict between what may be the ugly truth about his subject and what he wants badly to believe.

Performances continue through Sunday, Dec. 31 at Portland Center Stage at the Armory, 128 N.W. 11th Ave. Shows are at 7:30 p.m., Thursday at noon, and Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. Ticket are \$16.50-59.50. Also visit [www.pcs.org](http://www.pcs.org).

"Festival of Lights" -- The Grotto "Festival of Lights", Northeast 85th Avenue and Sandy Boulevard, continue this week through Saturday, Dec. 30 from 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., featuring hourly holiday music concerts, spectacular lighting displays, live nativity scene and family entertainment. Donations requested for Snow-CAP, of canned goods or dry baby foods.

**Playwright Presents 'Mutt'** -- A local playwright is challenging racial issues with levity and bravery in her world premiere of "Mutt" at North Portland's Interstate Firehouse Cultural Center, 5340 N. Interstate Ave. Lava Alapai tells the story of a bi-racial young adult's mistaken Caucasian self-identity. Shows extended through Saturday, Dec. 30. Tickets are \$12.

**New Year's Eve** -- The Wonder Ballroom, 128 N. Russell St., hosts a New Year's Eve party featuring 3 Leg Torso, the MarchFourth Marching Band and Heroes & Villains. In all, more than 45 musicians and performers will take the stage beginning at 9 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 31. This is a 21 and over show. Tickets are \$15 in advance at the ballroom box office and at [ticketmaster.com](http://ticketmaster.com).

**New Year's Celebration** -- Saturday, Jan. 13, the Japanese Garden Society, 611 SW Kingston Dr., will host the Oshogatsu (New Year) Celebration in the Garden's Pavilion from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Visit [japanesegarden.com](http://japanesegarden.com).

### ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

**Hip-hop Dance Classes** -- Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation is hosting family friendly hip-hop dance classes for ages 5 to 18. Various lessons teach rhythm, technique, coordination, agility, combinations and teamwork through urban dance moves. For more information, call 360-696-8236.

**Oregon Zoo Lights** -- The walk-through winter wonderland Oregon Zoo Lights comes to life each night through Sunday, Dec. 31. The festival includes a lighted zoo train, choral and ensemble music, puppet shows, and a model train display.

**Trippin' through Town** -- Take a trip through time to find the hottest poetry, hip-hop and soul influencing Portland on Wednesdays at the Ohm. \$7 cover. 31 N.W. First Ave.

**Belly Dance Classes** -- Caravan Studios offers classes in belly dance, African dance and more. Visit [www.gypsyscaravan.us](http://www.gypsyscaravan.us).

**OMSI Presents: Black Holes** -- A flight simulator transforms real scientific data about black holes into stunning visualizations in OMSI's new planetarium show "Black holes: The Other Side of Infinity." For more information, call 503-797-4000 or visit [omsi.edu](http://omsi.edu).

**Jazz for the Holidays** -- Friday, Dec. 29 thru Monday, Jan. 1, the Oregon Coast Council for the Arts will host Newport's Jazz for the Holidays, a massive New Years Eve Party, spread out over 4 days and headlined by some of Portland's jazz icons, including the Bobby Torres Ensemble and singer Nancy King, at the Newport Performing Arts Center. Visit [jazzatnewport.org](http://jazzatnewport.org) or call 888-701-7123.



Bobby Torres

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