# Play Inspired by AIDS Chaos

# Opinionated Judge Darleen Ortega

Portland's Profile Theatre ments of her and her brother's makes the writers of original season into the work of one or two playwrights. This season Paula Vogel, whose play "Intival this past season. Profile, too, will mount a production Baltimore Waltz," which was and earned her an Obie Award for Best Play in 1992.

Carl had talked about traveling pict her brother's illness, Voand sister, Carl and Anna, in- losing Carl. spired by learning that the sisly discovered terminal illness that the public health system can't seem to find a reason to prioritize.

Vogel's more fantastical approach captures a sense of the chaos of the early AIDS crisis--the feeling of unreality, the senselessness of people dying for no reason, a lack of concern among medical providers--but those aspects of the crisis were more accessible for audiences who experienced that sense of chaos back in the late '80s and early '90s than for audiences looking back from this distance. Vogel has scrambled the ele-

experience in a way that is plays its focus, delving each literarily and psychologically interesting but that makes the play harder to access than it brings a focus on the great may originally have been; in this production, at least, dedecent" so won my heart at spite an inventive set design, the Oregon Shakespeare Fes- it's a little hard to decipher that the trip to Europe is all a fantasy in Anna's head while of "Indecent" later this year-- the play is actually taking but first, it has produced "The place in Carl's hospital room.

That said, the cast of three the play that first brought Vo- is strong. Jen Rowe is a fierce gel to national prominence Anna, capturing a sense of frenzy that seasons the play's humor and also holds some of It's a tricky play to produce, the desperation that attends perhaps more so than when it the loss of a beloved brothpremiered in the early 1990s. er to a senseless illness. Dan It was inspired by the loss of Kitrosser is a gentle Carl, Vogel's brother Carl to AIDS-- ironic and a bit mysterious; but unlike more direct and po- Carl doesn't tell us everylemical approaches to that sub- thing and is carrying some iect matter (such as "Angels secrets, including from Anna. in America" or "The Normal Joshua Weinstein is a nim-Heart"), Vogel's play is more ble Third Man, shifting roles will keep you laughing and indirect and personal. She and from doctor to waiter to mysterious stranger to a series of to Europe together but missed lovers for Anna, alternating now showing through Nov. 3 the opportunity before he got from cold to comic to seducsick. Rather than directly detive. The play asks a lot of the cast and especially Weinstein, on the Oregon Court of Apgel circles it with an imagined who must shift shapes and peals and the first woman of and often broadly comedic trip moods as Anna dodges and color to serve in that capacito Europe between a brother struggles with the reality of ty. Her movie review and the-

ter is terminally ill with a new-better in memory than in the The Portland Observer.



PHOTO COURTESY BY DAVID KINDER/PROFILE THEATRE

Dan Kitrosser (left) and Josh Weinstein in Profile Theatre's production of "The Baltimore Waltz," now playing through Nov. 3 at Imago Theatre, 17 S.E. Eighth Ave.

moment, not unlike how the brain circles and dodges and dances around a painful experience. This production leave you with lots to chew on. "The Baltimore Waltz" is at Imago Theater.

Darleen Ortega is a judge ater arts column Opinionated It's a quirky play that works Judge appears regularly in



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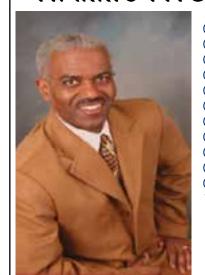
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