

Light Up the Night

page 7



LGBT Band Going to D.C.

page 8



Jason Stuart

page 22



nightspots
pick it up
take it home



Obama's choice spurs backlash



President-elect Barack Obama's selection of the Rev. Rick Warren (above) to lead his inaugural's invocation has upset many members of the LGBT community.

BY LISA KEEN
KEEN NEWS SERVICE

Debate heated up during the past week over President-elect Barack Obama's invitation to evangelical Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at his inauguration. And as it has, the Human Rights Campaign has offered Obama a way to make amends, while a lone activist has called for a doughnut strategy.

Mainstream media sank its teeth into the controversy early on, with reports that "gays are furious" about Obama bestowing such an honor on a pastor who has equated marriage between two same-sex adults with marriage between a brother and a sister or an adult marrying a child.

"President-elect Barack Obama's honeymoon with the liberal win of his party came to a crashing halt" on Dec. 17, said Washington Post political correspondent Chris Cillizza.

The Associated Press called Obama's invitation to Warren "an overture to conservative Christians" and a signal of "his willingness to upset liberals by tilting to the center." The New York

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High pregnancy rate for LGB teens

BY YASMIN NAIR

The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality recently published an article "Stigma management? The links between enacted stigma and teen pregnancy trends among gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in British Columbia." It presents data showing that LGB youth show higher rates (two to seven times greater) of pregnancy involvement than their heterosexual peers.

Elizabeth M. Saewyc, associate professor of nursing at the University of British Columbia, is the lead author of the study. A Dec. 17 piece in The Vancouver Sun, "Lesbian Youth at High Risk for Pregnancy: Study at UBC," summarized her findings and quoted Saewyc: "For some gay, lesbian and bisexual teens, [pregnancy is] camouflage because [their sexual orientation] is still pretty stigmatized and they still face a lot of harassment at school."

The Sun article has been making the rounds of

LGBTQ listservs and blogs. However, the original study shows more complicated findings and reasons for the rates of pregnancy.

The Journal article summed up three pen-and-paper anonymous adolescent health surveys—carried out in 1992, 1998 and 2003—among 30,000 high school students from grades 7-12 in Vancouver, British Columbia. These were not exclusively focused on sexuality.

The key term "pregnancy involvement" (as opposed to "pregnancy") allows the researchers to take gay and bisexual teens into account. The survey did not ask the teens the reasons why they became involved in pregnancy. Saewyc told Windy City Times that "'Why' is an open-ended question and they may have different answers to that, so it's hard to make sure you've captured all the possible reasons." The supposition that teens are using pregnancy as a way to camouflage their sexual orientation is one of several hypotheses based on past and ongoing

research into LGBTQ adolescent issues. However, it is clear, based on the emphasis given to it in the journal article and Saewyc's comments, that she is inclined to favor it as a preponderant reason. She emphasized the correlation between discrimination and pregnancy involvement: "We do see that teens who have been pregnant or caused a pregnancy are far more likely to also report being discriminated against on the basis of their sexual orientation."

Frank Walker, the founder and director of Chicago's Youth Pride Center (YPC), an organization that serves LGBT youth of color—and someone who said he became a father himself to fulfill a conventional male role—responded, "I'm shocked that people are only just beginning to realize this." He sees a lot of young men in the same situation. Asked if the study might affect YPC's work, he pointed out, "We're dealing with

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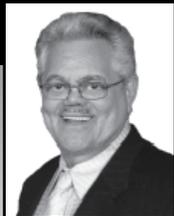
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Illinois State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz (above) held a fundraiser last week. Find out why on page 8.

Photo by Yasmin Nair



The Bowery Boys (above) is among the theatrical productions being reviewed. See page 18.

Photo by Peter Coombs

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Features include:
 -World roundup
 -Theater review: John & Jen (right)
 -Dr. Bruce Koff's Couples Connecting column: "...Prop 8's Lessons in Healing"

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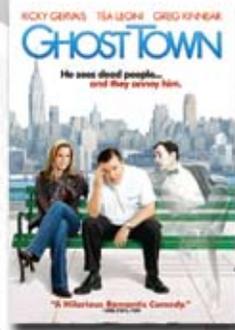
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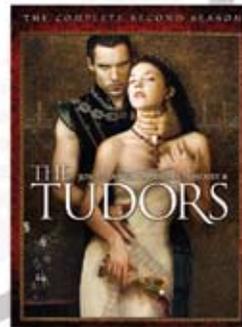
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Calif. attorney general: Prop 8 is invalid

BY REX WOCKNER

In a stunning legal move, California Attorney General Jerry Brown formally urged the California Supreme Court to invalidate Proposition 8 on Dec. 19 because, in re-banning same-sex couples from marrying, the voter-approved constitutional amendment deprived people of an aspect of liberty that the Supreme Court previously had concluded is guaranteed by the California Constitution.

Ordinarily, it is the attorney general's job to defend the state's laws, not attack them.

"Proposition 8 must be invalidated because the amendment process cannot be used to extinguish fundamental constitutional rights without compelling justification," Brown said in a statement.

"There are certain rights that are not to be subject to popular votes, otherwise they are not fundamental rights," he added in an interview with the San Jose Mercury News. "If every fundamental liberty can be stripped away by a majority vote, then it's not a fundamental liberty."

Rejecting recent arguments submitted to the state Supreme Court by gay-rights lawyers, Brown concluded that existing case-law precedents of the court do not invalidate Proposition 8 either as an improper revision of the state constitution or as a violation of the separation-of-powers doctrine. But that does not resolve the matter, he said.

In its May 15 decision legalizing same-sex marriage, the state Supreme Court "held that article I, section 1 of the California Constitution provides a right to marry that cannot be denied to same-sex couples," Brown's office said. "In order to invalidate such a fundamental right, the court must determine that there is a compelling justification to do so. But in (its decision), the court found that no such compelling justification exists. Accordingly, Proposition 8 must be stricken."

"The use of the [ballot] initiative power to take away a legal right deemed by this Court to be fundamental and from a group defined by a suspect classification is a matter of grave concern," Brown said in his brief to the court. "Proposition 8 should be invalidated as violating the inalienable right of liberty found in article I, section 1 of our Constitution."

In its May decision, the state Supreme Court struck down the state's opposite-sex definition of marriage as unconstitutional, citing a fundamental right to marry under the state constitution and the constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the law.

The court further determined—in a move that legal analysts said was unprecedented for a supreme court—that any discrimination based on sexual orientation is constitutionally subject to the strictest level of scrutiny by courts, which

made it dramatically harder for any level of government in California to defend itself in any arena where gays, lesbians and bisexuals are not treated the same as heterosexuals.

This was accomplished by the court's declaring sexual orientation to be, like race and religion, a so-called "suspect classification"—a categorization that forces any government in California that treats GLB people differently in any way to prove it has a specific compelling interest, rather than a mere rational basis, for doing so.

While Prop 8 wiped out the part of the court's decision that legalized same-sex marriage, it did not alter the more groundbreaking part of the ruling that found sexual orientation to be a "suspect classification."

Gay rights lawyers said back in May that the suspect-classification determination would prove to be even more of a game-changer for California gays in the long run than was the decision to legalize same-sex marriage.

If Brown's argument passes muster with the state Supreme Court, that prediction will have been borne out.

Equality California Executive Director Geoff Kors praised Brown's court brief and its novel argument.

"He just demonstrated the kind of leadership that isn't motivated by political expediency but by what is right," said the head of the state's leading gay lobby group.

NATIONAL ROUNDUP

BY ANDREW DAVIS

Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Executive Director Chuck Wolfe **has criticized President-elect Barack Obama for not naming an openly gay member to his Cabinet**, the Washington Blade reported. Gay-rights activists has pushed for Obama to select lesbian Mary Beth Maxwell to become the next Secretary of Labor, the last open Cabinet position. However, NBC News reported that Obama had picked Rep. Hilda Solis for the position. Wolfe called Obama's choice "disappointing."

The Human Rights Campaign (HRC)—the nation's largest LGBT-rights organization—**has responded to a commentary posted on the right-wing Web site World Net Daily by activist/singer Pat Boone**. In the piece, Boone said, "What troubles me so deeply, and should trouble all thinking Americans, is that there is a real, unbroken line between the jihadist savagery in Mumbai and the hedonistic, irresponsible, blindly selfish goals and tactics of our homegrown sexual jihadists." HRC President Joe Solmonese replied, in part, that "[Boone's] commentary marks a new low in anti-gay rhetoric. And yet it also demonstrates the depths of hatred from these demagogues toward the LGBT community."

Under a policy change, New York state officials will now let **married same-sex couples**

list both their names on their children's birth certificates, according to the New York Blade. The change would apply statewide except in New York City, which might alter its own birth certificate forms to accommodate same-sex couples.

Lesbian U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., has fired back at a new Bush administration rule that **health-care workers may refuse to participate in medical procedures they find morally reprehensible**. In a statement, Baldwin said, in part, that "[t]he refusal clause goes beyond women's health and a woman's right to an abortion or birth control. Under the new regulations, a doctor may also refuse to treat a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person."

Without any evidence, **some conservatives are blaming the gay community for the Dec. 12 arson attack** that resulted in damage to Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin's church, EDGE Boston reported. An article at the Web site Men for Palin blamed LGBT-rights activists, adding that "[t]hey are

and have been angry and on the move since the passage of Proposition 8 in California."

The longest-serving leader of an LGBT organization in the United States will leave his post next February when **Richard Burns steps down as executive director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center** in New York City, according to an organizational press release. Burns, who has held the position since 1986, will become the chief operating officer of The Arcus Foundation, a social-justice organization.

A poll in Connecticut shows that **most of the state's residents are comfortable with the court ruling that made same-sex marriage possible**, 365Gay.com reported. The Quinnipiac University survey, taken Dec. 11-15, found that 52 percent of voters believe the court made the right ruling.

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WARREN from cover

Times called it an "olive branch."

The Los Angeles Times quoted gay activist Howard Bragman as saying Obama "saw that Bill Clinton did damage to his early presidency by appearing to pander to the gay and lesbian community."

"Obama has chosen a different tack," said Bragman.

Chicago Sun-Times columnist Mary Mitchell called the choice "insulting" to Black civil-rights activists.

"How do you put a civil rights icon like the Rev. Joseph Lowery," who was asked to give the closing prayer, "at the tail end of an event that honors the nation's election of its first African-American president? The only reason I can think of for Obama to give Warren such an honor is that he is already thinking about re-election."

At first, Warren did little to calm the upset. In an interview with a Wall Street Journal affiliate Dec. 12, he suggested that the LGBT civil-rights movement "is not really about civil rights, but a desire for approval." By Dec. 20, he was telling the Associated Press that he is a huge fan of lesbian rock star Melissa Etheridge and has all her albums. Warren spoke with Etheridge when they both appeared at an annual meeting of the Muslim Public Affairs Council in Long Beach, Calif. He reportedly told the audience that he loves Muslims and, "for the media's purpose, I happen to love gays and straights."

The Los Angeles Times reported that Etheridge was "among the first to stand" and applaud Warren for his remarks at that Dec. 20 meeting.

On NBC's Dateline Thursday (Dec. 18), Warren reiterated his respect for gay people and claimed that, when protesters came to his megachurch to protest his support for the anti-gay Proposition 8, his church served them doughnuts and water.

That, according to the New York Times, prompted one activist to start a doughnuts-for-Warren movement—encouraging gay-rights supporters to buy Dunkin' Donut cards and customizing them with their photos of same-sex couples and send the cards to Warren.

Meanwhile, John Aravosis, a gay political blogger in D.C. (www.americablog.com) reported Dec. 19 that the Web site for Warren's Saddleback church states that, while gay people can attend church, "someone unwilling to repent of their homosexual lifestyle would not be accepted at [sic] a member at Saddleback Church."

And the controversy has led to some backlash barbs for gays, too. Boston Globe columnist Margery Eagan urged Obama to "ignore them."

"They're looking increasingly shrill," wrote Eagan. "They're on the ideological purity bandwagon that for too long has prevented Washington from accomplishing anything."

HRC's blueprint

On Dec. 19, the Human Rights Campaign urged President-elect Obama to "turn the corner on this controversy" by committing to HRC's "Blueprint for Positive Change" on LGBT issues. The blueprint calls for Obama to accomplish five things within specific time periods. It asks Obama, in the first 100 days of his presidency, to issue an executive order that "reaffirms" regulations in place to prohibit sexual orientation discrimination in federal employment; and to "develop a plan to begin the process" of repealing the "don't ask, don't tell" policy of excluding gays from the military. In the first six months, it asks that he "work with Congress to sign hate-crimes legislation. And then, without specific timetables, it asks that he commit to supporting "only a fully inclusive Employment Non-Discrimination Act" and that he "work with Congress" to end unequal tax treatment of domestic partnership benefits.

The latter refers to federal tax law that enables a married employee to provide health insurance coverage to his or her spouse without counting that benefit as income. However, for a gay employee, the fair market value of that health coverage is added to the gross income on which the employee must pay taxes. (The Center for American Progress and the Williams Institute estimate that a gay employee pays more than \$1,000 per year more in taxes because of that disparity.)

HRC's Web site offers visitors an opportunity to "sign" its petition to Obama, saying that the signer is "disappointed" that he invited Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at his inauguration and asks that he "restore my trust by pledging to support" the Blueprint.

A parade note

Contrary to early reports, this inaugural will not be the first to invite a gay contingent to participate in the presidential inaugural parade. Julian Potter was deputy director of the parade in 1993, for President Bill Clinton's first inauguration. She said she personally invited the Lesbian and Gay Marching Band to participate. The criteria for selection prior to 1993, she said, had been to include one band for each state. But with the first Clinton inaugural, the planners decided to be more inclusive by adding bands along the parade route. The Lesbian and Gay Marching Band was given a prime spot just two blocks away from the presidential reviewing stand.

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NOTE: In another inaugural development, lesbian U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., has been named to the list of honorary co-chairs for the inaugurations of President-elect Barack Obama and Vice President-elect Joe Biden. Among the others named to the team are Presidents Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush as well as Gen. Colin Powell and Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin.

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"Light Up the Night for Equality" participants were in the Loop Dec. 20. Photo by Kat Fitzgerald; see more at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com and www.MysticImagesPhotography.com

Protesters 'light up' Loop

BY SAM WORLEY

Amid throngs of holiday shoppers, community members gathered Dec. 20 outside the Macy's on State Street to protest recent setbacks to LGBT rights, particularly California's anti-same-sex-marriage measure, Proposition 8. Between several large rainbow flags, participants in "Light Up the Night for Equality" used candles and signs to draw passersby into conversations about current challenges facing LGBT individuals, including various marriage and adoption bans, and the selection of anti-gay pastor Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at President-elect Barack Obama's inauguration.

Beneath the department store's famous golden trumpets, roughly 40 people stood quietly to get their message across. Matty Zaradich, among the protesters, wanted to remind shoppers that, given the current state of gay rights, "Not everybody is having a great holiday season." His friend Kourtney Lowe concurred, characterizing marriage inequality as "totally unfair."

"This is a human-rights issue," Lowe said.

"Light Up the Night for Equality," a national event held simultaneously across the country in heavily trafficked shopping areas, was sponsored by Join the Impact. Local event organizers Corrine Mina and Nik Maciejewski said that the protest was meant to build on the momentum realized in the National Day of Action that took place Nov. 15, which mobilized hundreds of thousands of people across the country to protest marriage inequality. They hope to carry this momentum into an upcoming general meeting to be held Jan. 17. Though the location is not yet confirmed, more information will be forthcoming at the group's Web site, www.jointheimpact.com.

ALCC seeking nominees

The AIDS Legal Council of Chicago (ALCC) is accepting nominations for the 2009 Advocates of the Year Awards, which will be held Tuesday, May 5, at the Playboy Foundation, 680 N. Lake Shore. The Awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of men and women in Illinois who are making a difference in the lives of people with HIV.

To submit a candidate for consideration, download the nominating form at www.aidslegal.com/Documents/Nominating_Form_2009.pdf and return it with letters of support to ALCC by Friday, Jan. 30.

If you have any questions, please call Ricardo Cifuentes at 312-427-8990 or ricardo@aidlegal.com.

PREGNANCY from cover

the first issue [to make our community aware of young Black queer youth]; this isn't likely to be the priority right now."

What other factors influence these rates of pregnancy? They include risky sexual behavior; substance abuse; and a lack of sexual education or resources. LGBTQ youth tend to be disproportionately among the homeless. As Saewyc put it, "Once they come out, they're ejected. And in situations of survival sex, condom negotiation can be difficult."

Lara Brooks, drop-in coordinator of Chicago's Broadway Youth Center, works with street-based queer youth, and she sees many who are either pregnant or with children. According to Brooks, they tend to be invisible to both LGBT-based organizations and straight reproductive-service centers since they do not fit the conventional paradigms of families. Their invisibility is compounded by any involvement with the Department of Children and Family Services, either as wards or as people who give up offspring for adoption or foster care. Responding to the article and the issues raised, Brooks was wary of too much emphasis on sexual identity: "I'm really tired of the emphasis on the closet; these queer youths' lives are impacted by multiple factors like race and economics, which, in turn, impact their risky behavior and/or access to safe sex or even health care. [Teen pregnancy] is also about family support systems [or lack thereof] and poverty, even survival. There needs to be a more complicated analysis around all the factors."

Teenagers' access to safer-sex education is difficult. Saewyc told Windy City Times that "[i]n the U.S., abstinence-only mandated funding has meant that a lot of accurate information about sexual health has been off the table. Even in Canada, there's a limited amount of time allocated to the important things like how to make decisions around sexual behavior. It's important to make accurate and supportive sexual education accessible for LGB youth."

Mandated abstinence-only funding is a concern for Lynne Johnson, director of advocacy at Chicago Foundation for Women, who sees a direct connection between that and the issue of LGB teen-pregnancy involvement. According to her, the Bush administration pours millions of dollars into abstinence-only funding and "all the abstinence programs have to promote a 'mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage' as the expected standard of human sexuality, erasing LGBT [and straight] youth right off the top. [LGBT sexuality] is not even recognized in the standard of acceptable human activity. Then the programs make claims that condoms are not as effective." So Johnson isn't surprised at the rates of lesbian pregnancies.

Catherine Jefcoat, director of Lesbian Community Care Project, is both intrigued by and cautious of how this new study's findings are used and discussed. She expressed concern about the possibility of creating a hierarchy of stigmatizations: "Is it easier to be a teenage mom than a lesbian?" Jefcoat was interested in the socio-economic milieu in which teen pregnancy might occur, and factors like substance abuse and racialized poverty. She recognizes that pregnant lesbians and parenting queer youth are a relatively invisible population in a landscape where gay male youth, assumed to be non-parents, are seen as the default population. And Saewyc certainly wants to see the research used in its proper context: "These are co-relationships—these are links that don't equal cause."

Jefcoat is happy to see attention paid to the issues facing lesbians and their bodies. She says, "We need to know more about the truth of young queer lesbians' lives; this adds to the work." She sees a need for more resources given that "It's incredibly hard to build programs that address young queer female lives when funders [and many segments of the public] are only interested in our ability to make babies and not our sexuality, and that includes straight sexuality."



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Michelle Wetzel.

Chicagoans among those in LGBT inaugural band

BY KAITLYN MCAVOY

President-elect Barack Obama's inaugural parade will no doubt be a historic event. Not only will it be a celebration for our nation's first Black president, but it will also mark the first time in which an LGBT group will participate in the mile-and-a-half march.

The Lesbian and Gay Band Association (LGBA), a musical organization made up of over 30 concert and marching bands throughout the United States and countries like Canada and Australia, has been selected to have its members march in the parade on Jan. 20, 2009.

Lakeside Pride Freedom Band in Chicago is a member of LGBA and several of Lakeside's musicians were chosen to participate in the parade. Some say they couldn't be more excited to be part of the historic event.

"To be the first openly gay and lesbian group to ever be officially invited to participate in an inaugural parade is just huge—for me personal-

ly, for the LGBA organization, for Lakeside Pride, for the whole gay and lesbian community," said Michelle Wetzel, trombone player in Lakeside Pride since 2000. "I can't even put it into words how immense this is for us."

Wetzel said that as a legal aid lawyer, she represents people with HIV and AIDS and cares deeply about issues of poverty, housing and healthcare, and it is good to see that the next president feels the same way.

"I'm thrilled that [Obama] was elected," said Wetzel, "But I'm even more thrilled to be able to participate in his inaugural celebrations."

Wetzel was one of 177 LGBA band members chosen to go to Washington, D.C., for the parade. Those who wished to participate signed up online and the selection process was first-come-first-serve, so whoever got online and applied the quickest had the best chance of being picked, said Wetzel.

Several Lakeside members were among the chosen, including a trumpeter, a trombonist and saxophonists.

One of Lakeside's youngest members, 24-year-old Katrina Cook, was selected. Cook plays the baritone saxophone and has been with the band only a few months, but said she thinks she was lucky enough to be one of the people picked because not many are able to carry the heavy instrument, which weighs anywhere from 20 to 30 pounds, for the length of the parade.

Cook can hardly contain her excitement about being part of the parade and said she has been "giddy and jumping up and down," since she found out last week that she would be a part of it.

Cook said being part of the event is "wonderful" and worth missing days of work as an office assistant for the trip out to our nation's capital. She said she is happy to show support for Obama who has always shown support for the gay community.

All participants will practice together for the first time Jan. 18, just two days before the parade, said Cook. However, she isn't worried be-



Feigenholtz holds Boystown fundraiser

Illinois State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz—who has announced her intention to run for the seat of U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel, D-Ill., who is President-elect Barack Obama's chief of staff—held a fundraiser Dec. 17 at Cocktail, 3359 N. Halsted, in the heart of the area known as Boystown. At the event, Feigenholtz told an overflow crowd that she sees herself as a "sister in the community" and assured them of her continuing support for the "myriad issues" of gays and lesbians, including human rights and HIV/AIDS. The election will take place in 2009. Photo of Feigenholtz (with Anthony McGeath, left, and Bennett Lawson) and text by Yasmin Nair

cause the music will most likely be songs everyone known or has played before.

The Lakeside Pride Freedom Band is part of Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles, which include a jazz ensemble, orchestra, symphonic band and a color guard. Lakeside, which began in 1997, gives concerts and performances around the city. The Freedom Band also performs annually at the Chicago Marathon.

The LGBA began in September 1982, when eight independent bands from Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New York City and Washington, D.C., met in Chicago and decided to form the organization.

The LGBA members also played for former president Bill Clinton's inauguration celebrations but did not march in the parade. Almost 1,400 organizations applied to participate in Obama's parade, according to a press release from the Presidential Inaugural Committee.

Lesbian author wants info about aunt

Author Lucy Bledsoe (*The Ice Cave*, *Biting the Apple*) is trying to get any information she can on her aunt and namesake, also Lucy Bledsoe, who lived in Wilmette, Ill., and/or Chicago from 1956 until 1961.

The elder Lucy Bledsoe died in 1966, but would have been 85 now. E-mail lucybledsoe@comcast.net.

'Gays Got Talent' finals Jan. 10

The finals for Gays Got Talent, a wide-ranging Chicago-area talent contest, will take place Jan. 10, 2009 at Sidetrack, 3349 N. Halsted.

Doors open at 4 p.m., and the show begins at 5 p.m.; the cost at the door is \$5. On that day someone will be crowned the "Most Talented Gay" of 2008.

"People were encouraged to come out and dance, sing, perform poetry, comedy or display their magic, drag, or puppetry skills," said Amy Matheny, host of Gays Got Talent. "And the final big show will have it all—from comics to singers, musicians, slam poets, magicians, and the oldest gay talent there is—drag kings and drag queens."

The audience will vote to award the grand-prize winner \$1,000 cash, American Airlines tickets, a trip to Toronto, Broadway in Chicago tickets and more. See www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com for more.

Dealerships team up with depository for food drive

This Holiday season, Fletcher Jones Audi, Honda, Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz of Chicago—all at 1111 N. Clark—have teamed up with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to support those in need by sponsoring a holiday food drive.

Now through Dec. 31, people can drop off food donations at any of Fletcher Jones' four dealerships and ask a sales associate about food-drive specials. Canned goods are among the items requested; glass containers, perishable food and homemade items cannot be accepted.

Call 312-628-4000 for more details.

Kopelson joins Center

The Center on Halsted has announced that community leader Danny Kopelson has joined its team as director of communications and public affairs.

Kopelson was inducted in the 2000 City of Chicago's LGBT Hall of Fame and has been honored and recognized as a co-founder of the Dance for Life benefit, now in its 18th year, and as a founding member of the Chicago Gay Men's Chorus, now in its 26th year.

"We are very pleased to welcome Danny to the Center. He brings an especially strong and unique set of talents and backgrounds that will contribute to the continued success of our organization," said Modesto "Tico" Valle, the center's executive director.

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CFW awards \$300K in grants

Chicago Foundation for Women has announced its fall 2008 grants for 13 Chicago-area projects that improve the lives of women and girls. The \$300,000 supports work in two issue areas: family-violence prevention and reproductive justice.

The Irene Bayrach Anti-Violence Legacy Fund supports services and advocacy projects that address family violence in all its forms. Organizations that received funds from this grant included Youth Outlook (formerly Questioning Youth Center), Rape Victim Advocates and the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law.

The Catalyst Fund for Reproductive Justice provides grants as well as technical assistance for its grantees. Among its recipients are the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health and the Young Women's Empowerment Project.

Spring 2009 applications for Bayrach Fund grants are being accepted through Jan. 9; the Catalyst Fund is not taking applications. See www.cfw.org.

LGBT smoking-cessation program starts in Jan.

People who have resolved to quit puffing away in the new year can join Chicago's only LGBT smoking-cessation program.

The free seven-week program will feature a trained counselor and free nicotine-replacement therapy patches. Attendees are asked to attend all sessions and to complete a survey.

Groups begin Jan. 7 and Jan. 10 at Howard Brown Health Center, 4025 N. Sheridan; space is limited. Call 773-388-8682 or visit www.howardbrown.org/bitchoquit.

TPAN announces new development director

Sean Smith is joining HIV-services agency Test Positive Aware Network (TPAN) as its director of development.

Smith joins TPAN after serving as the manager of individual giving at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry. Previously, he was the director of government affairs at Howard Brown Health Center.

"Sean brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position, and we're excited to have him as part of our development team," said Bill Farrand, TPAN's interim executive director.

Writing contest deadline Jan. 1

SWELL—a quarterly online journal associated with local writers' group Newtown Writers that features LGBT-focused original writing—is sponsoring a fiction-writing contest.

The contest is open to LGBT writers and their allies. Entries will be accepted electronically until Thursday, Jan. 1, 2009. Submissions will only be accepted via e-mail, and there is an \$8 reading fee (payable through PayPal) for each entry.

For more info, including formatting guidelines, see www.newtownwriters.org/Fiction.html.

Lesbian comedian to teach stand-up

Local queer comedian Cameron Esposito will be part of a series of Lincoln Lodge's comedy outreach series when she teaches "The Feminine Comique" Monday, Jan. 5.

"Comique" gives students the opportunity to spend five weeks in a supportive all-female (and trans-friendly) environment while writing and rehearsing a five-minute standup set. Fees for each student are \$175; e-mail nellie@thelincolnlodge.com for more information or visit www.brownpapertickets.com to register.

Center's Ham-Bingo at Mary's Dec. 29

Center on Halsted will present Ham-Bingo—a comedic evening of drag-queen bingo—Monday, Dec. 29, at Hamburger Mary's, 5400 N. Clark, 8-10 p.m.

There will be fun, prizes and terrific drink specials. See www.centeronhalsted.org.

Leather Archives art show ends Jan. 9

Time is running out to see "ask," the mixed-medium exhibition and fashion show at Leather Archives & Museum, 6418 N. Greenview. It runs through Jan. 9, 2009.

"ask" reviews the latest in fetish inspired masks and works by local, national and international artist and producers. Exhibiting artists include Mephisto Leather, JOJO, Andy C and Fabrizio Cotognini.

See www.leatherarchives.org.

Jan. 'In the Life' spotlights religion

In the Life—the public-television series that documents LGBT life—explores religious devotion and discord in the LGBT community in its January airing, "Ties that Bind."

In "A Conversation With..." Bishop Gene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop ordained by the Episcopal Church, and Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, spiritual leader of New York City's largest LGBT synagogue, discuss their spiritual journeys. The episode concludes with a "Real to Reel" highlighting Parvez Sharma's groundbreaking film, A Jihad for Love.

"Ties that Bind" will air locally Friday, Jan. 2, at 10:30 p.m. on WTTW-11. See www.inthelife.tv.

QUOTELINES

BY REX WOCKNER

"THIS (OBAMA'S ELECTION) IS AMERICAN HISTORY BEING MADE. This is much bigger than Bill Clinton's win. Clinton kind of ran promising to be a better conservative than conservatives. This is big. This is the country telling Republicans, 'You know what? You guys are full of shit.'" — *Gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass., to Advocate.com, Dec. 4.*

"PEOPLE FROM BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE CAMPAIGN ARE POINTING FINGERS AT the small clique of California LGBT leaders who directed the (No on 8) campaign—Lorri Jean of the L.A. Gay and Lesbian Center, Geoff Kors of Equality California, the National Center for Lesbian Rights' Kate Kendall, Delores Jacobs of the San Diego LGBT Community Center, and Michael Fleming of the David Bohnett Foundation—charging that their insularity and inexperience with the humongous task at hand turned what should have been a difficult victory into a painful loss." — *The Advocate, Dec. 16.*

"WHEN YOU'RE NOT IN A RELATIONSHIP YOUR SEXUAL ORIENTATION IS more theoretical but it becomes more real when you are with somebody. ... If people like me don't take a stand then it will only get worse. ... It is no longer theoretical when you have people voting against what you believe is your right, making it illegal, when one of the best things about me is the person I am with. This applies to me and it is frightening." — *Crime writer Patricia Cornwell to Reuters, Dec. 11. She has been married for two years to Harvard professor Staci Ann Gruber.*

"LET'S TRY FOR A MINUTE TO TAKE THE RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVES AT their word and define marriage as the Bible does. Shall we look to Abraham, the great patriarch, who slept with his servant when he discovered his beloved wife Sarah was infertile? Or to Jacob, who fathered children with four different women (two sisters and their servants)? Abraham, Jacob, David, Solomon and the kings of Judah and Israel—all these fathers and heroes were polygamists. The New Testament model of marriage is hardly better. Jesus himself was single and preached an indifference to earthly attachments—especially family. The apostle Paul (also single) regarded marriage as an act of last resort for those unable to contain their animal lust. ... Would any contemporary heterosexual married couple—who likely woke up on their wedding day harboring some optimis-

tic and newfangled ideas about gender equality and romantic love—turn to the Bible as a how-to script? Of course not, yet the religious opponents of gay marriage would have it be so." — *From the lead on the Dec. 15 Newsweek cover story, "The Religious Case for Gay Marriage." See newsweek.com/id/172653.*

This [Obama's election] is American history being made.

—U.S. Rep. Barney Frank



"PROP 8 WAS THE STRAW THAT BROKE THE CAMEL'S BACK. Stonewall happened for a reason. Stonewall happened because people were tired of being beaten down. They were tired of having rules where they couldn't touch in public. They were tired of actual laws out there against same-sex couples holding hands. People reacted and all of the sudden the nation reacted. And I think the same thing is happening now. Prop 8 passed and everybody throughout California started protesting. Forty years later we have a new, immediate reason to protest." — *Amy Balliett, co-founder and co-coordinator of Join The Impact, the group responsible for the huge Nov. 15 protests against Prop 8 that took place in all 50 states, to the Palm Springs gay magazine The BottomLine, Dec. 5.*

"THOUGH IT'S TOUGH FOR SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES LIKE ME TO ADMIT IT, we've lost the gay marriage battle, especially among the young. We're going to have to come to some sort of accommodation with it to protect religious liberty." — *Syndicated, conservative Dallas Morning News columnist Rod Dreher, Nov. 10.*

"DO NOT LET THE MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS THAT RULE THE WORLD rule you too. Stand up. That is what we want. Go down in history as the leader of change that saved the world." — *Singer Melissa Etheridge in an open letter to President-elect Barack Obama in the Dec. 16 issue of The Advocate.*

—Assistance: Bill Kelley

QUOTE ON:

"IT'S ABOUT NOT BEING GAY. It's just a song about curiosity." — *Singer Katy Perry, about her 2008 chart-topping hit I Kissed a Girl, in the November issue of Blender magazine.*

"THE THING THAT SAVED AMERICAN CITIES IS THE GAY COMMUNITY. When all the families moved out, the gays didn't have families, and they're artistic—not to stereotype anybody. They restored the houses and made them beautiful. Now the families want to come back." — *Singer Chrissie Hynde, in the November issue of Blender magazine.*

"HARVEY MILK BELIEVED THAT IF ALL GAY PEOPLE were out of the closet, everyone would realize that they actually knew or were related to someone who was gay or lesbian. It's harder to hate someone you already know and love." — *Milk director Gus Van Sant about things he has learned, in the January issue of Esquire magazine.*

"MAKING GAY MARRIAGE LEGAL PARTLY means not having a nongay person lording over you, deciding for you what you can and cannot have." — *Milk director Gus Van Sant about things he has learned, in the January issue of Esquire magazine.*

—Compiled by Andrew Davis



The write stuff

Several of The New Town Writers recently gathered at T's, 5025 N. Clark, to celebrate the release of the 13th annual Off The Rocks anthology. The literary collection is currently available for \$10 at Unabridged Bookstore. Photo by Owen Keehnen

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WAYNE BESEN

Please, stop the sky from falling

This holiday season, when you throw a direct-mail appeal from a gay organization in the trash, you might just be trashing that group's future. The sky really is falling and many groups may not survive the economic chaos. To those who say these dire warnings make me Chicken Little, you are really playing a dangerous game of chicken that may leave our movement vulnerable to attack by anti-gay culture warriors.

By design, the recipe for fundraising is a pound of hype and hyperbole, mixed with a pinch of hyperactivity and a tablespoon of hyperventilation. This is what is necessary to grab the attention of super-busy, multi-tasking donors. Unfortunately, in a time of genuine crisis, donors are seeing GLBT organizations yelling S.O.S and all they are hearing is—Same Old Stuff.

This time, however, the warnings are very real. Cassandra is in crisis and the crying wolf is weeping, with good reason.

In the Washington Blade was a chilling article on the financial meltdown headlined, "Gay orgs cut staff to cope with recession." GLAAD President Neil G. Giuliano told the Blade that he had laid off staff and the reduction "touched all departments." Kevin Cathcart, Lambda Legal's

executive director, was forced to cut 10 percent of the organization's staff. The National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association's staff has been reduced from seven to two. The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force is leaving open unfilled positions.

Recently, my organization, Truth Wins Out (TWO), took out a hard-hitting ad in the Salt Lake Tribune, with the provocative headline, "Lies in the Name of the Lord." The ad was in response to a dishonest ad placed in the New York Times by an antigay organization that tried to reduce peaceful Proposition 8 protests to "mob violence." As a result of our powerful rebuttal, donors were responsive—but the size of the contributions was down significantly.

I have spoken to many other leaders in the gay, lesbian bisexual and transgender movement and not one has been immune from the effects of the recession. Donors are scaling back, grants are drying up and holiday cheer is turning into holiday fear. Instead of reaping the benefits of holiday giving, executive directors are looking over their shoulders for the Grim Reaper.

This is a particularly dangerous time to allow gay organizations to go under or downsize to the point of ineffectiveness. These groups are not expendable unless you consider basic rights and protection for your family luxury items.

In the very near future, Congress will likely be debating legislation that would protect gay people from job discrimination. The Democrats may also introduce bills to protect our families, end Don't Ask/Don't Tell or crack down on hate crimes. When these bills are dropped in the hopper, anti-gay organizations will try to drop kick our community. Afraid of losing the culture war, they will become more extreme and vicious than ever. It will be a street brawl of epic proportions. The question is, will our fighters be out on the

street working on your behalf, or pounding the pavement looking for work?

With Democrats in control and Obama in the White House, only a tidal wave of manufactured backlash can derail our progress. If you are foolish enough to believe that social conservatives are not capable of fomenting such fear and loathing with their backs against the wall, you have a very short memory. That is exactly what happened with Proposition 8, where anti-gay activists lied and finagled their way to victory. If they could pull it off in a liberal state like California, don't be naive and think they could not intimidate a governmental body, such as Congress, with members from states like Mississippi and Oklahoma.

Instead of bailing on GLBT organizations in their time of need, donors should dig deep and offer the equivalent of an economic bailout. There are those who can no longer give—and it is understandable that they cut back or refrain from contributing. But, if you are able, there are several organizations that need your help.

If we give our organizations a lump of coal for Christmas, we will surely take painful lumps from our pugilistic opponents. In the aftermath, we will quickly realize how important these organizations actually were, and reinvent them from scratch at a much greater cost. This is hardly a sound business model, no less a wise strategy for winning equality.

If you are getting walloped—please don't open your wallet. But, if you are able, think about your role in keeping our trusted and valued organizations stable. A generous gift to your favorite group might just give you the gift of liberty in return—which would make this a perfect holiday season.

See www.TruthWinsOut.org.



Warren of words

To my married gay friends who are not outraged by the prospect of Rick Warren giving the invocation at the Obama inaugural: I am surprised and disappointed at your passivity. You, of all people, should know that symbols matter. Words matter. Messengers matter.

Warren is not just your average opponent of gay marriage. From from the pulpit of his 20,000-member church, he publicly equates gay marriage—your marriage—with incest and pedophilia. Do you really think that his presence on the platform with the president, on what should be a national day of unity and celebration, has no significance? That it doesn't give Warren and his ilk legitimacy to further hurt gay families like yours? Even now in California, the anti-gay crowd, led by Warren types and represented by none other than Ken Starr, are arguing before the Calif. Supreme Court, contrary to what they said during the Prop 8 campaign, that not only should there be no new gay marriages, but also that the 18,000 marriages that were already performed should be nullified. Is that OK with you, too?

"It's just symbolic," you say? "Throw the zealots a bone and they will leave us alone when it comes to the 'real' issues." My dear, delusional friends, do you really think that radical religious extremists like Warren will stop their attack on gay families because he was allowed to offer up a prayer at the inauguration? Come on! Instead, they will use a picture of Warren at the inaugural on the front cover of the next gay bashing flyer and as the lead image on the next homophobic TV ad. I can see it now: "Rick Warren, chosen by President Obama to lead the nation in prayer at his inauguration, says 'no' to sexual deviancy like incest, pedophilia and homosexual marriage [or ENDA, or hate crimes laws or every other bit of GLBT favorable legislation]. Save our children—like Rick Warren wants to do—and stop these

deviants from destroying our country". [Cut to wide shot of massive D.C. crowd and Warren on the bunting-draped platform in front of the U.S. Capitol. Flags wave. Warren says "amen." Obama shakes his hand. Cut to small child kneeling at bedtime prayer, head bowed, who looks up into the camera and whispers: "Amen."] Is that symbolic enough for you?

"Give Obama a break," I hear from some. Would it be OK for Louis Farrakhan to offer up the inaugural benediction if it resulted in Obama getting a "break?" I mean, he supposedly does good things for the poor, too. The fact that he refers to Jews and gays as scum and denies the holocaust would just be overlooked so we can give Obama "a break," I guess. Would that be OK?

Obama's choice of Rick Warren to speak at the nation's inaugural is either pure political pandering or indicative of woeful ignorance on the part of the President-elect. It certainly is not "change we can believe in."

What is so disheartening to me is that our first African-American president doesn't get (or worse, gets but prefers pandering) that LGBT issues are not, as he likes to say, "social issues." LGBT issues are civil-rights issues. He, of all people, should know better.

Words matter. Symbols matter. Messengers matter. We don't. And that makes me sad and angry.

—Rick Ingram, Chicago

Warren and peace

President-elect Barack Obama has asked the Rev. Rick Warren to say the invocation for the inaugural. Some in the LGBT political community believe this is to be a slight to gays because of Warren's support of California's anti-same-sex-marriage initiative, Proposition 8. The Rainbow Sash Movement (RSM) needs to comment on this matter from a religious perspective.

In a letter to Obama, the Human Rights Cam-

paign (HRC) said, "We feel a deep level of disrespect when one of the architects and promoters of an anti-gay agenda is given the prominence and the pulpit of your historic nomination. ... By inviting Rick Warren to your inauguration, you have tarnished the view that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans have a place at your table."

While we respect the wonderful work the HRC has done on behalf of the LGBT community, we must voice a different opinion. We echo Obama's call that we must all come together even when we disagree on social issues. The call for "common ground" is deeply felt and understood among members of the RSM and our allies.

Our initial statement concerning this matter on our Web site has been met with hostility. The path forward is clear to us, especially during this Advent season: We must never lose hope for common cause, and continue to proclaim love of God and neighbor.

In California we have witnessed a wave of hostility on both sides in the aftermath of Prop 8. We continue to call for dialogue with religious leadership of California on this matter. Hate should have no place in a movement that has its roots in Stonewall and/or Jesus Christ.

The president-elect said Dec. 17 that he held views "absolutely contrary" to Warren on gay rights and abortion and described himself as "a fierce advocate for equality for gay and lesbian Americans." Also, Obama opposed Prop 8.

RSM disagrees with Warren on the issue of gay marriage, but we do agree with his work around the issue of HIV/AIDS, the poor (both gay and straight) and efforts to protect the environment. What is needed is a change of heart over a change of position.

During this holy season of Christmas we call on all people of good will to reach out to each other—both gay and straight—and to seek common ground.

—Joe Murray, RSM, Chicago



GOINGS-ON

WINDY CITY TIMES' ENTERTAINMENT SECTION



CRUISE CONTROL

Windy City Times talks with a member of the world-famous Rockettes (above, as toy soldiers). See page 22.

THEATER

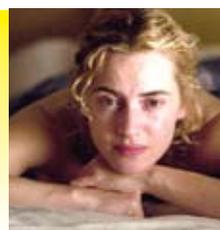
'Snow' business.
page 14

Photo by Liz Lauren



MOVIES

Love and Kate.
page 18



MUSIC

Welcome Matt.
page 22



Scottish Play Scott

BY SCOTT C. MORGAN

It's the end of an era for Bailiwick Repertory Theatre. When its current production of *The Christmas Schooner* sets its final sail Jan. 4, the Bailiwick will bid *adieu* to its longtime Chicago home, the Bailiwick Arts Center, 1229 W. Belmont.

You would think that it would be a bittersweet moment for Bailiwick co-founder and artistic director David Zak. But when interviewed, Zak was surprisingly upbeat.

"We're really excited about the move," Zak said. "We've had about 15 years here in this building, which has been really exciting and fun, but it's also an old building which has a lot of wear and tear and is in need of repairs."

Zak and the Bailiwick board decided that maintaining its own space was increasingly becoming a financial and labor-intensive burden. So when Bailiwick's lease runs out, it will once again become an itinerant company like when it was founded in 1982.

Zak is quick to point out that Bailiwick isn't disappearing.

"It seems like our audiences will be ready to follow us into new venues," Zak said, adding that Bailiwick has already booked summer dates for its annual *Pride Series* at the Center on Halsted's Hoover-Leppen Theatre. Zak said other venues around town are also under consideration.

Still, many in the LGBT community can't help but feel slightly wistful about Bailiwick's departure from Belmont Avenue. While not exclusively dedicated to LGBT theater like About Face Theatre, the Bailiwick has been celebrated for its dedication to queer theater.

Then there's also the question of where Chicagoans can now go to see male nude musical revues like *Barenaked Lads*. (I'll admit that my first visit to the Bailiwick was in 2002 to see



Barenaked Lads, one of the productions that ran at the Bailiwick.

Naked Boys Singing during a Chicago vacation.)

"People have always talked about the nakedness at the Bailiwick—it's a funny misconception because a very small percentage of what we did had naked people in it," Zak said. "You live with that reputation from people who had never seen other shows here like *Corpus Christi* or *Southern Baptist Sissies* or any of our musicals—they would always say that's our 'naked' theater."

Within the Bailiwick, there was the joke that "Bailiwick without clothes" helped to subsidize "Bailiwick with clothes." And based upon the dozens of Jeff citations won through the years, the Bailiwick proved that it was a forced to be reckoned with. During its time on Belmont, the Bailiwick produced important Midwest, U.S. and world premieres.

For example, when Broadway in Chicago balked at bringing in the national tour of Jason Robert

Brown's epic musical *Parade*, the Bailiwick produced the area premiere in a critically acclaimed production that later transferred to the Mercury Theatre.

Productions like *Sin: A Cardinal Deposed* (about the Boston clergy sex abuse scandal) and *Marlowe* (about gay Elizabethan playwright Christopher Marlowe) traveled to other U.S. cities, while other shows traveled abroad.

Bailiwick also scored an artistic coup by staging the American premiere of the Olivier Award-winning *Jerry Springer: The Opera* after Broadway producers shied away from the property, citing economic concerns about the large cast and fears about stirring up the wrath of the religious right.

"We really succeeded a lot of times with projects which commercial producers might have shied away from," Zak said. "Those projects were good for us and fun to do on a huge scale, but I'm excited to try other things where we're not in a situation of trying to put a huge show up on a stage the size of a thimble, which is what it felt like a lot of times."

Perhaps one of the longest-lasting legacies the Bailiwick helped with is hosting the premiere of *The Christmas Schooner*. The home-grown musical set in 19th-century Chicago has become such a successful property that it is regularly licensed by other theaters around the country.

Bailiwick's big musical productions may disappear in the future, but they will be remembered with a final concert called *Farewell to 1229*. Zak says selections from *Pope Joan*, *Dr. Sex* and more are included, along with new material to say goodbye to their longtime space.

And as for the Bailiwick Arts Center space itself, it is due to be gutted and transformed into a new three-theater space by the company Theater Wit! The planned re-opening is in October 2009.

For Zak, the move out for Bailiwick is pragmatic.

"I ripped a headline out of the newspaper which said 'evolve or die,'" Zak said. "That's kind of the situation that we're in right now—we

need to really rethink how we do things, or we're not going to be around."

Farewell to 1229 plays at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 29; tickets are \$50-\$75. **The Christmas Schooner** finishes its run Jan. 4 at 1229 W. Belmont; tickets are \$25-\$35 and \$20-\$25 for seniors/students. Call 773-883-1090 or visit www.bailiwick.org.

CRITICS' PICS

Grey Gardens, Northlight Theatre, through Dec. 28. Hollis Resnik's performance is a must-see in this unusual, highly acerbic musical portrait of mother and daughter Big Edie and Little Edie Beale, based on the 1975 documentary film about Jackie O's relatives. JA

It's a Wonderful Life: The Radio Play, American Theater Company, through Dec. 28. With Stef Tovar as George Bailey and the divine John Mohrlein as the evil Mr. Potter, a holiday chestnut is imbued with sparkling new life. And watching John Sterchi play God? Priceless. CS

Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol, Theater Wit at Theatre Building Chicago, through Jan. 3. Playgoers who missed Tom Mula's off-center account of a London financier's legendary conversion when it premiered in 1998 have a second chance to hear the storyteller himself tell how it all *really* happened. MSB

The Santaland Diaries, Theater Wit at Theatre Building Chicago, through Jan. 3. Just like *The Nutcracker* and *A Christmas Carol*, the holidays just are not complete without a dose of David Sedaris' scathing account of working as a Macy's department store elf. SCM

—By Abarbanel, Barnidge, Morgan and Sullivan



Please read Important Safety Information below, and talk to your healthcare professional to learn more about PREZISTA.

ABOUT PREZISTA

PREZISTA (darunavir) is a prescription medicine. It is one treatment option in the class of HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) medicines known as protease inhibitors.

PREZISTA is always used with 100 mg ritonavir (Norvir®) in combination with other HIV medicines for the treatment of HIV infection in adults.

- The use of other medicines active against HIV in combination with PREZISTA/ritonavir (Norvir®) may increase the likelihood of your overall treatment response. Your healthcare professional will work with you to find the right combination of other HIV medicines
 - The long-term effects of PREZISTA therapy are unknown at this time. It is important that you remain under the care of your healthcare professional
- PREZISTA is not approved for the treatment of HIV infection in pediatric patients.

PREZISTA does not cure HIV infection or AIDS, and does not prevent passing HIV to others.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

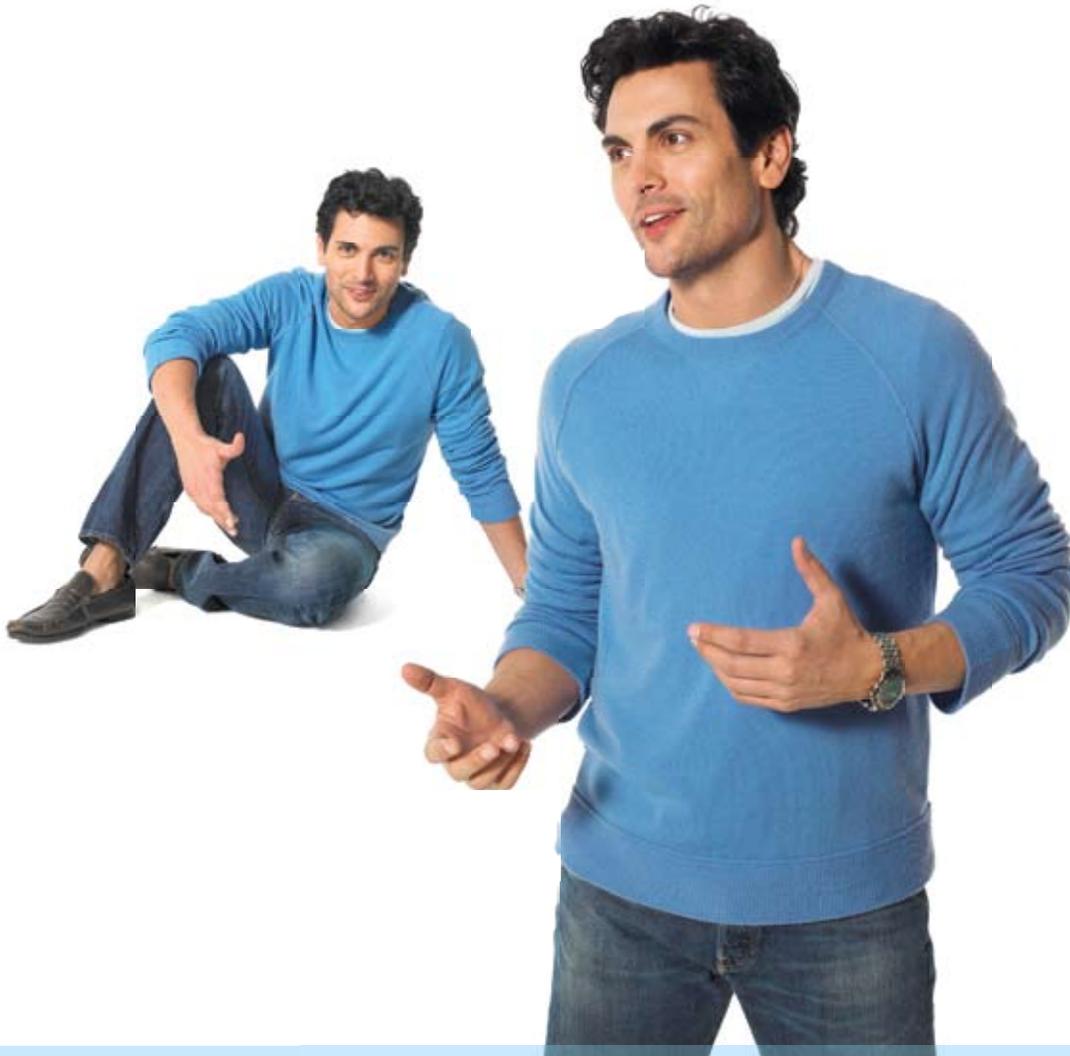
- **PREZISTA, together with Norvir® (ritonavir), has rarely been observed to cause liver problems that may be life-threatening. It was not always clear if PREZISTA caused these liver problems because some patients had other illnesses or were taking other medicines. Your healthcare professional should do blood tests prior to initiating combination treatment including PREZISTA. If you have chronic hepatitis B or C infection, your healthcare professional should check your blood tests more often because you have an increased chance of developing liver problems**

Talk to your healthcare professional about the signs and symptoms of liver problems. These may include yellowing of your skin or whites of your eyes, dark (tea-colored) urine, pale-colored stools (bowel movements), nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, or pain, aching or sensitivity on your right side below your ribs

- **Skin rashes have been reported in patients taking PREZISTA. Rarely, PREZISTA has been reported to cause a severe or life-threatening rash. Contact your healthcare professional if you develop a rash**
- **Taking PREZISTA with certain medicines could cause serious and/or life-threatening side effects or may result in loss of its effectiveness. Do not take PREZISTA if you are taking the following medicines: dihydroergotamine (D.H.E.45®, Migranal®), ergonovine, ergotamine (Wigraine®), Ergostat®, Cafegot®, Ergomar®), methylergonovine, cisapride (Propulsid®), pimozide (Orap®), oral midazolam, triazolam (Halcion®), rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifater®, Rifamate®), indinavir (Crixivan®), lopinavir/ritonavir (Kaletra®), saquinavir (Invirase®), lovastatin (Mevacor®), pravastatin (Pravachol®), simvastatin (Zocor®), or products containing St. John's wort**
- **Before taking PREZISTA, tell your healthcare professional if you are taking sildenafil (Viagra®), vardenafil (Levitra®), tadalafil (Cialis®), atorvastatin (Lipitor®), atorvastatin/amlodipine (Caduet®), or rosuvastatin (Crestor®). This is not a complete list of medicines. Be sure to tell your healthcare professional about all the medicines you are**

Belief

in myself
in my doctor
in my care



PREZISTA now offers **ONCE-DAILY** dosing for adults taking HIV meds for the first time.

PREZISTA must be taken with 100 mg ritonavir (Norvir®) and with food. PREZISTA must be taken in combination with other HIV meds.

Talk to your healthcare professional to see if PREZISTA is right for you.

 **PREZISTA**[®]
(darunavir) tablets
NOW ONCE DAILY

Please visit www.PREZISTA.com

taking or plan to take, including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements

- Tell your healthcare professional if you are taking estrogen-based contraceptives (birth control). PREZISTA might reduce the effectiveness of estrogen-based contraceptives. You must take additional precautions for birth control, such as condoms
- Before taking PREZISTA, tell your healthcare professional if you have any medical conditions, including allergy to sulfa medicines, diabetes, liver problems (including hepatitis B or C), or hemophilia
- Tell your healthcare professional if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant, or are breastfeeding
 - The effects of PREZISTA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. You and your healthcare professional will need to decide if taking PREZISTA is right for you
 - Do not breastfeed if you are taking PREZISTA. You should not breastfeed if you have HIV because of the chance of passing HIV to your baby

- High blood sugar, diabetes or worsening of diabetes, and increased bleeding in people with hemophilia have been reported in patients taking protease inhibitor medicines, including PREZISTA
- Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking HIV medicines, including PREZISTA. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time
- As with other protease inhibitors, taking PREZISTA may strengthen the body's immune response, enabling it to begin to fight infections that have been hidden. Patients may experience signs and symptoms of inflammation that can include swelling, tenderness, or redness
- The most common side effects related to taking PREZISTA include diarrhea, nausea, headache, and abdominal pain. Uncommon but severe side effects such as inflammation of the pancreas and increased blood fat levels have also been rarely reported. This is not a complete list of all possible side effects. If you experience these or other symptoms, talk to your healthcare professional. Do not stop taking PREZISTA or any other medicines without first talking to your healthcare professional

- Please refer to the ritonavir (Norvir®) Product Information (PI and PPI) for additional information on precautionary measures

For adults taking HIV meds for the first time: PREZISTA 800 mg (two 400-mg tablets) must be taken at the same time with 100 mg Norvir® once daily every day. PREZISTA must be taken with food (the type of food is not important).

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA.

Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Important Patient Information on the next page for more information, or visit www.PREZISTA.com.

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IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION

FDA-Approved Patient Labeling

PREZISTA® (darunavir) Tablets

Patient Information about

PREZISTA (pre-ZIS-ta)

for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection
Generic name: darunavir (da-ROO-nuh-veer)

ALERT: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with PREZISTA. Please also read the section "Who should not take PREZISTA?".

Please read this information before you start taking PREZISTA. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss your treatment with PREZISTA prior to the first time you take your medicine and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using PREZISTA and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with a doctor.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION I SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PREZISTA?

PREZISTA, together with NORVIR® (ritonavir), has rarely been observed to cause liver problems which may be life-threatening. It was not always clear if PREZISTA caused these liver problems because some patients had other illnesses or were taking other medicines. Your healthcare professional should do blood tests prior to initiating combination treatment including PREZISTA. If you have chronic hepatitis B or C infection, your healthcare professional should check your blood tests more often because you have an increased chance of developing liver problems. Please also read the section "What are the possible side effects of PREZISTA?".

Rarely, PREZISTA has been reported to cause a severe or life-threatening rash. Contact your healthcare provider if you develop a rash. Your healthcare provider will advise you whether your symptoms can be managed on therapy or whether PREZISTA should be stopped.

WHAT IS PREZISTA?

PREZISTA is an oral tablet used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) infection in adults. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). PREZISTA is a type of anti-HIV medicine called a protease (PRO-tee-ase) inhibitor.

HOW DOES PREZISTA WORK?

PREZISTA blocks HIV protease, an enzyme which is needed for HIV to multiply. When used with other anti-HIV medicines, PREZISTA can help to reduce the amount of HIV in your blood (called "viral load") and increase your CD4 (T) cell count. HIV infection destroys CD4 (T) cells, which are important to the immune system. The immune system helps fight infection. Reducing the amount of HIV and increasing the CD4 (T) cell count may improve your immune system and, thus, reduce the risk of death or infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

PREZISTA is always taken with and at the same time as 100 mg of ritonavir (NORVIR®), in combination with other anti-HIV medicines. PREZISTA should also be taken with food.

DOES PREZISTA CURE HIV OR AIDS?

PREZISTA does **not** cure HIV infection or AIDS. At present, there is no cure for HIV infection. People taking PREZISTA may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although PREZISTA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, PREZISTA can help reduce your risks of getting illnesses associated with HIV infection (AIDS and opportunistic infection) and eventually dying from these conditions.

DOES PREZISTA REDUCE THE RISK OF PASSING HIV TO OTHERS?

PREZISTA does **not** reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact, sharing needles, or being exposed to your blood. For your health and the health of others, it is important to always practice safer sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom or other barrier method to lower the chance of sexual contact with any body fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions, or blood. Never re-use or share needles.

Ask your doctor if you have any questions on how to prevent passing HIV to other people.

WHAT SHOULD I TELL MY DOCTOR BEFORE I TAKE PREZISTA?

Tell your doctor about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- are allergic to sulfa medicines.
- have diabetes. In general, anti-HIV medicines, such as PREZISTA, might increase sugar levels in the blood.
- have liver problems, including hepatitis B and/or C.
- have hemophilia. Anti-HIV medicines, such as PREZISTA, might increase the risk of bleeding.
- are pregnant or planning to become pregnant. The effects of PREZISTA on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. You and your doctor will need to decide if taking PREZISTA is right for you. If you take PREZISTA while you are pregnant, talk to your doctor about how you can be included in the Antiretroviral Pregnancy Registry.
- are breastfeeding. Do not breastfeed if you are taking PREZISTA. You should not breastfeed if you have HIV because of the chance of passing HIV to your baby. Talk with your doctor about the best way to feed your baby.

WHO SHOULD NOT TAKE PREZISTA?*

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether taking PREZISTA is right for you.

Do not take PREZISTA if you:

- are allergic to darunavir or any of the other ingredients in PREZISTA
- are allergic to ritonavir (NORVIR®)
- take any of the following types of medicines because you could experience serious side effects:

Type of Drug	Examples of Generic Names (Brand Names)
Ergot Derivatives (to treat migraine and headaches)	dihydroergotamine (D.H.E. 45®, Migranal®) ergonovine ergotamine (Cafergot®, Ergomar®) methyletergonovine
Gastrointestinal Motility Agent (to treat some digestive conditions)	cisapride
Neuroleptic (to treat psychiatric conditions)	pimozide (Orap®)
Sedative/hypnotics (to treat trouble with sleeping and/or anxiety)	oral midazolam triazolam (Halcion®)
Herbal Product	St. John's wort (<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>)
HMG-CoA Reductase inhibitors (also known as statins) (to lower cholesterol levels)	lovastatin (Mevacor®, Altoprev®, Advicor®) simvastatin (Zocor®, Simcor®, Vytorin®)
Antimycobacterial (to treat tuberculosis or <i>Mycobacterium avium</i> complex)	rifampin (Rifadin®, Rifater®, Rifamate®, Rimactane®)

CAN PREZISTA BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?*

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including prescription and nonprescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. PREZISTA and many other medicines can interact. Sometimes serious side effects will happen if PREZISTA is taken with certain other medicines (see "Who should not take PREZISTA?").

Tell your doctor if you are taking estrogen-based contraceptives (birth control). PREZISTA might reduce the effectiveness of estrogen-based contraceptives. You must take additional precautions for birth control such as a condom.

Tell your doctor if you take other anti-HIV medicines. PREZISTA can be combined with some other anti-HIV medicines while other combinations are not recommended.

Tell your doctor if you are taking any of the following medicines:

Type of Drug	Examples of Generic Names (Brand Names)
Antiarrhythmics (to treat abnormal heart rhythms)	bepidil lidocaine (Lidoderm®) quinidine amiodarone (Cordarone®) digoxin (Lanoxin®) flecainide (Tambocor®) propafenone (Rythmol®) warfarin (Coumadin®)
Anticoagulants (to treat and prevent blood clots)	
Anticonvulsants (to treat epilepsy and prevent seizures)	carbamazepine (Tegretol®, Carbatrol®) phenobarbital phenytoin (Dilantin®, Phenytek®)
Antidepressants (to treat depression)	trazodone (Desyrel®) desipramine (Norpramin®) clarithromycin (Biaxin®)
Anti-infectives (to treat bacterial infections)	
Antifungals (to treat fungal infections)	ketoconazole (Nizoral®) itraconazole (Sporanox®) voriconazole (Vfend®) rifabutin (Mycobutin®)
Antimycobacterials (to treat tuberculosis or <i>Mycobacterium avium</i> complex)	
β-Blockers (to treat high blood pressure, heart attack, or heart failure or to lower pressure in the eye)	metoprolol (Lopressor®, Toprol-XL®) timolol (Betimol®, Combigan®, Istalol®, Cosopt®, Timoptic®)
Benzodiazepines (to treat anxiety and/or trouble with sleeping)	midazolam administered by injection
Calcium Channel Blockers (to treat heart disease)	felodipine (Plendil®) nifedipine (Adalat®) nicardipine (Cardene®)
Corticosteroids (to treat inflammation or asthma)	dexamethasone fluticasone propionate (Advair Diskus®, Cutivate®, Flonase®, Flovent Diskus®) atorvastatin (Lipitor®) pravastatin (Pravacho®) rosuvastatin (Crestor®)
HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors (also known as statins) (to lower cholesterol levels)	
Immunosuppressants (to prevent organ transplant rejection)	cyclosporine (Sandimmune®, Neoral®) tacrolimus (Prograf®) sirolimus (Rapamune®) methadone
Narcotic Analgesics (to treat narcotic withdrawal and dependence)	
Neuroleptics (to treat schizophrenia or bipolar disorder)	risperidone (Risperdal®, Risperdal® Consta®, Risperdal® M-TAB®) thioridazine
PDE-5 Inhibitors (to treat erectile dysfunction)	sildenafil (Viagra®) vardenafil (Levitra®) tadalafil (Cialis®)
Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) (to treat depression, anxiety, or panic disorder)	paroxetine (Paxil®) sertraline (Zoloft®)

Tell your doctor if you are taking any medicines that you obtained without a prescription.

This is **not** a complete list of medicines that you should tell your doctor that you are taking. Know and keep track of all the medicines you take and have a list of them with you. Show this list to all of your doctors and pharmacists any time you get a new medicine. Both your doctor and your pharmacist can tell you if you can take these other medicines with PREZISTA. Do not start any new medicines while you are taking PREZISTA without first talking with your doctor or pharmacist. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for a list of medicines that can interact with PREZISTA.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE PREZISTA?

Take PREZISTA tablets every day exactly as prescribed by your doctor. You must take ritonavir (NORVIR®) at the same time as PREZISTA.

- For adults who have never taken anti-HIV medicines, the usual dose is 800 mg (two 400 mg tablets) of PREZISTA, together with 100 mg (one 100 mg capsule) of ritonavir (NORVIR®), once daily *every day*.
- For adults who have taken anti-HIV medicines in the past, the usual dose is 600 mg (one 600 mg tablet or two 300 mg tablets) of PREZISTA, together with 100 mg (one 100 mg capsule) of ritonavir (NORVIR®), twice daily *every day*.

PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®) should be taken together at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®), your doctor can help you decide which schedule works for you.

Take PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®) with food. The type of food is not important. Swallow the whole tablets with a drink such as water or milk. Do not chew the tablets.

Continue taking PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®) unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®) that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®), you must not skip doses or interrupt therapy. If you don't take PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®) as prescribed, the beneficial effects of PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®) may be reduced or even lost.

Patients taking 800 mg of PREZISTA once daily

If you miss a dose of PREZISTA (two 400 mg tablets) or ritonavir (NORVIR®) by more than 12 hours, wait and then take the next dose of PREZISTA (two 400 mg tablets) and ritonavir (NORVIR®) at the regularly scheduled time. If you miss a dose of PREZISTA (two 400 mg tablets) or ritonavir (NORVIR®) by less than 12 hours, take your missed dose of PREZISTA (two 400 mg tablets) and ritonavir (NORVIR®) immediately. Then take your next dose of PREZISTA (two 400 mg tablets) and ritonavir (NORVIR®) at the regularly scheduled time.

IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION

Patients taking 600 mg of PREZISTA twice daily

If you miss a dose of PREZISTA (one 600 mg tablet or two 300 mg tablets) or ritonavir (NORVIR®) by more than 6 hours, wait and then take the next dose of PREZISTA (one 600 mg tablet or two 300 mg tablets) and ritonavir (NORVIR®) at the regularly scheduled time. If you miss a dose of PREZISTA (one 600 mg tablet or two 300 mg tablets) or ritonavir (NORVIR®) by less than 6 hours, take your missed dose of PREZISTA (one 600 mg tablet or two 300 mg tablets) and ritonavir (NORVIR®) immediately. Then take your next dose of PREZISTA (one 600 mg tablet or two 300 mg tablets) and ritonavir (NORVIR®) at the regularly scheduled time.

You should always take PREZISTA and ritonavir (NORVIR®) together with food.

If a dose of PREZISTA or ritonavir (NORVIR®) is skipped, do not double the next dose. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of PREZISTA or ritonavir (NORVIR®) at any one time.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF PREZISTA?

Like all prescription drugs, PREZISTA can cause side effects. The following is not a complete list of side effects reported with PREZISTA when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV medicines. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

PREZISTA, together with NORVIR® (ritonavir), has rarely been observed to cause liver problems which may be life-threatening. It was not always clear if PREZISTA caused these liver problems because some patients had other illnesses or were taking other medicines. Your healthcare professional should do blood tests prior to initiating combination treatment including PREZISTA. If you have chronic hepatitis B or C infection, your healthcare professional should check your blood tests more often because you have an increased chance of developing liver problems.

Talk to your healthcare professional about the signs and symptoms of liver problems. These may include yellowing of your skin or whites of your eyes, dark (tea colored) urine, pale colored stools (bowel movements), nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, or pain, aching or sensitivity on your right side below your ribs.

Rash has been reported in 10.3% of subjects receiving PREZISTA. In some patients, PREZISTA has been reported to cause a severe or life-threatening rash. Contact your healthcare provider if you develop a rash. Your healthcare provider will advise you whether your symptoms can be managed on therapy or whether PREZISTA should be stopped.

Other relevant severe side effects reported at an uncommon or rare frequency were inflammation of the liver or pancreas, increased blood fat levels, diabetes, and changes in body fat.

Some side effects are typical for anti-HIV medicines in the same family as PREZISTA. These are:

- high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) and diabetes. This can happen in patients taking PREZISTA or other protease inhibitor medicines. Some patients have diabetes before starting treatment with PREZISTA which gets worse. Some patients get diabetes during treatment with PREZISTA. Some patients will need changes in their diabetes medicine. Some patients may need new diabetes medicine.
- increased bleeding in patients with hemophilia.
- changes in body fat. These changes can happen in patients taking anti-HIV medicines, including PREZISTA. The changes may include an increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck, breast, and around the back, chest, and stomach area. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known.

- immune reconstitution syndrome. In some patients with advanced HIV infection (AIDS) and a history of opportunistic infection, signs and symptoms of inflammation from previous infections may occur soon after anti-HIV treatment, including PREZISTA, is started. It is believed that these symptoms are due to an improvement in the body's immune response, enabling the body to fight infections that may have been present with no obvious symptoms.

The most common side effects include diarrhea, nausea, headache, and abdominal pain.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms. If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

WHAT DO PREZISTA TABLETS LOOK LIKE?

PREZISTA 300 mg tablets are orange, oval-shaped, film-coated tablets mentioning "300" on one side and "TMC114" on the other side.

PREZISTA 400 mg tablets are light orange, oval-shaped, film-coated tablets mentioning "400" on one side and "TMC" on the other side.

PREZISTA 600 mg tablets are orange, oval-shaped, film-coated tablets mentioning "600" on one side and "TMC" on the other side.

HOW SHOULD I STORE PREZISTA TABLETS?

Store PREZISTA tablets at room temperature (77°F (25°C)). Short-term exposure to higher or lower temperatures [from 59°F (15°C) to 86°F (30°C)] is acceptable. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions about storing your tablets.

This medication is prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep PREZISTA and all of your medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This leaflet provides a summary of information about PREZISTA. If you have any questions or concerns about either PREZISTA or HIV, talk to your doctor.

For additional information, you may also call Tibotec Therapeutics at 1-877-REACH-TT or 1-877-732-2488.

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Distributed by:

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Division of Ortho Biotech Products, L.P., Raritan NJ 08869

Patent Numbers: 5,843,946; 6,248,775; 6,335,460 and other US patents pending

NORVIR® is a registered trademark of its respective owner.

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Revised: October 2008

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The Snow Queen. Photo by Liz Lauren

THEATER REVIEW

The Snow Queen

Playwright: music & lyrics by Michael Smith
At: Victory Gardens Theatre, 2433 N. Lincoln
Phone: 773-871-3000; \$20-\$37
Runs through: Dec. 28

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

A show must be ready for an audience on its opening night, of course. But just as Rome wasn't built in a day, so do long-running seasonal revivals often undergo considerable tweaking from year to year. The Snow Queen's 2006 premiere production at Victory Gardens Theatre, adapted by Frank Galati, Blair Thomas and Michael Smith from the Hans Christian Andersen story, barely made it past intermission. But after a first act glutted with grotesque slow-moving mannequins and dirges reminding us that—surprise!—winter is dark and cold, the second act suddenly blossomed with quick-stepping, catchy ditties that set listeners to smiling and

swaying in their seats until the plot mandated a return to grim solemnity.

Its 2007 remount reflected lessons learned. Gone were the white robes and gray skies, replaced by the glowing reds and golds with which Scandinavian countries chase away the subarctic gloom. Scenes formerly dominated by saurian puppets were enlivened by a squad of dancers under the guidance of choreographer Jim Corti (who could coax a polka out of two barcaloungers, with the right accordionist). And Michael Smith's score, the foundation for the all-musical text, now included a number of likewise pop-oriented ditties—an argot-laced grump for a pair of wooden soldiers, for example, or an earthy blues duet for a mother-and-daughter bandit gang. And who could go wrong with a lament by a princess bored with clueless boys?

But this isn't Wicked, and besides, what The Snow Queen is all about is a teenage girl's heroic journey to rescue her guy-friend after a magic spell renders him stupid. So for 2008, the hedonistic lad has a moment of insight where he renounces the brain-numbing temptations of—you guessed it—gaming on the internet, thus

making him worthy of the young woman who braves so many dangers on his behalf. (Did I mention the thrilling martial-arts battle with the Queen's guards?)

These new elements, far from protracting the narrative, actually serve to move the action along faster: A raven's love song takes on a roguish edge, a formerly-cloying description of Her Frigid Majesty's icy palace emerges as a lockstep march and the joys of male adolescence are delineated with rock-concert body language. The proven crowd-pleasers—notably the show-stopping Love Letter On A Fish—are still in evidence, too. But look for this original work-in-progress to continue growing on its road to success.

THEATER REVIEW

America: All Better

Playwright: the Second City ensemble
At: Second City at
Piper's Alley, 1616 N. Wells
Phone: 312-337-3992; \$20-\$25
Runs through: open

BY MARY SHEN BARNIDGE

When a pale, underfed Olympic gymnast, played by Shelly Gossman, does a balance-beam walk—for real—along the balcony rail in the Piper's Alley mainstage, daintily stepping over the pint-glasses of patrons too stunned to remove their hazardous debris, we barely hear the ringside commentary. That is, until she shows signs of faltering, whereupon audience members at the performance I attended lept to offer her sweaters, hugs and warm support.

You see, Michael Patrick O'Brien's tales-from-the-crypt host has earlier informed us that we are living in a "scary America," and *that* means we must all stick together. This is the ethos making this 96th revue by Chicago's venerated Second City company one of the most compassionate in recent memory, its empathy heightened by action carried out into the house to diminish the us-and-them dynamic so often infecting this comedy genre. Even that old stand-by, the "bash

the rich" sketch—in this case, recounting the travails of a Lake Forest family forced to relocate to Des Plaines ("and ride the Metra, where they drink beer from paper bags"), rejects mean-spirited caricature, instead letting the situation inspire the irony.

The political satire that is Second City's stock-in-trade is served up in abundance: a shetland-pony wig and David Mamet vocabulary identifies governor Blagojevich easily, while a martial fanfare proclaims Rahm Emmanuel a "Hebrew hit man." The mayor's gaffes addressing foreign delegates is standard-issue (albeit well-executed) mockery, as is the hip-talking African-American studies professor. But reflecting genuine social change is the pro wrestler who delivers a calm and rational analysis of her opponent's rancor, to the disappointment of a sportscaster demanding rabid fury, and a classroom of children (their teacher, too) who succeed in taking a small step away from ethnophobia.

Not all the concepts work equally well. The sensitivity games in a murderers' rehab group take too long to set up, and a Pirandello-esque marriage proposal between actors in mid-scene gets lost in faux fourth-wall breakdown. But the show that opens with a cheerful serenade, repeatedly interrupted by gloomy news, finishes by incorporating the words of our new president-elect (who never appears, but whose message of hope suffuses the evening like the aura of a quietly defiant muse) into a lesson reminding us, as it sends us home, that courage and conviction—even only feigned—will always defeat the fears our imaginations render bigger and scarier than they truly are.

'Marvin's Room' at Redtwist

Marvin's Room—a drama about the joys of love and living that came from the mind of the late playwright Scott McPherson—is running at Redtwist Theatre, 1044 W. Bryn Mawr.

Tickets are \$22-\$30. Visit www.redtwist.org or call 773-728-7529.

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The Seafarer. Photo by Michael Brosilow

THEATER REVIEW The Seafarer

Playwright: **Conor McPherson**
At: **Steppenwolf Theatre, 1650 N. Halsted**
Phone: **312-335-1650; \$20-\$70**
Runs through: **Feb. 28**

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

Any description of Conor McPherson's *The Seafarer* is doomed to fall short. Try to deconstruct the plot or sum up the characters and you only cheapen what is sublime, reducing a masterpiece to a soulless outline.

You want to know what the piece feels like? Read Samuel Taylor Coleridge's haunting, horrifying *Kubla Khan*—a howling banshee of a poem where unspeakably beautiful sea sirens lure sailors to their deaths, down into wailing in tombs of ice fathoms below the bottom of the ocean.

In the cold, annihilating nowhere of *Kubla Khan*, you are utterly, eternally alone. Or, as the high stakes gambler Mr. Lockhart puts it midway through *The Seafarer*: "[T]here truly is no one to love you. ... Even He's sick of you." It's with a sense of exquisite symmetry that McPherson's black-as-dark-matter comedy is prefaced by a stanza from *Kubla Khan*. The poem is never uttered on stage, but Coleridge's fearsome cry—"Beware! Beware! His flashing eyes, his floating hair!" informs this astounding tale from start to finish.

Set in a filthy basement flat, *The Seafarer* might seem like an unlikely masterpiece. But there's no denying its power. It is spellbinding, and continues to be so long after the final curtain call. Weeks after you've seen *The Seafarer*, it will creep up on you, causing you to shiver on a warm sunny day or tear up at profound beauty found in something as seemingly insignificant as a common housefly. It's a corker of a horror story, and a tale of redemption as sweet and powerful true religion.

It takes place over the course of an all-night poker game among a group of hard-drinking Dubliners, losers all by any standard you'd care to apply. Sharky (Francis Guinan), is a miserable dry drunk, white-knuckling it through minute after torturous minute of sobriety while caring for his endlessly demanding, blind and disgustingly bath-averse brother Richard (John Mahoney).

Joining the brothers for a Christmas Eve card game is the hapless, good-natured Ivan (Alan Wilder) and the seedily handsome Nicky (Randall

Newsome). And then there's Nicky's new friend Mr. Lockhart (Tom Irwin), a stranger in a dangerously well-tailored suit.

Director Randall Arney orchestrates McPherson's slow burn of a narrative to perfection. This is a cast of men at the height of their creative powers, and an ensemble that defines the very term.

And then there's Tom Irwin as Mr. Lockhart. Radiating a lethal aura of charm and malevolence, he is unforgettable as an entity desperately trying—like everyone else—to make it through Christmas without cracking into a thousand points of annihilating pain. As for the much-publicized monologue deep in the second act we'll risk sounding hyperbolic and simply say this: You don't want to die without hearing it. Really.

ONLINE THIS WEEK...

REVIEW OF:

—John & Jen

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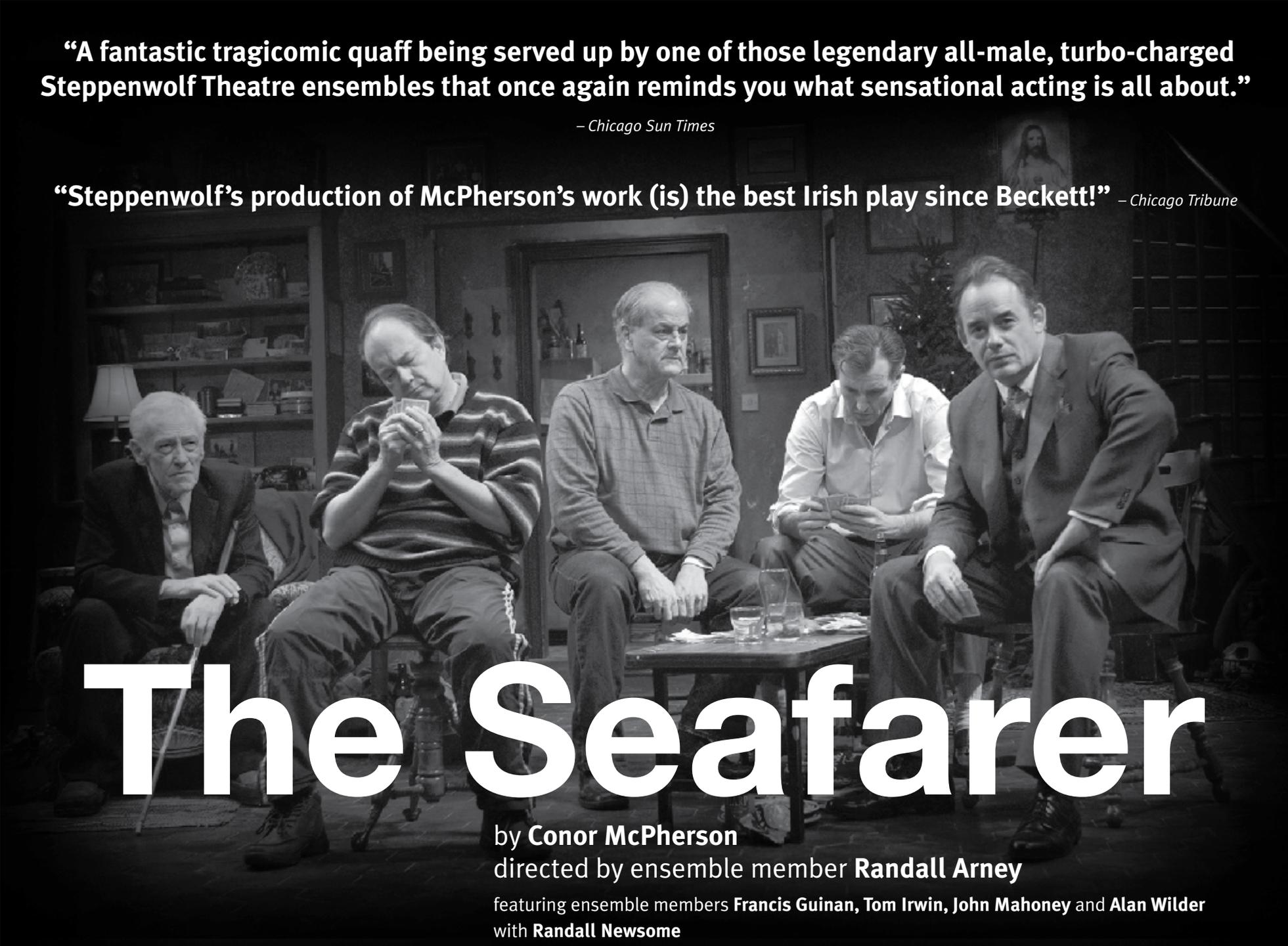
Profiles Theatre, currently celebrating its 20th-anniversary season, will host a benefit evening with acclaimed playwright and filmmaker Neil LaBute Saturday, Jan. 3, at Profiles Theatre, 4147 N. Broadway, at 6:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$50 each; call 773-549-1815 or e-mail proartdir@aol.com.

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THEATER REVIEW

The Bowery Boys

Playwright: Book and lyrics

by David Bell, music by Jeremy Cohen

At: Marriott Lincolnshire,

10 Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire

Phone: 847-634-0200; \$45 - \$55

Runs through: Feb. 15

BY CATEY SULLIVAN

The economy being what it is, you could argue there's a layer of preposterous fantasy inherent to the tales of Horatio Alger. The 19th-century writer's stories are all essentially the same: Plucky homeless orphan goes from rags to riches powered by nothing but his (Alger's is a boys' world) wits and All-American gumption. Today, such a transformation seems about as likely as a major regional theater taking a chance on a brand new musical. Oh, wait.

Applause to the Marriott for giving The Bowery Boys, David Bell's musical take on Horatio Alger, a world premiere of terrific production values and a robust cast. "Boys" needs some work—the plot is convoluted, the first act is a bit sluggish—but it's a pleasurable antidote to all those producers who would rather foist the 500th revival of Grease on audiences than try something new.

With Bell's book and lyrics and Jeremy Cohen's pleasant score (which echoes George M. Cohan's Yankee Doodle Dandy, and Give My Regards to Broadway), The Bowery Boys is a pleasant, uncomplicated diversion. Set in 1880s New York City, this is a show where shades of gray (between good and bad) have no place. The Tammany boys are conniving thugs, the Bowery boys

are golden-hearted innocents and there's no question about who will win eventually triumph. Despite harsh cruelties inherent to a story about homeless kids trying not to starve on skid row, muckraking photographer Jacob Riis would find little to photograph here.

Moreover, there's no denying the humor written into the bad guys. One of the biggest laughs comes from a Tammany operative you can imagine Patrick Fitzgerald hauling off to the hoosegow:

"You want in? You gotta buy in. We're the government for God's sakes," the crook snarls in a hilariously ripped-from-the-headlines moment. In all, the bad guys are a lot more interesting than the likable but bland leads (Brian Sears as the entrepreneurial bootblack Dick and Morgan Weed, a sort of Eponine-lite as the refined immigrant lass Mary.)

"Yer sister's one big bundle of bad," says government henchman Roughhouse (Jeffrey Baumgartener, one big bundle of hoodlum) to his boss, Kid Twist (a deliciously weasely Jeff Dumas). He's talking about the hard-as-nails, morally flexible Nanny Mae. Although the villainess is miscast—Lesley Bevan is all pristine and porcelain in a role that calls for the exact opposite—Bell's dialogue makes it clear that this is character you love to hate.

If The Bowery Boys has a life beyond the Marriott, Matt Raftery's choreography should go with it. Drawing on influences from Irish step-dancing to tin-pan alley tap, the boffo dance numbers propel the piece along even when the book lags.

It's a spirited show, and enough to make one forgive the Marriott for including Nunsense in its season.

KNIGHT
AT
THE
MOVIES

Valkyrie.

Valkyrie,
The Reader,
film note

BY RICHARD KNIGHT, JR.

Hey kids: This year it's Nazis for Christmas! Believe it or not, we have not one but two movies—the Tom Cruise-led political thriller **Valkyrie** and the romantic drama **The Reader**, with Kate Winslet—opening Christmas Day that revolve around one of the darkest periods in modern history. (A third—Defiance, the story of Jewish resistance fighters battling Nazis that stars Daniel Craig—opens here mid-January.)

What's there to say about Valkyrie, the oft-delayed Cruise film in which he plays Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, a high-ranking Nazi officer who decided in 1943 that Hitler needed to be killed and, along with other party commanders, hatched a plan to do so? Director Bryan Singer's movie is certainly well-made and well-cast, with apparently every credible British actor that could be rounded up.

Further, Cruise—sporting an eye patch and thick, curly hair—actually dials down his usual intensity. The period design of the film, set in Germany, has been lavishly recreated. (There are enough crisp Nazi uniforms to furnish dozens of road companies of The Producers.) The film is gorgeously shot and edited, and the music score by John Ottman is filled with enough percussion crashes to start an avalanche. So it turns out that Valkyrie is not the camp fest that I relished or the dud that I predicted. However, it's still a picture that begs the questions "Why was this movie made in the first place?" and "Who was it made for?"

No matter how many ways you add the pluses—the film's sharp look and its pretty good acting (for the most part)—it's still Nazis trying to get rid of other Nazis. Even if you buy into the theme that some of the Nazis had a change of heart about *der Fuhrer* and decided that they wanted no part of the crazy bastard, or if you just take it straight as nothing more than a history lesson, it's still not a particularly involving movie.

Stripped of the over-the-top special effects that have driven Cruise's most successful vehicles, Valkyrie doesn't offer much in its place. It certainly doesn't work as a suspense picture because the suspense is so baldly manufactured and telegraphed as to be unbelievable (with enough "knowing looks" between the plotters to tip off a five-year-old) and, without suspense, what else is there to drive a movie like this?

What characters can one pin his or her hopes on in its absence? The pretty wife? Cruise's fetching male *aide de camp*, ready to take a bullet for him? There's just nothing else to the movie and though gay director Singer has assembled a group of hunky extras, it doesn't offer enough gratuitous male eye candy to justify its length. (Even Thomas Kretschmann, who wears a bikini in a moment of gratuitous male ogling, turns out to be just a tease). In the end, Valkyrie is not bad, not good and not much of anything—bringing to mind the late singer Billy Preston's

line, "Nothin' from nothin' leaves nothin'."

While watching *The Reader*, on the other hand, one never suffers from boredom. This *über*-romantic drama set in Germany and New York, focusing on the affair between a 15-year-old German teen (David Kross, in a memorable debut) and an older woman of mystery (Kate Winslet in a terse, superbly restrained performance) is awash in unabashed sensuality—at least in the first section. The film is told in flashbacks and flash-forwards over a 50-year period in which the teen, now seen as an adult (Ralph Fiennes), finds himself reflecting on his unforgettable affair and its tragic aftermath. One can't blame him. The sex scenes between Kross and Winslet, as captured by out director Stephen Daldry, are unforgettable—so lusty that the audience comes to anticipate the afternoon trysts as much as the randy young teen. (This is especially true in the scene where Winslet bathes a fully nude Kross.)

Then the affair ends as mysteriously as it began and it is only years later that Kross, by chance, will come to realize that Winslet was hiding a very thorny past. The complicated plot contains more than a hint of *Sophie's Choice*—what with the wide-eyed innocent falling in love with the doomed, sad beauty haunted by her past transgressions and the Nazi stuff. But there are also echoes of many other really old, satisfying tearjerkers (especially *Madame X*). The movie, with its gorgeous score by Nico Muhly, is excessively literate—Kross reads to Winslet at her insistence (*The Odyssey*, *Hunk Finn*, etc.) and the plot hangs on this conceit. But it's the sensuality of the affair (that eventually leads to love) that is the movie's greatest accomplishment. Daldry has captured the impact of a first love—the kind that brands the heart forever—and it lingers throughout the movie and long after it's over. This makes *The Reader*, this year's *Atonement*, an example of tragic film romance at its sensual height.

Department of Shameless Self Promotion: Attention landlubbers! In a nice alternative to the bars this New Year's Eve, my alter ego (Dick O'Day) is hosting another edition of **Camp Midnight**, the film series dedicated to presenting "the best of the worst." I'm once again teaming up with David Cerda and his crew of Handbag Production players and the Music Box for a New Year's Eve screening of the 1972 disaster flick *The Poseidon Adventure*. We'll have a jam-packed pre-show, complete with contests, surprise performances, prizes and more; it all begins at 11 p.m., and is followed by the screening. And get this: When the ship flips onscreen at *Midnight* as Shelley Winters, Stella Stevens, Ernest Borgnine *et al.* are celebrating their fateful New Year's Eve aboard the S.S. Poseidon, we'll be doing the exact same thing in the theatre. Tickets, which include a champagne toast and party favors, are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. A portion of the proceeds will help fund the forthcoming revival of *Hell* in a Handbag's hit musical *Poseidon*! See www.musicboxtheatre.com.

Check out my archived reviews and **Knight at Home at the Movies** column for DVD recommendations at www.windycitytimes.com or www.knightatthemovies.com. Readers can leave feedback at the latter Web site.



Fonda supports Laramie

On Dec. 1, Moisés Kaufman and members of Tectonic Theater Project unveiled the work-in-progress draft of the new epilogue to *The Laramie Project* at the New York Theater Workshop. The event was followed by a Q&A session and a reception. Among those in attendance were many supporters of Tectonic, including Jane Fonda, shown with Kaufman (middle) and Kevin Jennings, the project's board chair.

SPOTLIGHT



They may not take it all off like their burlesque counterparts, but *The Flaming Dames Torch Cabaret* promises an arousing time with **Have a Very Sexy Christmas**. This revue, co-produced by New Millennium Theatre Company of Chicago, puts the emphasis on "naughty" instead of "nice" for the holiday season. *Have a Very Sexy Christmas* plays 8:30 and 10:30 p.m. Fridays through Jan. 2 at The Spot, 4437 N. Broadway. Tickets are \$10-\$15; call 312-458-9083 or visit www.nmtchicago.org. Photo by Leslie Kerrigan

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Windy City Media Group includes Windy City Times, Nightspots and WindyCityQueercast.com

WHAT TO DO?

Thursday, Dec. 25

Spin Fierce Drag cabaret with Lady Vera Parker, \$5 PINK vodka cocktails, 11 p.m., 800 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

Friday, Dec. 26

Celebrate Chanukah at Or Chadash, starting with a latke and chicken pot luck dinner, 7 p.m. Hanukiat/Menorah candles and Shabbat service, 8 p.m. Bring your menorahs and light up the night. (773) 271-2148, office@OrChadash.org or www.OrChadash.org

Hydrate Regifting Party, complimentary hosted bar with our donation of clothing, toy or non-perishable food item, 9-11 p.m., followed by DJ Ron Geronimo, 3458 N. Halsted St., hydratechicago.com

Kwanzaa Celebration dinner, 6 p.m., program: 8 p.m. \$15 per non-member, \$12 member. DuSable Museum of African American History: Kwanzaa Karamu featuring Sammy Dyer School of the Performing Arts www.dusablemuseum.org

Spin The last shower contest of the season, sign up by 10:30 p.m., contest at 11:20 p.m., \$200 first prize, hosted by Foozie, 800 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

The Rails Christmas Party with DJ An-

ton, DJ Trade, DJ Ransom & DJ Stoney, \$6 before midnight, 1675 N. Elston, railschi@aol.com, 708-543-9114

Touché Toys For Big Boys gift exchange, bring your crappy gift for a chance to win, 6412 N. Clark St., touchechicago.com

Saturday, Dec. 27

Circuit Nitro presents DJ Billy Steele, hosted by Foozie, Sale-E, with beefed up dancing boys, \$15, \$10 in advance, 3641 N. Halsted St., n-2nitro.com

Hydrate Open decks, aspiring DJs compete for a chance to open for Chris Cox, 9-11 p.m., followed by DJ Scotty Thomson, 3458 N. Halsted St., hydratechicago.com

Spin WCRAD holiday mixer, complimentary hosted bar 8-9:30 p.m., guest bartender Vinny, 8-11 p.m., \$10 admission, 800 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

Touché Puppy Play party, playspace and toys for boy pups, 6412 N. Clark St., touchechicago.com

Sunday, Dec. 28

Spin Sing-A-Long Sundays presents Evita, 3 p.m., 800 W. Belmont Ave., spin-nightclub.com

Monday, Dec. 29

Ham Bingo comedic evening of drag queen Bingo, benefits Center on Halsted, 10 p.m., Hamburger Mary's, 5400 N. Clark. www.centeronhalsted.org

Tuesday, Dec. 30

In Motion: Empowerment for Holiday Stress, group coaching for LGBT/A people experiencing stressed family relationships this season. Living Well Ministries, 6554 N. Rockwell. 7:30-9 p.m. Pre-registration required. Cost: \$25/week

Open Mic, sponsored by SHURE and hosted by Kat Fitzgerald (folk/fock), 7 p.m. Every Tuesday dozens of musicians come to Uncommon Ground for Open Mic. Uncommon Ground Devon, 1401 W. Devon Ave. 773-465-9801

OUTmusic Queer Open Mic, free, mostly acoustic queer music. 7:30 p.m., Urban Café, 1467 W Irving Park 773-327-9427 www.urbancafechicago.com

Wednesday, Dec. 31

3160 A Naughty or Nice New Year's Eve with Pop Goes the Gio!, celebrate the hottest hits of 2008, dress in your naughty or nice outfit, champagne toast at midnight, no cover, 3160 N. Clark St., chicago3160.com

Berlin Leslie & the Lys give a beat-dazzled New Year's Eve party, wear your best gem sweater or make one at the bedazzling station, doors open 9 p.m., \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, 954 W. Belmont, berlinchicago.com

Camp Midnight The Poseidon Adventure, with Dick O'Day and the Hell In A Handbag players, celebrate midnight at the same time as the characters in the movie, champagne toast included, 11 p.m., Music Box Theatre, 3733 N. Southport, musicboxtheatre.com

In Motion: Empowerment for Holiday Stress, group coaching for LGBT/A people experiencing stressed family relationships this season. Living Well Ministries, 6554 N. Rockwell. 7:30-9 p.m. Pre-registration required. Cost: \$25/week

Jackhammer Candyland New Year's Eve, hundreds in cash toss by bartenders at midnight, Candyland shot specials, champagne fountain, hosted by Chanel Exotique, 6406 N. Clark St., 773-743-5772

Wild Pug New Year's Eve party, benefit for Northern Illinois Pug Rescue and Adoption, champagne toast, party favors, balloon drop, Baby New Year Shot Boy, VJ Bobby Marley, DJ Oskar, 4810 N. Broadway, worldsgreatestbar.com

Wed., Dec. 31



SPLISH SPLASH

Dick O'Day and the Hell in a Handbag players will host "Camp Midnight"—which will include a showing of The Poseidon Adventure, at the Music Box, 3733 N. Southport.



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Jason Stuart.

DVDs

Jason Stuart: 'Middle' man

BY OWEN KEEHNEN

Jason Stuart has been a groundbreaking gay actor and comedian for 25 years. He was one of the first gay actors to be out from the very start of his career.

His length of television and film credits is extensive and include *Will & Grace*, *Ping Pong Playa*, *House*, *George Lopez*, *Charmed*, *Kindergarten Cop*, *Vegas Vacation*, *The Drew Carey Show* and *Gia*, with Angelina Jolie. However, Stuart's greatest success has probably come with his stand-up comedy. Recently, he decided to produce and star in the here TV! special *Making It to the Middle*, chronicling his experience as a gay stand-up comic. The DVD of the special has just been released from Ariztical Entertainment. Recently, Stuart took a few moments to talk about *Making it in the Middle*.

Owen Keehnen: So, Jason, would you start by explaining the title of your new self-produced comedy DVD *Making it to the Middle*?

Jason Stuart: Well, I wanted to show what it was like to be in the middle of my life, in the middle of the country [and] in the middle of my career. I wanted to do a documentary about the reality of being a comic who's not totally famous and yet not a complete loser.

OK: So is the middle comfortable?

JS: It would be more comfortable if Scorsese was calling me for his next movie. I think I would like to get out of the middle and more towards the top.

OK: Well, the frame of the DVD is about your arriving in Columbus Ohio and preparing for a comedy show that night at a club. It is interspersed with you talking, preparing for the show and the show itself. What did you want to show with it all?

JS: That it's not all glamorous. The shows are great and the people are great, but it's a lot of hard work. That nightclub world can be brutal. I also wanted to create a record of what I have been doing for the past 20-25 years.

OK: What's the toughest part of it for you?

JS: The traveling, being in the middle of nowhere without my friends, the endless airports—and the angry flight attendants!

OK: So in that 20-25 years you must have witnessed a lot of changes.

JS: Yeah, part of what I wanted to do, too, was to have a chronicle of this. The comedy clubs have gotten more generic, so now I tend to play more colleges and gay events. I am closing the comedy-clubs chapter on my life for the most part. It isn't what it used to be. It's probably a 75-to-25 spread with straight to gay. Gay men are busy looking for sex (I know I'm one of them) or going to see my comedy pals Kathy Griffin or Margaret Cho.

OK: Why do you think that is?

JS: Gay men are not at the point where they

are able to support themselves, but we're close! Gay men need to realize that we can be as funny as a straight or bisexual woman. I think it is coming ... but they need a little nudge or a naked body, and I have one if they want it!

OK: Going along with that, this is a pretty mid-America audience as well and yet you flirt with the guys, dish [about] your Jewish family, make fun of Bush, push for gay marriage and make anti-military cracks. Do you ever curtail your material based on the crowd?

JS: I try to set up the jokes so each audience understands where I am coming from. I can't help it if someone is offended. Joan Rivers said if you don't offend some people in your audience you've lost your edge.

OK: So you don't temper the material?

JS: No. Recently I was in San Antonio, Texas, hosting the HRC Dinner they warned me not to joke about The Alamo! So you never know what is going to offend someone. I just try to be funny.

Read the entire interview with Jason Stuart at www.WindyCityMediaGroup.com.

MUSIC

Matt Alber: This romantic hides nothing

BY DAVID BYRNE

This year, Matt Alber released *Hide Nothing* on Tommy Boy's LGBT-focused imprint Silver Label. Here, the Kansas born musician blends classical influences with pop sensibilities. Songs like *The Slow Club* and *Monarch* have uplifting, heavenly choruses. *End of the World*—which has the most romantic gay video out there—can be heard in the films *Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom* and *The New 20*.

After tending to a washer that just exploded, this former Chanticleer singer talked with *Windy City Times* about his outstanding ethereal debut, what a romantic he is and how he ran into somebody from his past at a recent event in Los Angeles. Somehow, this self-confessed choir geek manages to chuckle or radiate a smile that can be felt through the phone. During our chat, Alber seemed amazed reflecting on his accomplishments, after all, he has made remarkable strides since moving to L.A. three years ago. It was no surprise that this handsome Cardinals fan is a joyous beam of light, just like his sensational music.

Windy City Times: You have starry-eyed and romantic themes throughout your album. Are you a romantic?

Matt Alber: Oh, I think that might be the first word to describe me. I tend to fall in love pretty quickly and pretty hard. I do like to be swept off my feet.

WCT: How much of your debut album, *Hide Nothing*, is autobiographical?

MA: It is 100-percent autobiographical. Every song came out of an experience or story that moved me or something that happened to me. The song *Nonchalant*, one I co-wrote with my friend Jeff Cerie, is about two people passing in the hallway, both trying to be nonchalant about their feelings. About a month later, my roommate became my husband. It makes me careful about what songs I write, just in case they come true.

WCT: So your song *Field Trip Buddy*, a universal queer tale of grade school crushes, is from experience?

MA: Not sure if you had that field trip as a kid—every year we did something like go see the *Nutcracker*. It was the one time I got to hold hands with another boy all day long. I looked forward to that. It was sort of like Christmas; that's what it felt like. I got a lot of responses from straight guys because they could identify with that. They had similar boy crushes as kids.

I wasn't really counting on that and was expecting it to resonate just with the gay audience.

WCT: I've seen your phenomenal videos for *Monarch* and *End of the World*. You are quite a visual artist!

MA: I'm really happy to have made a video for *End of the World*. We just finished editing it; it is a dream come true having a team come along and say that they want to visualize this song. We decided to make it at a barbershop in my neighborhood. Jerry the barber has been cutting hair for 50 years. The piece is set in the 1960s; it is a romantic gay story in a masculine environment.

WCT: Who is that guy dipping you in the video?

MA: That is Zak Barnett, who is good friends with the video's director, Robin Scovill. Before accepting a project, Robin waits for something to grab him. He hadn't done a music video in awhile and I am so glad he said yes. Zak is a really awesome openly gay actor in L.A. Instead of some supermodel next to me, we had somebody I could have real chemistry with. The video is now on Logo and we are inviting MTV and VH1 to air it. I am hoping the video will bring forward some momentum on overturning these unfair laws.

WCT: How was it playing at the premiere party for the movie *Noah's Arc: Jumping the Broom*?

MA: Oh my God, that was amazing. They invited me because *End of the World* is featured in it. The event was at the Highlands Hollywood. I was waiting to go on, since I got there super-early. I was standing on the landing and pinching myself. Three years ago I moved to L.A. and didn't know anybody. Standing outside to play with a string quartet and grand piano was a little overwhelming. There was a guest there, Raven Symone. The last time I saw her was five years prior, when I was a contestant on *Star Search* and she was a celebrity judge. This was when I was trying to be the first openly gay country singer. Raven gave me a really bad score. [Laughs] So I found it amusing that I got to sing for her.

WCT: On your album *Hide Nothing*, you cover Imogen Heap's *Hide and Seek*. What sparked that?

MA: She's my hero. I love the way she writes and delivers music. It's so up my alley. In any mood, I can reach for her music and feel better. It's a tribute to her. The song's theme sort of ties in with hiding and not hiding. I hope she hears it someday, but I am kind of scared to death if she does. Covering somebody's work is dangerous territory. One day I would love to tour with her.

WCT: How was debuting your song *Beotia* at the *Gay Games* in Chicago in 2006?

MA: It was a little while ago, but you can never forget singing in a stadium with a bunch of incredible athletes. I can close my eyes and see myself on the stage with the torch. I hope they invite me back.

WCT: What can you tell me about your re-



Matt Alber.

make of *Star of Wonder* by The Roches?

MA: My label asked me if I wanted to record a Christmas song. I was thinking through what I wanted to do, I just kind of racked my brain. I love the Roches. I can't help fall in love with their sound. So I decided upon *Star of Wonder* and Googled it, hoping maybe I will find the chords. Terre Roche—who wrote the song—published the music on her Web site, saying this song belongs to us all. It was a sign. I tried to take it to a bit of a newer direction with the idea of looking off to something and wondering if it is calling you. All proceeds go to L.A. Youth Network, which provides group homes and emergency shelter to homeless (mostly) gay teens in L.A. They don't have room for all of them and are trying to build more homes and a high school. These kids are getting left behind. As a teenager who was tossed out of his house for being gay, I identify with these survivors.

WCT: What can we expect from you in the near future?

MA: Currently I am putting together a tour of colleges and universities. I am working with some agencies, trying to give concerts and round table discussions covering what is like being an adult, a responsible, gay social person in this new era. Nobody talked about this at my school. I would have loved to have had somebody to discuss this. I am looking to working with choirs at these colleges, hoping to invite a local choir to be part of my concert each evening.

Alber's debut, *Hide Nothing*, is out now on the Silver Label imprint of Tommy Boy Records. For more on Matt Alber, please visit www.mattalber.com.

SPORTS

Wis. gay hockey league holding NYE party

The Madison Gay Hockey Association (MGHA) will hold its "Big Queer New Year's Eve Party" Dec. 31 at 10 p.m. at the Mediterranean Hookah Lounge and Cafe, 77 Sirloin Strip, Madison, Wis.

Tickets to the events are \$12 and are available at the door. Attendees must be at least 21. See www.madisongayhockey.org.

Qrew Chicago wants new name

Qrew Chicago, an all-inclusive rowing (or "crew") organization, is asking the community for help in finding a new name.

People are apparently having trouble with its name. Qrew Chicago President Scott Curcio said, "It's witty and catchy, but as we grow, we continue to realize that our name is difficult to pronounce and comprehend among the greater rowing community." Also, the organization feels that the "Q" puts a limit on the identity of its diverse group of rowers.

Name and logo ideas should be sent to membership@qrewchicago.org through Saturday, Jan. 10.

Gay Games gift certificates available

By visiting www.games-cologne.com and selecting "shop," people can purchase gift certificates—good for 25, 50 or 100 euros—that can be redeemed for Gay Games 2010 registration fees. If the recipient redeems the gift certificate by Dec. 31, he or she will qualify for an early-bird discount of 25 euros (about \$35) on the total bill. However, one without a gift certificate can also register by Dec. 31 and receive a discount.

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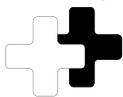

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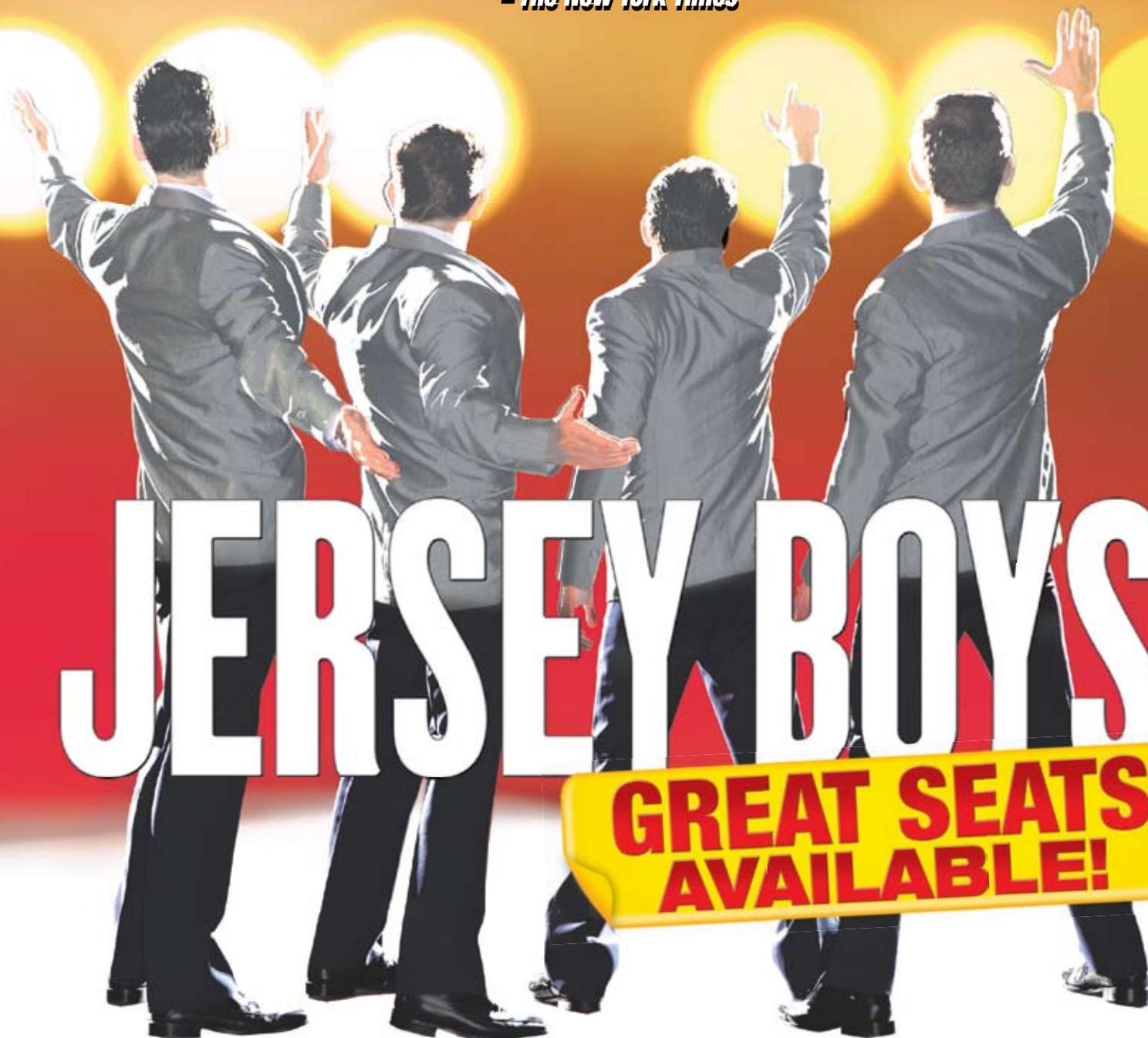
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