

THEATRE RHINOCEROS

John Fisher, Artistic Director

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TOM ORR JOINS THE CAST OF "tick tick ... BOOM!" on Thursday, 02/25/2010

Local actor Tom Orr, San Francisco's "original musical comedy cabaret porn star," happily joins the cast of Theatre Rhinoceros' current production of Jonathan Larsen's "tick tick ... BOOM!", a prequel of sorts to his RENT.

A veteran performer, producer and award-winning lyricist best known for his parody revue, DIRTY LITTLE SHOWTUNES!, which ran at Rhino in 1997, Mr. Orr was last seen on The Rhino's stage as the showstopping "Perky Little Porn Star (from Skokie, IL)" in their 2000 staging of NAKED BOYS SINGING!

Now, after a series of hit solo cabaret shows (I FEEL A THONG COMING ON!, TOM ORR IN A CRASS ACT! and JINGLE BELL JOCK!) as well as ensemble work at New Conservatory Theatre Center (TAKE ME OUT) and 42nd Street Moon (COCO), Orr returns to his Rhino roots as the male swing and understudy for "tick tick ... BOOM!" and on Thursday, Feb. 25, will play the role of Michael, usually portrayed by Theatre Rhinoceros Board Member Brian Sharber Yates.

Orr saw the original 2001 Off-Broadway production with Raul Esparza and Nataschia Diaz in the leads and found he truly connected to the material.

"I saw it and cried and cried at the end," he says. "I'd just moved to New York and also just turned 31, which is older than Jon, the protagonist in the play who's having his own midlife crisis as a starving artist in NYC."

"Meanwhile, Stephen Sondheim -- who is a character in the show as a mentor figure and was a real life mentor for Jonathan Larsen -- has been very kind and encouraging to me as an aspiring musical theatre songwriter, so it really cut close to home. Now it feels like nice symmetry to revisit the material years later and find new insights into my own career path."

Orr goes on, "Both men's roles are juicy, but Michael, as the gay best friend, is the catalyst for the main character's dramatic arc. When Mike reveals he has HIV (and remember this musical is set in 1990, before the 'cocktails' came out and people were still dying relatively quickly), it shakes Jon out of his selfish whiny bubble and makes him realize his own problems pale next to other people's 'real' concerns. It moves him to take more proactive steps in his career and to continue writing music that is lasting and important and a lightning rod for his generation and beyond."

The other original members of the cast (Scott Gessford as Jon and Holly Nugent as his put-upon girlfriend Susan, et al.) will appear as scheduled.

"tick tick ... BOOM!" plays through Feb. 28, 2010, at The Eureka Theatre, 215 Jackson Street at Battery. For more info, go to: www.TheRhino.org