

Celebrating Our 35th Season

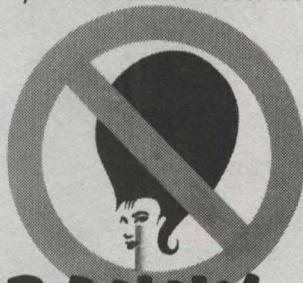
Provincetown Theatre Company

proudly presents

A MICHAEL SOLDIER PRODUCTION

Sponsored by Provincetown Reservations Systems

OPENING NITE



JUNE 8 !!!

THE TRANNY CHASE

by NYC GLAMMY WINNER **LINDA SIMPSON**

directed by **MICHAEL SOLDIER**

\$16 A•HOUSE 7PM MONDAYS

starring

**AT PRS
OR DOOR**

**DOORS OPEN
6:15PM**

JOANNA JAMES
WHERE THE BOYZ ARE
A•HOUSE FRIDAYS

ANNA CHOVIE
PUTTIN' ON THE HITS

SABILLA
ILLUSIONS

JONA WILLIAMS
MISS GAY USA 1998
LEGENDS

DASH VATA • MARK MEEHAN • LAURA SHABBOT • MICHAEL SOLDIER • JOEY PONS • DAVID MCFARLAND

THIS COMEDY CONTAINS EXPLICIT LANGUAGE & ADULT THEMES & BOOZE WILL BE SERVED. NO ONE UNDER 21 WILL BE ADMITTED

**UPCOMING
SCHEDULE**

The Forest of John the Fox Wednesdays 7pm \$6.00 July 8 - August 26
Message to Michael Thursdays 8pm \$14.00 July 9 - July 26
Picasso at the Lapin Agile 8pm \$14.00 August 9 - August 23
Give It Up 8pm \$14. August 9 - August 23

For Reservations call Provincetown Reservations
Systems 487-2400 • For Further Information, contact
Roger Cacchiotti 487-8673

The *Tranny Chase

Produced by Michael Soldier
in association with

The Provincetown Theatre Company

In a unique collaboration between The Provincetown Theatre Company, a number of drag performers from shows throughout town, conventional actors and the Atlantic House bar, Michael Soldier is staging a theatrical first for Provincetown.

Staged on the dance floor of the Atlantic House disco, **The Tranny Chase** follows the internal struggle between gender illusionist Fem Hanson (played by Joanna James, who stars in "Where the Boyz Are") and her male identity, Blake (played by Dash Vata). In a clever theatrical twist, Fem and Blake appear together on stage playing out their internal dialogue in a series of fantasy sequences. Blake looks into his mirror or dressing room closet and Fem looks back.

Blake is torn between wanting to express his female side and grasping at his male identity. He whines that he is sick and tired of having sex in makeup and a wig and is afraid that the man of his dreams will not see the real him through the dress and eyeliner. Fem, however, warns him to grow up and be who he is, ala *La Cage aux Faux*.

The Atlantic House works perfectly for the production since many of the scenes take place either in the Tranny Bar where the "girls" hang out or in the gay bar where they perform. Producer Michael Soldier (aka Precious Moments), Joey Pons and Mark Meehan (formerly of Space Pussy fame) play the three Tranny chasers in the story. Tranny chasers are presumably men who are attracted primarily to drag queens; thus explaining the title of the production.

Aside from Fem, the other "leading ladies" are Maxy, the veteran drag queen (played by Anna Chovie, who hosts "Puttin' on the Hits"), the virgin

Eve Harrington (played by Jona Williams, Miss Gay Massachusetts, 1998) and Pandora, the streetwise transsexual who cannot wait to become a real woman so she can find herself a real man (played by Sabilla, who stars in "Illusions").

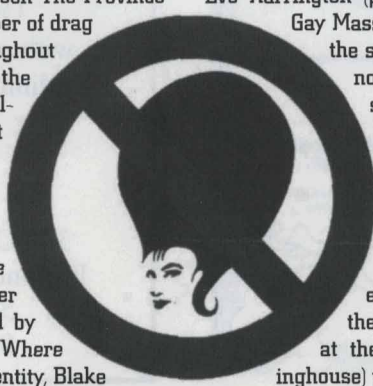
In addition, Laura Shabbat plays Ginger, the unflappable talk show hostess and the Reverend David McFarland (head of the Provincetown AIDS Ministry at the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse) plays a role you'll have to see to believe.

The Tranny Chase, written by Les "Linda" Simpson, a New York drag performer, was performed last year in New York City. The play was awarded a Glammy (yes, that's right, a tranny version of the Oscar). While the show is equally funny and raunchy, it also has a serious side as it explores the life experiences of drag entertainers and their personal challenges—often a mixture of humor and pain.

This is the first theatre production at the Atlantic House, honoring its 200th anniversary. The show is presented cabaret style, with drinks available from the bar. Due to the adult language and explicit subject matter (as well as the availability of liquor), the show is limited to patrons age 21 and over; proof of age will be required.

***Tranny** noun (slang): a transvestite, a transsexual, drag queen, gender illusionist. A man dressed as or living as a woman for sexual thrills, to entertain, to fulfill one's biological and/or psychological predisposition to the female gender.

The Tranny Chase will be performed every Monday at 7:00 pm at the Atlantic House. For information call The Provincetown Theatre Company at 487-8673. Tickets are \$16.00



BEHIND THE SCENES

Finding the man behind the

By Kathi Scrizzi Driscoll
Staff Writer

Billie Holliday performed there; so did Eartha Kitt. Tennessee Williams wrote some of his plays there. But never before in the 200-year storied history of Provincetown's Atlantic House has a play been performed in its famous bars.

Until Michael Soldier got it in his head to produce one there. **"The Tranny Chase,"** performed with some professionals through the community Provincetown Theatre Company, opened June 8 and will be staged at the Atlantic House every Monday night through Labor Day.

The black comedy deals with the sex life of drag queens and transsexuals, "behind the scenes, behind the glamour and the sequins of the nightclub life," Soldier says. He considers the Atlantic House to have been on the "cutting edge" of jazz and other art forms during its two centuries, and that's how he believes this play fits right into that history.

"People aren't all that challenged by a man in a dress now," he says. *"But to know there's a human being behind the man in the dress is something some people don't want to deal with. To talk about that (with the play) and to do it as a comedy and entertain people is what I want to do."*

Soldier has done some club promoting and drag work. This winter, he produced "Not So Macho Mondays" in the Macho Bar at the Atlantic House, with performers working around a theme like skewering a Celtic singer, "The Greasy Comeback of Olivia Newton John" and The Carpenters on Valentine's Day.

Soldier read a review of "The Tranny Chase" when it was produced in New York last year and recognized the work of his friend, playwright Les Simpson, who goes by the drag persona of Linda Simpson. Soldier called Simpson to get a script, then set up a staged



Staff Photo by RON SCHLOEF
Laura Shabbot(left), Mark Meehan, Jesus Cortez, Jim Wilson, Dave Etchings and Dash Vata in the Provincetown Theatre Company's production of "The Tranny Chase" at the Atlantic House.

reading last winter through the PTC at Napi's restaurant.

He needed a barroom setting for the show, and "the Atlantic House approached me," Soldier says, "which is exactly what I hoped would happen."

Information: 487-8673.



Ask three local actors why they'd want to repeat roles in a play they performed a year and a half ago and you get the same answer: Because **"All in the Timing"** was so much fun to do the first time.

Rich Malatesta, Marcia Huyette and Sally Clemence are reprising their roles in the Theater on the Bay encore production of "All in the Timing," which kicks off the company's farewell season in its strip-mall theater at Trading Post Corners. All

say the show, first done in January 1997, is one of their fondest theater memories and that they used to quote lines from the play when they got together.

"When (director Laura Garner) suggested bringing it back, I jumped at the chance," Malatesta says. "At the final dress rehearsal, we were still cracking up. It's a funny, funny piece and it's so much fun to do."

"You do a play once and when it's done, you think 'I could have done this differently,'" says Clemence, who considers the play "a blast." "Now, two years later, you say 'Hey, I can do this again!'"

And, notes Malatesta, so many of his friends who didn't get to see the play before will now have that chance.

Garner and the actors also took

this opportunity to change a few things. The play's dynamics are different with two new cast members, but some changes were also made in the way scenes and characters are approached.

The biggest change for Huyette was in being more comfortable with her parts and being on stage after getting additional experience during the months between these two productions. "I'm having more fun than I did before and I didn't think I could have more fun than I did before," she says.

"All in the Timing" continues through June 20. Tickets: 759-0977.

SHORT STUFF

■ Have you seen that one-minute commercial for Coke that precedes some of the movies at Hoyts

"Tranny Chase" breaks new ground for drag

By Joe Burns
BANNER STAFF

Les Simpson will accomplish what no other playwright in Provincetown's long theatrical history has done when his play "The Tranny Chase" opens Monday night at the Atlantic House.

"The fact that we're doing this at the A-House is amazing," says the show's producer-director Michael Soldier. "This is the place where Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, all these jazz greats have performed. Tennessee Williams has written his plays in there. And we're getting the A-House involved with the Provincetown Theater Company, now they have joined forces."

Simpson, a New York drag performer known as Linda Simpson, captured the drag queen scene with a story that on the surface is a frothy bit of drag theater, but beneath the bubbles lays a full-bodied plot that looks at the drag queen scene through the dual identities of a drag performer.

"They are fighting it out to see who's going to be able to live their life fully," says the show's producer-director Michael Soldier. "The drag queen and the boy are con-

stantly in conflict because the boy wants to try and have steady relationships [and] be accepted for who he really is, but he's so used to being practically worshipped for his drag persona and his success as an entertainer that he's sort of lost touch with who he is and how he can manifest an honest relationship."

Soldier says that the problem faced by the play's main character is not uncommon. "The problem for many [the drag queens] is that the guys they end up sleeping with are usually secretive bisexual guys who have sex with men dressed as women in order to avoid the real issue that they're probably gay or at least bisexual, but they need the illusion of heterosexual sex. It reminds me of a lot of Shakespeare's stuff, where the gender issues become a really big deal."

In an example of art imitating art, the "trannys" in the show are all played by drag performers: Johanna James (Jimmy Wilson), who plays Fem Hanson, the female persona of the lead character; Jona Williams (Jonathan Williams) as Virgin; Anna Chovie (Dane Etchings) as Maxi; and Sabilla (Jesus Cortez) as Pandora Blake. The male side of the lead character is played by Dash Vata.

The tranny chasers are Mark Meehan (formerly of Space Pussy) as Ed, Joey Pons as Hector, and Soldier as J.T. David McFarland performs as Arthur, the boy in the bar, while Laura Shabott, the only female in the production, plays Ginger, a talk show host.

Soldier, who brings his own drag performer experience as Precious Moments to the production, decided to present the show in Provincetown after reading a review of a production at New York's alternative performance space, P.S. 122. The Provincetown Theater

Company, for whom Soldier serves as assistant artistic director, presented staged readings of the play in February at Napi's restaurant, and these prompted him to seek a summer venue.

continued on page 28



Photo Vincent Guadagno

The cast of the "Tranny Chase," the first theater production to be held at the A-House.

Wolf continued from page 23

"Around the Corner," the song that started it all, which features her on piano. "Snap Out of This" is a full-blown swing tune Wolf calls her "surprise song." The album also shows a bit of gospel-blues ("I Think I Told You So"), slow blues ("Whoop Tee Doo"), and the uptown supper club sound of "Five," a song to her father. Wolf has dedicated the album to her father, as well to her sister and Lewis. "Playing music with Julie, playing music with Zoe, those are my favorite things," she says.

Making the CD has had a

strong impact on Wolf. "This winter I really felt what it was like to be a full-time musician," she says. "I just went from project to project. I did some really new things for me, I collaborated with a dance production. I did a lot of gigs, I have a band [in Seattle]] with other singer-songwriters called One Fancy Girl.

Wolf recently bought a home in Seattle and is revved up for her return to the West Coast, but while she's in the East she's just looking for some peace. "When I hit Seattle in the fall, I'll hit it hard," Wolf says. "But while I'm here it's pretty much Zoe's time and I'll be the funny bass player in her band."



O'Neill continued from page 23

emphasis on O'Neill's poetry inspired by his love for Beatrice Ashe, a local girl who was a muse to him. "It's a totally different side of the guy," Murphy says. It also explores O'Neill's point of view regarding women as reflected by his choice of songs in his plays. "I Just Can't Make My Eyes Behave," a song from 1906 that O'Neill later used in "Ah, Wilderness," is described by Murphy as a very light flirty number reflecting the personality of the woman he was smitten with. "Beatrice Ashe reflects the women he thinks he wants," Murphy says. But O'Neill's desires were conflicted. "Frankie and Johnny," a traditional song used in "All God's Chillun Got Wings," is used in "Ragtime Revue" as a contrast to his idealized woman, "because what he was looking for was somewhere between the hussy and the Virgin Mary, or the Virgin Mary as a hussy," Murphy says.

"Ragtime Revue" uses O'Neill's music much as O'Neill did in his plays, as points of reference, but O'Neill went one step further, taking his pleasant musical memories and turning them on their heads.

"He tends to use [the songs] in a contrasting way," Murphy says. "In the play 'Abortion,' which is set in a college campus, the baseball hero gets a girl in trouble and then she dies having an abortion. He's just won the big game and, in the end, just before he blows his brains out,

everyone is singing 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow 'off-stage.'"

Murphy also cites "Oh You Beautiful Doll" as further evidence of O'Neill's twist of context. "Even though he first heard it in New York ... he uses it in 'The Moon of the Caribees,' which is a sea play. But he uses it in an interesting way in that ... all these sort of disenfranchised seamen are on this ship that's moored in a port in the Caribbean. A bunch of women from shore come out to sell them sex and alcohol, and when they dance, the music that plays is 'Oh You Beautiful Doll.' It's the contrast of these strangers in the middle of nowhere, at least for them, dancing to a song which is very familiar to them. In a way, he does it to create a sense of the displaced person in a temporary state of home, and that's the kind of home he knew best."

Tiffany continued from page 23

"As soon as I saw the play I knew I wanted to produce it for the summer, but I knew that it was going to be a difficult thing for the theater company," Soldier says, citing the need for a barroom setting and the need to reimburse the drag performers.

As it turns out, the A-House is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year, and Soldier, who also produced Not So Macho Monday theme parties at the historic establishment's Macho Bar, was approached by the A-House to put on the production there after Larry Yahn, a close associate of bar own-

Multi-media show at art center

Bart J. Murell, a long-time resident of Provincetown with an extensive background in dance, theater and teaching will present his show, "But I Have Always Been a Positive Person...No Pun Intended," at 7 and 9 p.m. tomorrow, at the Schoolhouse Studios Common Room, located on the second floor at 494 Commercial St. The multimedia piece combines dance, music, vocals, and video and features a variety of local talent. The piece is a part of the Schoolhouse Center's opening celebration from 6-10 p.m.

Local poet Lynn Stanley will read and sign copies of her new book, "Gravity Claims Us," at 8 p.m. Saturday in the Schoolhouse Common Room.

er April Cabral Pitzner, attended one of the readings. The theater company has overseen the production while Provincetown Reservation System has provides sponsorship.

Looking at the new alliances and the fact that performers from venues all along the drag strip have come together as actors for this production, Soldier says he's seeing drag entertainment that is "freeing up and changing things immensely."

"The Tranny Chase" will be performed Mondays throughout the season. Tickets are \$16 at the door or through Provincetown Reservations Systems.

Sex Unlimited

Steamy Stage Scenes Steal the Show in Provincetown

By Laura V. Scheel

Director Michael Soldier's most recent production, "The Tranny Chase," produced in association with the Provincetown Theatre Company, is unabashedly funny, shamelessly naughty and supremely acted.

Monday evening's opening performance of the lively show, in the downstairs room of Provincetown's Atlantic House (the near 200-year-old tavern's first-ever theatre production), was packed with the curious, awaiting what unfolded to be a shamelessly raucous and surprisingly thoughtful performance.

By definition, tranny is a slang term, its meaning spelled out clearly in the show's program: *a transvestite, a transexual, drag queen, gender illusionist; A man dressed as or living as a woman for sexual thrills, to entertain, to fulfill one's biological predisposition to the female gender.* But "The Tranny Chase" is not just another drag show, not just another night of superstar impersonation and lip syncing (though those are wildly entertaining as well). Focusing on the lifestyles of the trannies — their stories, preferences, inner conflicts, hopes and relations with those who interact with them — the show deals with many universal themes. The chase part of the show's name stems from the men who pursue the trannies; in this case, most are men who stalwartly deny any homosexual tendencies while declaring their strong attraction to trannies in the very same breath.

Our cast of trannies are true-life men in drag themselves, most of whom perform in shows throughout Provincetown and beyond. Much of the strength of the show lies in their ability to appear not to be acting: lacking are any awkward moments in character during the entire performance; the feeling of sitting in the audience extends beyond merely watching actors onstage when the actors appear so comfortable and natural in their roles. The show is more interactive, more personal, and the audi-

ence feels as if they are a part of the conversational flow.

Each tranny comes to the stage with her own distinct flair, and each represents a different layer of the entire theme. Fem Hanson (played by Jim Wilson) is a show-girl tranny, enamored with stardom, the attentions and affections of her audience, yet is in a perpetual battle of conscience with her male personae, named Blake (played by Dash Vata).

Shy and lonely Blake wants a chance at a real relationship, something he believes to be impossible in the scheme of the

catty competition amidst the group. Unaffected by this is Pandora (played by Jesus Cortez), another level of tranny, who often punctuates her opinions with the shake of her pill box full of hormones. Sexy and sauntering, Pandora is of the belief that to be entirely womanly is the way to go.

The chasers add both depth and further comedic strength to the performance, and each of the three also reveal different types of character. Ed (Mark Meehan), dude-like and proud of his manhood, is in absolute denial; he sleeps with trannies but pledges loudly and repeatedly that he is straight. J.T., played by director Michael Soldier, is confident in his masculinity and prowess, and admits freely to sleeping with, and even having a brief relationship with, a drag queen, yet wouldn't want the outside world to know it. Hector (Joey Pons) simply slinks around, macho in his tank top, gold chains and muscles, smooth in his words, and represents the ideal score for a tranny.

Through witty and sometimes scandalous dialogue, the performance is an incredibly entertaining slice of life piece. Its players all form the characters that could be found in any piece of the culture; their ways and actions may differ from the established status quo, yet the themes of finding one's identity within the self and the outer social group are universal. While some of the lines and ideas may seem offensive to some, overall, the performance is skillfully orchestrated, both in the fine acting and direction. With no intermission, the show's pace is fluid, funny and filled with clever dramatics and situations. Here is a performance that skillfully combines social awareness with honest and traditional burlesque entertainment at its best.

"The Tranny Chase" will run on Monday nights throughout the summer at the Atlantic House in Provincetown. Doors open at 6:15, with a 7 p.m. showtime; tickets are \$16. This show deals with explicit adult themes.

Review

tranny chase, yet the sexual success rate of Fem's presence makes for a difficult decision and repeated humorous encounters with their alter egos. The two actors work so fluidly together, and especially with the aid of simple yet effective prop and set design, that the illusion of them existing as one identity is entirely complete.

Maxi, another tranny, played fantastically by Dane Etchings, is a character on the other side of the spectrum. Forever in drag and in pursuit of the nightly bar scene catch, she is the most cynical tranny. Burned too many times by the false hopes of a meaningful relationship blossoming from a one-night stand, Maxi throws herself coldly and headlong into the game, convinced that no one can hurt her emotionally and even charging the chasers for her goods and services. Maxi chastises Fem/Blake for her debate, in disbelief that the life of late nights, drugs, booze and male take-home trophies would ever fade out of favor.

An initiate into the tranny chase scene is Virgin, with Jonathan Williams (this year's Miss Gay Massachusetts winner) playing the part of the naive but more than willing newcomer in the game. Schooled by Maxi and Fem, Virgin soon becomes a source of

try our
callops,
served
h baked
ortions.

Orleans

ays, 10am
wer, and a
-Sept. 4.
ys 10am
cat, and a
musicians-
y 1-Sept. 1.

NEWSTER

R REVUE

114

's
Beef
t Oysters,
own Sale