

ON STAGE with Stan Jenson

THE RED SHOES – Los Angeles:



Once upon a time, there was a fairy tale about a young ballerina who bought a beautiful pair of red ballet shoes. At first, they brought her great success on stage, but too late, she discovered that the shoes were controlled by the shoemaker, and she was unable to stop dancing, leading to her death. In 1948, a British film with the same title told the story of a ballerina who gets cast in a

ballistic production of "The Red Shoes," with great dollops of the fairy tale merged into the backstage tale. Now, Britain's totally awesome Matthew Bourne (Swan Lake, The Car Man, etc.) has created a new stage production based on the film and the fairy tale, and it's coming to L A for its only west coast appearance. He gained recognition in 1995 with his all-male, homoerotic Swan Lake. It has been followed by new productions every two or three years, but we haven't seen one in a while, so this one is sure to fill up very quickly. Although the show has plenty of legitimate ballet, there are numerous other dance styles included, and plenty of shirtless, hunky men. What's not to love? Book early! Ahmanson Theater 9/5 – 10/1 (CenterTheatreGroup.org).

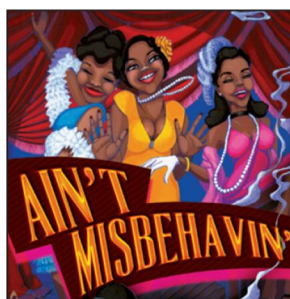
HOMOS, OR EVERYONE IN AMERICA – San Diego:



Fresh from its Off-Broadway debut last year, this show kicks off the new season at San Diego's wonderful Diversionsary Theatre Company. A gay couple in New York comes together, breaks apart and just about everything in between in Jordan Seavey's look at urban gay life in America, its complexities, its pleasures and, sadly, its dangers. The

story starts and finishes late in the relationship, but during the course of the play, we flash back to various moments and events. The language is neither PG nor PC, as the "Homos" in the title suggests, but the playwright has received accolades for his ability to capture the language of gay guys in their 20's to 30's, living in NYC from 2006 – 2011. I don't think I've ever seen a disappointing production at Diversionsary, and glad that they are back in action. Diversionsary Theatre 9/14 – 10/15 (Diversionsary.org).

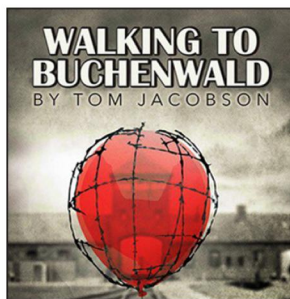
AIN'T MISBEHAVIN' – La Mirada: La Mirada Center for the Performing Arts, tucked away in a residential pocket north of Knott's Berry Farm, has become one of my favorite companies. This month, they are presenting one of my favorite shows, a collection of the songs of



Fats Waller. "Fats Who? And was this dude really called Fats?" I hear you asking. Yes, a larger-than-life black man who wrote songs and played the piano in the 30's and 40's, songs he wrote such as "I Can't Give You Anything but Love," "Honeysuckle Rose," and the title song have earned their pages in

the Great American Song Book. In Ain't Misbehavin', two men and three women deliver a high-spirited, tuneful, and often funny revue of his songs, plus other great numbers from Harlem's Cotton Club period, including "This Joint is Jumping," "It's a Sin to Tell a Lie," and "Your Feet's Too Big!" Even if you don't know these songs, the structure of the show is infectious, and should provide a fun night out. La Mirada Center for the Performing Arts 9/15 – 10/8 (LaMiradaTheatre.com).

FIXED and WALKING TO BUCHENWALD – Los Angeles:



Turns out there are two promising gay-themed shows this month at the Atwater Village Theatre, a complex of small venues northeast of Los Angeles. The first is Fixed, a story about a Filipino ladyboy who works for a brothel in LA's Filipino-town. When she and the son of a local politico fall in love,

warfare arises between the political family and the owner of the house, and hell hath no fury like a ladyboy scorned. The other is Walking to Buchenwald by Tom Jacobson, one of L A's most prolific playwrights. It is a deceptively sweet story in which a soon-to-be-married couple takes one set of parents on their first visit to Europe (as the playwright and his husband actually did). The audience it taken on an ominously comic journey during which guinea pigs play cricket, dead bodies talk, and an unexpected trip to a concentration camp leads to a shocking yet poignant conclusion. Fixed is presented by The Echo Theatre Company 9/14 – 10/22 (EchoTheatreCompany.com) and Walking to Buchenwald is produced by Open Fist Theatre Company 9/2 – 10/14 (OpenFist.org), both presented at Atwater Village Theatre.