

# Weekend reviews

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enough tension to keep us as engaged as we've come to expect from this series.

—Marty Hughley  
The Oregonian

## "LIPS TOGETHER, TEETH APART"

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays, through Oct. 23

**Where:** Theater! Theatre!, 3430 S.E. Belmont St.

**Tickets:** \$16-\$30, 503-242-0080 or profiletheatre.org

When the lights rise on the Fire Island, beach-house deck setting of Terrence McNally's comedy "Lips Together, Teeth Apart" that's now receiving a carefully crafted humorous but touchingly poignant production from Profile Theatre, we are confronted with a tableau in which the play's four characters are each frozen in separate activities. In this opening moment, McNally provides a powerful image of the emotional distance that divides these four friends and intimates from one another even as they stand/sit in close proximity to each other. As the characters come to life during the play's first scene and as they continue to interact through the play, their deeply felt isolation from one another remains. Sure, these characters talk, joke, eat and play together, but despite



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Susannah Mars, Leif Norby (center) and Darius Pierce star in "Lips Together, Teeth Apart," which opens Profile's 15th season.

bonds of marriage, blood and lust, they are unable or unwilling to fully bridge the chasms that separate them.

This is a tricky, somewhat amorphous play. The script moves effortlessly between dialogue among the four characters and individual character inner monologues. Director Jane Unger's skilled four actors manage these transitions with a fluency that is truly impressive.

—Richard Wattenberg  
Special to The Oregonian

## "ONCE ON THIS ISLAND"

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Thursdays-Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays, through Oct. 8

**Where:** Brunish Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 S.W. Broadway

**Tickets:** \$10 to \$30, PCPA box office, 503-248-4335 or ticketmaster.com

**Website:** stumptownstages.com

A mingling of the sweet and bittersweet, the sophisticated and the ethnic, make "Once on This Island," currently

performed by Stumptown Stages, a heady evening of musical theater. The 90-minute show fills the semi-intimate space in Brunish Hall at the Portland Center for the Performing Arts with Caribbean rhythms, soaring ballads and the kind of dancing that has you swaying in your seat. Based on Rosa Guy's novel "My Love, My Love," the story blends elements of "Romeo and Juliet" and

"The Little Mermaid," as a peasant girl (Jalena Montrond) falls in love with a mulatto aristocrat (Quincy Hickson) from the other side of the island, a boy pledged to marry one of his own class and color. The entire cast is strong, and Christopher Moll's choreography, including high-powered, ritual dances, simply shines.

—Holly Johnson  
Special to The Oregonian