

David Horowitz

Writing & Reflection

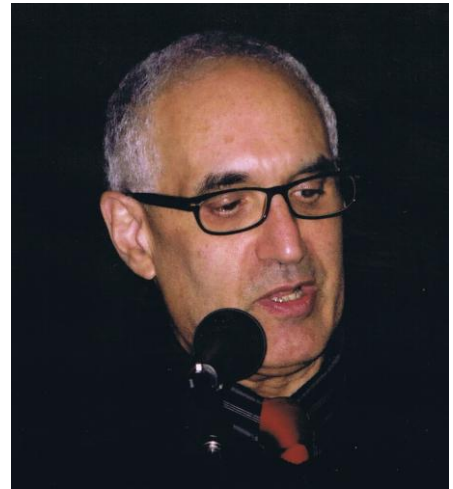
Freeway ran weekly between 1972-1975 in the Portland State University *Vanguard* – here are two columns. David Horowitz taught & teaches American cultural history at PSU.

Friday, December 7, 1973

Faith

What you gonna do when the well runs dry?

– Crawdad Song



David A. Horowitz at Dorothea Lange in Oregon opening, PSU, October 2009 © David Milholland

If the radiation doesn't get it, Pioneer 10 will soon be breaking away from the gravity field of Jupiter and heading for the outer reaches of our cozy solar system at 82,000 miles an hour. In about two million years, it will be approaching the distant star Aldebaran.

Not a bad feat of technology and brain power.

Kahoutec nears the sun every day, as the Earth prepares for what may be the greatest cosmic light show in recorded history.

Nixon's in the White House, counting the days, while the birthdate of a martyred Jewish holy man approaches. The nights get colder and longer and the last tankers of Middle East oil near their hungry ports.

It is surely the winter of our discontent.

On the tube the other night, a Texas oil man said that he'd always figured the next world war would be over Arabian oil — one-fifth of our national supply, he said. It's either war, then, or depression. Since Democrats bring war and Republicans depression, and Carl Albert doesn't want to be President, it's depression that we can look to this fateful winter. The lay-offs at General Motors and the truckers' blockade are only the ominous beginnings. The stock market isn't crashing for kicks. Meanwhile, a Harris poll shows that Americans have more than twice as much trust in their garbage men as in their President.

The corporate managers have failed us once again. Without Monday night football there might be a revolution in this country. We're pretty much on our own, and we're going to have to fall back on our own resources — our survival tools, as we struggle to stay warm, fed, and working.

Since November, 1963, Americans have been learning to take nothing for granted. Surprise and tragedy have wrecked our liberal illusions and prepared us for the worst. It may be coming.

But as death breeds life, so destruction seeds creation. We are, after all, creators, we anthros. A plaque on Pioneer 10 announces to the galaxy that we humans comprehend lens theory and that we use binary logic — 1 plus 1 makes something else.

We must remember, no matter how hard the rain falls, that we can think and create, that occasional visionaries bless our days and soften our nights. If we would only use our rational tools to get our house together, and our spiritual ones to free our souls, we might make it through. But two million years is a long time, and the last tankers are docking. And in Bethlehem, Pa., they've turned off the Christmas lights. It is the season of Faith.

April 11, 1975

Mirage

God has returned

In the shape of an oil tank.

– Bertolt Brecht, 1929

As universities such as Portland State increasingly lose touch with the creative needs of those they serve, new institutions are arriving to take their place. In recent years, Portland has become something of a center for a revitalized cabaret theater, an informal kind of troupe presentation, heavily laced with the traditions of old popular music, raucous comedy, and frequent social satire.

The Hallelujah Chorus operates out of the Questing Beast Palace, a cabaret and dancing tavern on SE Stark and 29th. The Storefront Theater, across from the White Eagle Bar under the east approach to the Fremont Bridge, is preparing a second annual vaudeville show for late spring. The Family Circus performs at the Arbuckle Flat coffee house of the Contact Center on SW Morrison and 15th. Just last week, the Circus and the Center staged a five-day *Performing Arts Marathon* in which local singers, dancers, musicians, poets, jugglers, comics and theater groups peddled their wares around the clock to continuous and enthusiastic crowds. Now, Euphoria tavern, down on the warehouse tracks by SE 3rd and Oak, is presenting Sunday evening cabaret with *Mirage*.

Mirage is no less than a burlesque show about the Mideast oil crisis. Its political commentary is often bitter and biting, but the tone of the show is close to total irreverence. Picture Kosygin and Brezhnev singing “First you say you do, then you don’t” to each other at a summit conference while across the table Bob Dylan hits on Nelson Rockefeller for a quick five.

Nobody is spared in this fast-paced, off-the-wall approach to the absurdity of war and the insanity known as world politics. Anyone whose sensitivities are bruised by flip references to their favorite ethnic group, national cause, sexual turn-on, or credit card probably isn’t ready for this kind of theater. Too bad, because the *Mirage* troupe presents some of the most exciting and freewheeling political comedy and musical satire this town has ever seen.

At one point, the leaders of the Arab world break up their solidarity conference with a wrestling and name-calling match, while American and Russian arms sellers compare cash receipts and place bets on which of their customers will win the coming war. The Europeans, on the other hand, strangled by the loss of Mideast oil, are reduced to pathetic tears over the waning of western civilization and stumble over each other in their newfound impotence. As for the Americans, *Mirage* pictures a depression-ridden USA, complete with apple-sellers and street hucksters peddling to foreign tourists the artifacts of a lost civilization — electric toothbrushes, night-lights, blenders, and so on. The tourists, with predictable camera in hand, are visiting Arab oil magnates. Somewhere along the line we’re treated to a peppy rendition of *Dancing Sheik to Sheik*.

Much of the mood of Penny Allen’s script is inspired by the theater of Bertolt Brecht, whose political satire came out of the tradition of cabaret theater in Berlin during the 1920s. Part of that tradition was an absorption of the styles of popular dance music prevalent in German and American night life. *Mirage* resurrects a whole span of American popular music and the dance and comedy routines which have accompanied our popular entertainment for the past fifty years. There are also original songs, written by Martin Brother and members of the troupe, which take that tradition and use it to confront us with our own perverse times. How about *Euthanasia in Asia* for a starter? Barry Barnum’s piano back-up, which literally ties the show together, is so right it’s indescribable.

For some reason, Americans have never excelled at musical political satire. Perhaps its apparent cynicism has been offensive to a people who assumed Progress lay right down the tracks. Now that the train isn’t running anymore, political and social satire may be opening up. The *Mirage* troupe, under the direction of Penny Allen and the sharp eye of producer Cheryl Allen, has given us an enticing marriage of biting political commentary with the old styles of



MIRAGE

Notes and Credits

The Players:

Cheryl Allen
Penny Allen
Bob Degaetano
Lola Desmond
Corky Hubbert
Diane Libeck
Larry Ramsay
Richard Wiltshire

and: Mina (Carole) Bugier
as the Belly Dancer

The Musicians:

Barry Barnum on piano
Dick Hammerstrom on bass
Leroy Williams on drums
Judy Zupo on flute

Direction: Penny Allen

Production: Cheryl Allen

Lights: Anita Malady, Dick
Hammerstrom, and Larry
Ramsay

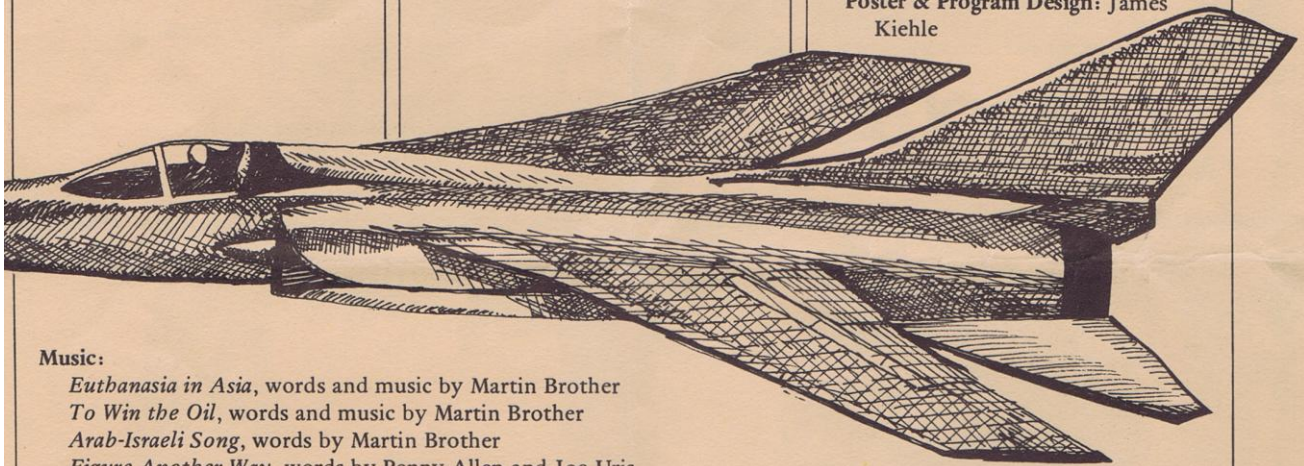
Sound: Bill Reinhart

Costumes: Catherine Nesbit,
Kathy Shayler, Diane Libeck,
and Penny Allen

Stage and House Manager: Alice
Quaintance

Make-up: Kathy Shayler

Poster & Program Design: James
Kiehle



Music:

Euthanasia in Asia, words and music by Martin Brother
To Win the Oil, words and music by Martin Brother
Arab-Israeli Song, words by Martin Brother
Figure Another Way, words by Penny Allen and Joe Uris
Dancing Sheik to Sheik, words by Sue Fischer, *Mad Magazine*, and Richard Wiltshire
Undecided, words by Richard Wiltshire
Sleep with One Eye Open, Moshe Dayan, words by Corky Hubbert

Special thanks to: Jack Shields and the Clackamas Community College Theatre Department, Scottie Kent and the Y.W.C.A., Bill Reinhart and KBOO Radio, Anita Bigelow, Ted Mahar, Phyllis Goto, John Platt and Channel 4 Cable, Helen Bitar, Eric Silverstein, Derrik Abram, Doug DeVault, and Eros Bookstore.

ASCAP Music Credits:

Sheik of Araby, words by Harry B. Smith and Francis Wheeler, music by Ted Snyder. Copyright 1921 by Mills Music Inc., New York.
As Time Goes By, words and music by Herman Haffeld. Copyright 1931 by Harms Inc.
Caravan, by Duke Ellington. Copyright Juan Tizol, Bellwin-Mills Publishing Co., New York.
Carolina in the Morning, words by Gus Kahn, music by Walter Donaldson. Copyright 1922, Warner Bros.
Brother Can You Spare a Dime?, words by G. Y. Harburg, music by Jay Gorney. Copyright 1932 by Harms Inc.
Merry Minuet, by Sheldon Hasnick, published by Valando, New York.
Undecided, words by Sid Robin, music by Charles Shavers. Copyright 1939, Leeds Music Corp., New York.
Exodus, words by Pat Boone, music by Ernest Gold. Copyright 1960 and 1961, Carlyle Alpina, S. A.
Midnight at the Oasis, words and music by David Nichtern. Copyright 1973 and 1974, Space Potato Music, Port Washington, New York.
Dancing Cheek to Cheek, words and music by Irving Berlin. Copyright 1934.

music and comedy which never fail when executed properly and enthusiastically. There's a belly-dance by Mina Bugler which just might slide you out of your seat altogether.

One of the freedoms which satire gives a troupe is the escape from point-of-view. Pedantic theater is very difficult to manage because audiences must be entertained before they can be instructed. In the comedown of the seventies, political polemics would simply appear out-of-touch. *Mirage* has only one point-of-view, and it concerns war. That statement becomes clear at the closing of the show. Interestingly, it is expressed without words as the final chords are struck on the piano.

Mirage will be playing Sunday evenings at 7:30 through the end of May at Euphoria. You want to be loose for this one, so bring ID and come a little early and listen to the band get into their act while you get a couple of beers under your belt. Anyone who misses the rare opportunity of enjoying an energetic and well-disciplined troupe such as this one can only hate themselves and life altogether.

December 1984

Multnomah Magazine — an excerpt

George Touhouliotis:
The Passion Behind Satyricon
Portland's leading "experimental" night spot

STUMBLE ACROSS THE LITTER in Northwest Sixth, past Couch and the 101 Club, past Henry's Stop and Swap, past Portland Tattoo and Demetri's Grocery, and you find yourself beneath a pert red awning topped by a stark white marquee. Enter the battered wood "cellar" door, adjust to the dimly lit pastel globe fixtures, and the eye begins to pick out certain features — the unadorned, pressed formica bar top, nondescript grey-paneled walls, fifties black and red checkered floor tiles.

Above the bar is a green chalkboard pitching souvlaki and pitabread for \$1.85; to the side a primitive Walt Curtis painting of a crucified woman. The eye soon discovers a Flash Gordon pinball machine across the room, a beat-up, sloppily stained spinet piano in an alcove, red fifties plastic lounge benches in a corner, a utilitarian early sixties jukebox in the rear. Check out the jukebox and you find one of the best surviving collections of fifties and sixties soul and rock'n'roll in the city, mixed with a smattering of eighties new wave and punk.

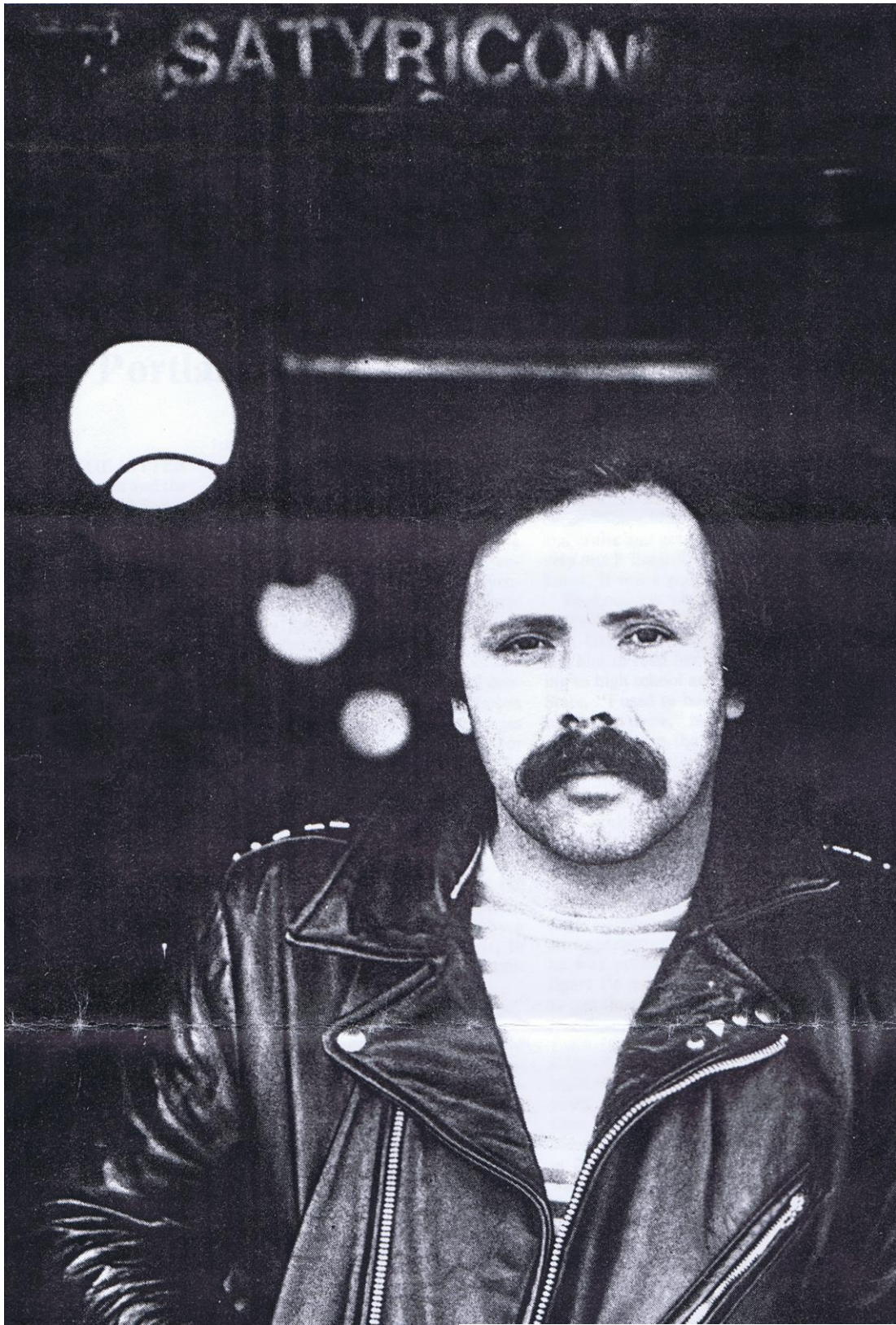
Walk through the rear archway, beneath Angelina Marino's intense abstract portraits, past the sixties black light which makes your teeth and white sneakers fluorescent, past the pithy bathrooms and a few tables, and you find yourself on a scuffed tiled floor confronting an improvised wooden stage. The space is defined only by bare brick, colored light, warehouse columns, and a few more fifties lounge benches scattered dissolutely on the periphery.

Since its opening in March, Satyricon has become the leading experimental night spot in the city. Playwrights read freshly painted scripts on Mondays. A hundred or so poets gather each Wednesday to applaud, cackle, hoot, and otherwise react to each other's readings. Sunday nights occasionally are given over to private parties, open to anyone with I.D. and a buck or two at the door.

For the rest of the week Satyricon does nothing less than provide the most consistent showcase for innovative live music in the city. In its bare nine months of existence, Satyricon has replaced former shrines such as the Long Good-bye and Luis La Bamba's as the city's center of the hard-core culture rooted in the punk and new wave rebellions of the late seventies and early eighties. Its wide variety of bands nevertheless pays homage to the traditions of hard-edged rock'n'roll and rockabilly that have taunted urban sensibility for the past 30 years.



Friends Walt Curtis, Marjorie Sharp and George Touhouliotis ... photo © David Millholland



George Touhouliotis
image in DH cover feature
excerpted from *MM* issue at right



Satyricon is a gathering place for artists, writers, dancers, musicians, and the men and women who earn their living in the restaurants and bars of downtown nightculture. The clientele is diverse, each night totally different in feeling from any other. A band playing a Thursday crowd may receive an entirely different response the next evening. At Satyricon, a band's effectiveness is easily judged by the proportion of people who desert the front bar to get closer to the music.

Satyricon is a place where social convention does not inhibit the expression of individual personality but encourages it. It is not a club for people looking for someone to go home with. In fact, the darkness is comforting to some because it's easier to feel you're receding, easier to escape intrusions from unknown quarters. For some of its clients the music, poetry, and drama remain secondary to the general comfort of the place. For others, Satyricon functions in the classic sense of the jazz club — a place to keep contact with friends, to transact business if necessary, a nexus from which to conduct one's life.



Through it all, Touhouliotis sustains his vision — “to maintain a life scene where something is of value, of importance.” “I want to be here for a while,” he says. “I’m not done yet.” Assuming that Satyricon can keep its balance between spontaneous abandon and the requisites of plumbing and legal proprieties, Touhouliotis may be right. He has helped to nurture a rich and challenging culture at the crux of Portland's Old Town and Skid Road. With dignity and guts and a little luck, he has made it possible for vitality to thrive on the edge of this city's night. A Greek bearing the gift of civilization, Touhouliotis has constructed a passion play on Northwest Sixth that does justice to the tortured search for intensity and truth.



Hazel Hall ...

illustration by Stephen Leflar

May 14, 1995

Hazel Hall Dedication

Note: The \$5,000 bequest of David & Michael Horowitz to the OCHC *Hazel Hall Poetry Garden* project was by far the largest donation, enabling timely completion. Here are David's comments at the Mother's Day dedication.

This donation came out of the estate of our parents, Nathan & Dorothy, a legacy passed on to Michael & me following our father's death last October.

Our mother was an elementary school teacher, guidance counselor, and adjunct college instructor in the New York City area before retiring in 1974. She was also a life-long poet, short story writer, and dramatist up to her death from cancer in 1990.

Our father completed only eight grades of schooling before entering the work force at the age of 13. Between 1945 & 1974 he was a salesman for a NY sanitary products company. He also compiled a life-long portfolio of short stories, plays, essays, lyrics, and poetry. After 1990 he resided at Portland's Robison Jewish Home, where he continued to write although severe arthritis confined him to a power wheelchair. After his death, the Robison Home published a life-time collection of his verse as a fundraiser.

By making this gift, my brother and I seek to honor the creative spirit of our parents — like Hazel Hall, ordinary people who struggled to express their inner light despite family responsibilities and other adversities.

We believe that the Hazel Hall Memorial & the other projects of the Oregon Cultural Heritage Commission provide a wonderful means to acknowledge a connection to Portland's life & past. As writers ourselves, we cherish the opportunity to commemorate the central importance of creative expression in our city's culture.

We fervently hope that others among you soon may participate in the Commission's efforts to honor what Walt Curtis calls the “frail, ephemeral human spirit.” I can assure you that offering a gift like this provides a profound sense of pleasure in connecting with the “the good things” of life.

Thank you, mom and dad. Thank you, Hazel Hall.

