



Wallace Norman, Producing Artistic Director

Smoke & Mirrors

by Shock of Gray Productions

stage direction and lighting design by Beverly Brumm

costumes by Flavia Rando

Shock of Gray ensemble

Carol Bay, Margot Fitzgerald, Berenice Fisher, Marge Helenchild, and Deborah Sherman

Using elements of word, music, song and movement to share and celebrate their experiences as lesbians over the past five decades, five multi-talented women developed this **provocative, political and entertaining** exploration of 'queer' identity. The members of the ensemble are denizens of the Hudson Valley and have also long been part of the downtown Manhattan theater scene, some since the mid-1970s. Influenced by techniques and improvisational forms developed by the Open Theater, they create original material that combines movement work and storytelling in the form of a theatrical collage.



Five performances.

Date	Day	Time
Aug 25	Friday	8:00 PM
Aug 26	Saturday	5:00 PM
Aug 27	Sunday	8:00 PM
Sep 1	Friday	5:00 PM
Sep 2	Saturday	8:00 PM



"It's 1959, I'm lying on the living room floor in a railroad flat in Queens. Liberace is on the TV . . . and my father takes this puff on his cigar and in a burst of smoke he says to my mother: 'Jeez what a pansy! Whadya see in that queer anyway?'" An eight-year old child first encounters the threat of her dawning identity. And so begins a narrative that takes the audience on a journey of the evolution of "queer" identity from the 1950's through the present through the eyes of five lesbians.

This new and original play, *Smoke and Mirrors*, by the Shock of Gray Ensemble, traces the journeys of five women as they revisit the images and experiences of mainstream culture and queer subcultures that shaped their identities. The piece explores five decades of cultural messages, from the stereotypes of the fifties to the perplexing sex and gender images of the present. Through personal narratives and emblematic imagery, the women capture the angst, humor and complexity of their on-going struggles to find authentic selves, and in the process, raise provocative questions about what it means to be "queer." Entertaining and illuminating, the piece appeals to a mixed audi-

ence as it surveys the sexual politics of our time.

The members of Shock of Gray Ensemble have long been part of the downtown Manhattan theatre scene, some since the mid-1970's. Influenced by techniques and improvisational forms developed by The Open Theatre and by Story Theatre, the ensemble creates original material that combines movement work and storytelling in the form of a theatrical collage. Shock of Gray Productions Inc. is a not-for-profit theatre collective, developing and refining material collaboratively, with different members taking on primary responsibilities for various tasks: all members contributed to the authorship of this piece. *Smoke and Mirrors* was developed over a period of three years through workshops around such themes of lesbian experience as: childhood and family experiences, sexual self discovery, lesbian pulp fiction, lesbian feminism, assimilation, aging, and contemporary transgender politics. And as the work evolved, the material began to reflect the changing meanings of "being queer."

Smoke and Mirrors is presented by woodstock fringe as part of its annual

Festival of Theatre & Song

2006 Season, August 4 through September 3

"Powerful - Multi-dimensional - Fascinating"
Woodstock Times

"Fringe Bristles with Excellence!"

"Cabaret Workshop Surpasses Genius!"

"SongFest A Celestial Pleasure !"
Kingston Freeman

Byrdcliffe Theater, Upper Byrdcliffe Road, Woodstock, NY

www.woodstockfringe.org

(845) 810-0123