

theater

John Longenbaugh

Openings and Previews

A Contemporary Theater—Join the Bobs, guitarist Michael Powers, jazz singers Edmonia Jarret and Greta Matassa, jazz pianist Dehner Franks, and comedians Rod Long, Michelle Beaudry, and Elliot Maxx for *A Taste of ACT*, a benefit for the theater that includes dancing and entertainment on all four floors of the theater. 700 Union, 292-7660. \$100-\$300. Sat 3/8 at 6.

ANA! Theater—Two new episodes of *The Shadow*, the theater's popular dramatizations of the golden-age radio hero with a talent for not being seen. In "The White Legion," a powerful conspiracy dispenses its own justice, until the masked crimefighter decides to quash them. In "The Little Man Who Wasn't There," someone else with the gift of invisibility is committing crimes, and the Shadow's being blamed! 2222 Second, 728-1375. \$6-\$8. Opens 3/8. Fri-Sat at 8 and 10, Sun at 7. Ends 4/12.

☆**Book-It Theater**—Paul Mullin's adaptation of John Gardner's *Grendel*, the story of "Beowulf" from the monster's point of view. Book-It Repertory Theater, 1219 Westlake, third floor, 216-0833. \$6-\$12. Pay-as-you-can preview 3/5. Opens 3/6 Thu-Sat at 8, Sun at 2. Ends 3/30. See pick box this page.

Giggles Comedy Club—*Literary Giggles* features an evening's reading of humorous books, essays,

Pay-as-you-can 3/20. Opens 3/21.

Continuing Runs

5th Avenue Theater—The eagerly awaited arrival of *Beauty and the Beast*, Disney's adaptation of its own animated film, featuring a Beauty, a Beast, and a lot of lively furniture. 1326 Fifth, 292-ARTS. Tue-Fri at 7:30, Sat at 2 and 7:30, Sun at 1 and 6:30. Ends 4/6.

ANA! Theater—Dawson Nichols' premiere play, *Escher's Hands*, is an eccentric look at creative collaboration, where a man and woman collaborate to write the story of a hooker and her pimp. Problems arise when their fictional creations take on a life of their own. A tight production and Nichols' clever dialogue can't quite cover over some blurred logic as the piece develops, and the playwright's own cavalier treatment of his creations leaves a decidedly unpleasant taste in one's mouth by the play's end. 2222 Second, 728-1375. \$8-\$10 Thu-Sat at 8, Sun at 7. Ends 3/15.

☆**Annex Theater**—Bret Fetzer's new play, *The Story of the Bull*, retells a series of Greek myths involving the monstrous Minotaur and other legendary figures associated with him. The best thing about this show is Fetzer's poetic and cynical script, but the author's own direction creates a lot of theatrical static, with puppets, cross-gendered casting, and gaudy colors that distract rather than serve his own writing. Late night: the glorious return of premiere sketch comedy group *Bald Face Lie*, a bunch of talented wisecracks who give new meaning to the word "zany," and also the word "electrocoagulation." 1916 Fourth, 728-0933. *Bull* \$10-\$12. *Bald* \$5 or free with mainstage ticket. *Bull* Thu-Sat at 8, Sun at 7. Ends 3/15. *Bald* Fri-Sat at 11. Ends 3/14.

Scary monsters

**STAGE
PICK**

When playwright Paul Mullin was offered the chance to adapt John Gardner's novel *Grendel* by the Book-It Theater Company, he leaped at the chance. Gardner's book, which tells the story of *Beowulf* through the eyes of the monster, is one of the playwright's favorites, and he cites Gardner as the single greatest influence on his own writing. Besides that, Mullin thinks that it's well suited for dramatic adaptation, perhaps more so than other projects that Book-It has taken on. "It's all an internal monologue, so there's no problem of adapting a third-person narrative." It's also short, more properly a novella than a novel, so little cutting of the text was required. And Gardner's central concerns, about chaos, existence, and life on the edges of humanity, are especially dynamic. Mullin admits that the project is still an experiment: "It's like photographing a sculpture. It's never the same piece of art. But if it's well done, it can be successful on its own terms." Book-It Repertory Theater, 1219 Westlake, third floor, 216-0833. \$6-\$12. Pay-as-you-can preview 3/5. Opens 3/6. Thu-Sat at 8, Sun at 2. Ends 3/30.



James Lapan plays Beowulf's nemesis.

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