

■ DALLAS, TEX.



Foreground: Seth Magill and Martha Harms. Background: Ian Ferguson, left, and Gregory Lush.

JEFFREY SCHMIDT

IT'S A "SCI-FI FANTASY MUSICAL" ABOUT MARIE Antoinette and her adventures on a time-traveling hot-air balloon. It's also the show that left Dallas critics breathless during its workshop run in 2012, winding up on numerous end-of-year best-show lists. *On the Eve* combines a fantastical book by actor Michael Federico, performances by some of the area's top acting talent, and a driving rock score by Home by Hovercraft, a local band known for its theatrical bent. How theatrical? Its lead singer, Seth Magill, also plays *Eve's* hero Chase Spacegrove, while Magill's wife, Shawn, music-directs on keyboard.

Theatre Three, a Dallas company founded in 1961 to do

innovative work, is staging the musical's official premiere. It runs Jan. 16–Feb. 9, with director Jeffrey Schmidt (a T3 artistic associate) once again at the helm, along with most of the workshop cast. "*On the Eve* is a terrific example of an 'artist's project'—something originated by an independent conglomerate of actors, writers and musicians that needed a home," says Jac Alder, Theatre Three's executive producer/director and founding member.

The show's plot poses serious questions about politics and class warfare as it flits through time, from the French Revolution to modern day to a post-apocalyptic world. "We started out just wanting to write about the first hot-air balloon, but with the trick of making it a time machine," says Federico. "Then we got interested in looking at what happens right before major shifts, whether those stem from invention, romance or revolution. Everyone in the show is in some state of revolt, because they believe things can and should be better."

The rock score also doubles as Home by Hovercraft's debut album, titled *Are We Chameleons?*, and it works as a stand-alone record and as a character-driven score. As Shawn Magill explains, "We wanted the songs to shed light on our characters with introspective or declarative moments, versus always moving the plot forward physically."

Federico characterizes *On the Eve* this way: "If you love *Threepenny Opera* and *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure* as much as I do, you're eventually going to combine them." —Lindsey Wilson

To listen to songs from *On the Eve*, visit www.tcg.org/americantheatre.

■ SAN FRANCISCO

HAMLET, WITH PORN

LIBERTY BRADFORD MITCHELL ADMITS that her family's story is practically Shakespearean. Her father was Artie Mitchell, who teamed up with his brother Jim to become the Mitchell Brothers, infamously known for their work in the pornography industry. They produced and directed the 1972 feature-length porn film *Behind the Green Door*. Then in 1991, Jim shot Artie. Growing up in that environment is the topic of Liberty Mitchell's one-woman play *The Pornographer's Daughter*. "Exploring my family members as characters helped to objectify them and the events," Mitchell says. "It ultimately brought me to a deeper understanding of their motivations and humanity." *Pornographer's Daughter* is playing at San Francisco's Z Space Jan. 17–Feb. 16. (Coincidentally, the Mitchell Brothers's O'Farrell Theatre, a strip club, is located two miles north.) Mitchell compares her family to Hamlet's, saying, "It comforted me that my family story really wasn't so unique as an archetype." —Diep Tran



Liberty Bradford Mitchell, flanked by members of onstage rock band the Fluffers.

DAVID ALLEN

■ NEW YORK CITY

KEEP THE METER RUNNING

INCUBATOR ARTS PROJECT is taking audiences for an unforgettable ride this month. *Take Me Home*

by Alexandra Collier will be a part of IAP's 2014 Other Forces Festival (see page 80), but don't expect to book an aisle seat. This new site-specific piece is set in "the mobile heart of the city"—a taxicab. Three audience members per performance will venture through the streets of New York under the guidance of actor/cab driver Modesto "Flako" Jimenez.

"I feel like I am always looking at this city as an outsider," says Collier, a native Australian, who conceived the piece shortly after moving to New York. "And cab drivers are usually foreigners, too, who are negotiating how to live in this city as outsiders." Collier has been developing the script with Jimenez in order to be true to the Dominican-born performer's experience. Of course, the unpredictable nature of the piece is part of the fun. "There will definitely be wild-card moments of improvisation as we hit traffic," ventures Collier. In addition to their interaction with the driver, audiences will experience the natural theatricality of the sidewalks of New York, as well as staged moments on the streets.

Making four trips a night, Jimenez's cab will transport a modest 12 passengers daily, adding up to 126 captive audience members Jan. 9–26. At the dispatch is director Meghan Finn, whose show *The Downtown Loop*, at 3LD Art and Technology Center last October, put audiences on board a virtual New York City tour bus. —Jason Purdy



ISABELLE RAPHAEL

Alexandra Collier with taxi.