



SCOTT SOLOWAY

Playwright/director **Robert O'Hara**, best known for such time-splicing historical epics as his 1996 debut *Insurrection: Holding History* and last year's Helen Hayes Award winner *Antebellum*, returns to Washington, D.C.'s Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company May 30 for *Bootycandy*, a 10-play anthology of sassy lessons in sex education.

**Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in Cincinnati, Ohio, and immediately escaped at 18.

**What did you want to be when you grew up?**

I wanted to be a lawyer, but when I got to college I realized the only reason was because of all the TV shows. When I looked at the classes I would have to take, I said, "There's no way in hell I'm going to read all these books."

**What's your first theatrical memory?**

Playing a tree stump in *Hansel and Gretel* in the first or second grade. I had to dress in all brown, and I may be misremembering this, but I think Hansel and Gretel were actually crawling on me, looking around for candy or something. I was like, "From now on I need to write my own plays."

**Which do you prefer, playwriting or directing?**

One takes place in solitude and the other takes place in front of others. When I get tired of one, I have the other.

**What the heck is "bootycandy"?**

My mother and grandmother used that as a word for male genitals. My mother would say, "Don't forget to wash your bootycandy." She can't believe they're letting me do a play called *Bootycandy*—it's like doing a play called *Ding-a-ling*.

**You wrote a Richard Pryor biopic for Martin Scorsese, and you've written a play about Pearl Bailey. What other famous lives would you like to dramatize?**

Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston. I'd love to write something about fame. Scorsese told me, "You don't have to write everything from birth to death; find something that's emblematic of their life, and what we think we know about them will take care of the rest."

**What music are you listening to these days?**

I just downloaded Radiohead's new album, and Kurt Franklin's new album—he's a gospel entrepreneur, I guess you'd call him. I love gospel; it's so repetitive. They sing, "I love the Lord" 17 times, and after a while you're like, "Okay, I love the Lord!" I also want to get *The Book of Mormon* soundtrack; it's the most brilliant thing ever.

**If you could visit any time period, what would it be?**

I would definitely be put to death in so many time periods because of my mouth. I would want to visit the future—a time where more people are as crazy as I am.

**If your house were burning and you could rescue only three things, what would they be?**

My computer, my boyfriend...maybe my Netflix account.

**What's your greatest guilty pleasure?**

"Judge Judy." It feels like what court used to be, in the days when people would come in and say, "Somebody stole my chicken." She's richer than God now, and these poor people come in with no teeth; she is a feudal lord in a way.

**What's your idea of spiritual bliss?**

My boyfriend and I dancing every Sunday to the theme song of "The Amazing Race." We basically act crazy for about 30 seconds. And if you know anything about my boyfriend and me, watching us dance would be quite a spiritual moment.

**What's the tackiest thing you own?**

I have a T-shirt from the Walnut Hills High School talent show. It has a big red star that says WALNUTS.

**What's the secret to a long life in the theatre?**

Rum and Coke. In that order.

**If you could see one more play, what would it be?**

I want to see the play that is going on inside my dying grandmother's head. She has been dying for about 20 years, and she wakes up every now and then and people are like, "Oh, you're still here!" I want to know what that play is that happens when she wakes up and looks around. I may write it, actually.

**It isn't theatre unless...**

People walk out. It's the only real live moment in a live event. The people on stage have rehearsed what they're doing, but the person walking out has not. ❏