

The Crippled Critic



MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2013

"I Love to Eat" at Portland Center Stage

I saw "I Love to Eat" at the perfect time in my life, I have just begun to cook and I've had enough successes that I've arrived at the "this is fun!" stage. If playwright James Still's portrait of James Beard is accurate, Mr. Beard does not seem to have left that stage. He is a foodie, but not a food snob. My favorite parts of the play were the little pearls of wisdom he gives the audience about food, cooking, his own process, and tips and tricks.

One of these is his distaste for pretension, (he hated the word "cuisine" to describe American cookery.) There's a moment where he lavishes praise on follow-TV-chef Julia Child's garlic mashed potatoes, though he quick to wonder whether the cream sauce is necessary....

The play shares it's name with Mr. Beard's cooking show, the first of its kind, and the title does seem an apt description of the man and his philosophy. He loved to eat, and viewed food as a path to happiness. Some of us got to share in his love for food right there in the moment, as the actor (Rob Nagle) prepared onion sandwiches for the first row....

The highest compliment I can pay the show is that it has inspired me to seek out one of James Beard's cookbooks.... Throughout the show Mr. Beard insists that it was his mission to convince people that cooking is not something reserved for the elite, and I will take him at his word, his approach is very enticing to a beginner, and seems to start with a love for eating. I have that in spades, oh and a monogrammed apron just like his... I'm well on my way!

Posted by [Kristopher Haines](#) at [3:21 PM](#)