

PRETTY FACES: THE LARGE AND LOVELY MUSICAL

*Sonntag previews play
that expands the
boundaries of what is
considered beautiful*

The FA snowball has started its roll down the mountain! Your Art Director was privileged to attend one of the first previews of a show that will move our preference into the mainstream.

I hesitated upon seeing the 8x10 glossies of the cast pinned up in the lobby... really more BBW girls than NAAFA women, but hey, one step at a time. It'll be '94 or '95 before all Japanese women go on ice cream diets to achieve that special end-of-the-century look.

There was an empty seat in the center of the front row of the small and intimate Actors Outlet Theatre. Your A.D. plopped himself down for an in-your-face experience. Video monitors popped on as the lights went down and glamorous leading lady Monique (Lynn Halverson) filled the screen with her broad shoulders to deliver a promo announcement for the fifth annual Global Glamour Girls Pageant from Paris, Ohio.

Then Jimmy Lee (Ron Meier), the wiry little gay director/choreographer of the Pageant came bounding out with a wonderful speech about his mission to expand the boundaries of what's considered beautiful. I don't know if playwright Robert W. Cabell is a *DI-MENSIONS* reader, but he nails down all the ideas we've been pushing these five years.

Co-hosting the Pageant is leading man Roger (Charles Mandracchia), a tall, muscular male model who's been having an on-again, off-again affair with Monique. Roger at first seems a vain airhead but then reveals a bit more depth as the plot progresses. What's wonderful from our point of view is that Monique calls him a chubby-chasser: a universally attractive man who on-

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ly romances fat women!

A contrasting relationship develops between stage manager Carter (Michael Winther), who's more the painfully shy nerd people often think of as the typical FA, and repressed contestant Texas-Baptist-Blonde Bobby-Joy (Kathleen Rosamond Kelly). There's a lot of shorthand stereotyping of plot, characters, and ethnic grouping here, but, shot through with the radical agenda of size acceptance, it works. When, toward the end, Roger seizes Monique in a powerful embrace, a lot of societal resistance to our preference is going to be blown away.

The men in the show are all Broadway veterans whereas the women are all coming from regional theater to make their NY debut. The show boasts 26 new songs, great singing, awesome harmony, and well-drilled dancing, even in preview. Producer Tommy DeMaio started out in the late 60's doing "My Fat Friend" with Lynn Redgrave. He's certainly a friend of ours, and we wish him success with *Pretty Faces*. ■