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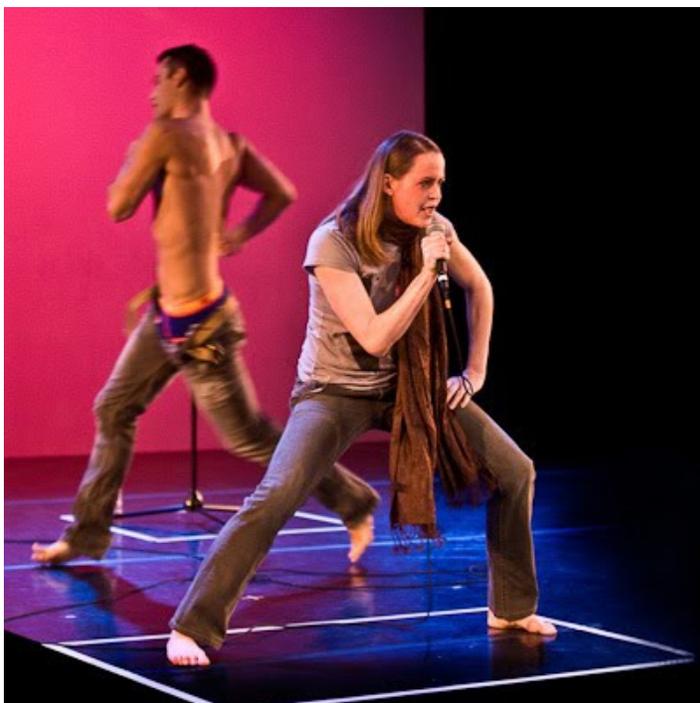
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# The Wild Reed

*Thoughts and reflections from a progressive, gay, Catholic perspective.*

MONDAY, AUGUST 09, 2010

## Oh! . . . What's This, Then?



I saw my first show of this year's [Minnesota Fringe Festival](#) last night: [casebolt and smith's O\(h\)](#). It's a wonderfully witty, engaging, insightful, and often irreverent exploration of "contemporary dance." I highly recommended it.

*City Pages* includes *O(h)* in its "Fringe Starter Kit" - a list of "20 goods bets for this year's festival," and notes that "[casebolt and smith](#), big 2009 Fringe favorites, return with their brand of modern dance that is equal parts sexy and irreverent - and free of pompous leanings."



Here's how the dancing, wise-cracking duo are described on their website:

While in the process of enjoying two distinctly individual careers in performance and choreography, Liz Casebolt and Joel Smith met and discovered a shared desire to make dances that confront convention.

They formed *casebolt and smith* in 2006, and have quickly become known for their unique and innovative voice.

### About Me



[Michael J. Bayly](#)

Born and raised in [Australia](#), I now reside in the U.S. where I currently serve as executive coordinator of [Catholics for Marriage Equality MN](#), an initiative of the [Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities \(CPCSM\)](#). I am also editor of [The Progressive Catholic Voice](#) and co-chair of the Minnesota-based [Catholic Coalition for Church Reform](#). I established [The Wild Reed](#) as a sign of solidarity with all who are dedicated to living lives of integrity – though, in particular, with gay people seeking to be true to both the gift of their sexuality and their Catholic faith. *The Wild Reed* simply invites people to observe and reflect upon one man's progressive, gay, Catholic perspective on faith, sexuality, politics, and culture.

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With [Charlie](#), October 2012.

### Essential Reading from Around the Web

Called "the **Nichols** and **May** of dance" by the *LA Times*, their collaboration focuses on the collision of two diverse histories. The work is "powerful, compelling and hilarious" (*SanDiego.com*), and offers a "marvelous aesthetic and thought-provoking worldview" (*ArtscapeMedia.com*).

The Fringe Festival website [notes](#) that *casebolt and smith* "make smart, funny and accessible duets that speak, literally and figuratively, about the process of making dances. Their collaborative process is intentionally exposed onstage in order to complicate, question and illuminate gender and sexuality dynamics and the cultural politics embedded in the ways bodies are traditionally represented in dance."

Their latest work, *O(h)*, is described as follows by the Fringe Festival organizers:

If you're sick of modern dance that takes itself way too seriously, this dance show is perfect for you. Instead of gratuitous abstraction, heavy breathing and over-emoting, *O(h)* delivers Ike and Tina, gyrating hips, hand snaps, head wraps and a happy ending. Skirting the line between camp and academia, and never afraid to dip to one side or the other, *casebolt and smith* tear apart their process of making dances. Speaking directly to the audience while dancing and sometimes singing, the two offer honest insights into their limitations as a duet company (two people can't be a trio) and their fear of becoming unoriginal. The dance evolves from demonstrations of what they can, can't and won't do into intricate dance phrases layered with pop culture references and iconic dance images of the past. They undress the politics of ownership by borrowing other people's ideas, and at the same time reveal their anxiety about performing those ideas without permission. The result is a totally original creation that offers a fast paced, complex and hilarious glimpse into the minds and pants of *casebolt and smith*.

*O(h)* and by the way . . . *casebolt and smith* are not responsible for any children who turn gay as a result of watching this performance.

*O(h)* can be seen as part of the Fringe Festival on **August 12** (10:00 p.m.), **August 13** (7:00 p.m.), and **August 15** (1:00 p.m.) All performances are at the Southern Theater (1420 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis). It really is a must-see! Following are snippets from a YouTube posting. Enjoy!

Recommended Off-site Link: [Casebolt and Smith](#) See also the previous *Wild Reed* post: [The Dancer and the Dance Love, Equality and the Rumba Recovering the Queer Artistic Heritage Oh, Yeah!](#) Images 1-2: Matthew Murphy. Image 3: Robert Salas. Posted by [Michael J. Bayly](#) at 9:23 AM  
Labels: [Dancer and the Dance](#), [Humor](#)



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