Quick Picks

December 1, 2000

In the end-of-year MIX: Positoid columnist **Shawn Decker** (with partner **Gwenn Barringer**) represents the U.S. in **MTV's Staying Alive 2,** a UN World AIDS Day special hosted by **Will Smith**.

December's **Artery**, the art-crit online magazine from the Estate Project (www.artistswithaids.org/artery), boasts the publication of **Sarah Schulman's** new AIDS play, The Child.

The by-teens, for-teens **Project Access** will put out its second annual zine, **The Deal**, for "Get Tested Week," December 1–9. Grab one for your fave kid at www. HIVGetTested.org.

The protagonist of **David Leavitt's** literary-insider novel, **Martin Bauman; or, a Sure Thing** (Houghton Mifflin), chiefly whines about his publishing perils, and it's not until the end of the book that Leavitt winds his way to the familiar territory of AIDS in New York City's late '80s. This too-talky book's most notable moments are found in the searing send-up of **Larry Kramer**—under the name of Seamus Holt—which is, by turns, hilarious, heartbreaking and dead-on.

Speaking of romans à clef, **Jaime Manrique** reports that he has completed **Señoritas In Love,** his novel about the late Cuban exile and PWA writer **Reinaldo Arenas** (excerpted in the August POZ). Though the narrator has a passionate autumnal affair with Arenas (called Ramón Ariza in the book), Manrique swears their real-life relationship was strictly platonic. Regardless, Ariza's advice to his lover crosses the fictional divide: "When you write," he says, "be ready to stand behind every word, even if you are asked to face a firing squad to defend it."

-Shana Naomi Krochmal

MUSIC

Badlands—A Tribute
to Bruce Springsteen's Nebraska
(Various Artists)
Sub Pop Records

This is a different kind of tribute album—a track-by-track reinterpretation of Nebraska, Bruce Springsteen's stark 1982 folk-rock milestone of simply arranged ballads documenting rural life's

extraordinary hardships. The recording’s 12 acts encompass Latin rock (Los Lobos), country (Deana Carter and Johnny Cash), vintage new wave (the Pretenders’ Chrissie Hynde), singer-songwriter pop (Aimee Mann and Michael Penn), alternative folk (Ani DiFranco) and more. But Badlands is a unified reprise of Springsteen’s strike against slick Reagan-era schlock that remains timeless—and perhaps is more timely today than we’d care to admit. A portion of the profits will be donated to the Nobel Prize–winning medical relief agency, Doctors Without Borders, which has made international access to HIV meds a central part of its own campaign.

—Barry Walters

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