

Performance

Embrace the Abyss

Josh Kornbluth shows us how to really live

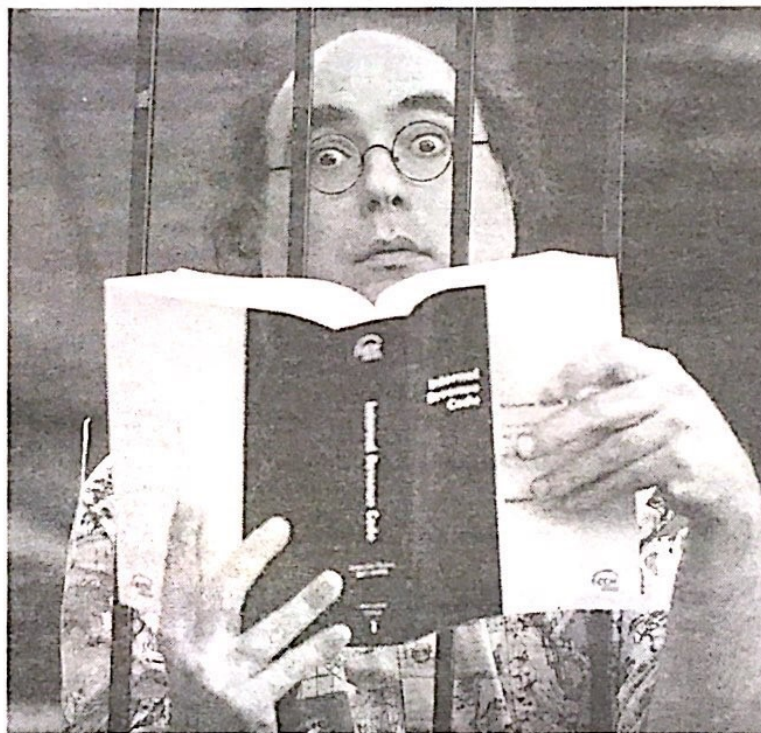
BY JASON COTTRELL

What a charmed life Josh Kornbluth leads. You know you've arrived when you're cashing in on your own IRS disaster. Who would you envy more? The man smiling with four aces? Or the man smiling in the face of a tax audit?

THU
3/24

Kornbluth wasn't born with four aces. He is the son of New York communists who taught him to hop subway turnstiles, to always fight the system and — either directly or by example — that filing taxes is optional. His happy-go-lucky roots and the system come to a head in his latest autobiographical monologue, **Love & Taxes**, in which Kornbluth faces the fact that he hasn't filed taxes in seven years. To make matters worse, his \$80,000 debt is jeopardizing his love life.

Love & Taxes overlaps a bit with *Haiku Tunnel*, an



Dave Leport

earlier Kornbluth monologue that was released as a movie in 2001. *Haiku* told of Kornbluth's experiences as a hapless secretary in the tax law office where we meet one of his more memorable characters: tax attorney Bob Shelby. Shelby is the golf-shirted, country-club opposite of Kornbluth's scowflaw upbringing, and he resurfaces in *Love & Taxes*. Like Kornbluth's parents, Shelby

spends his days working over the system. The difference is, he operates at the billion-dollar level, relying on collapsible corporation rulings and reverse double dummy maneuvers. Shelby's zeal and genius is contagious and, for a moment, causes Kornbluth to lose his way. "I'd begin to forget things, like I'm nominally against capitalism," he says. Being woefully out of place is a common theme in Kornbluth's work, and it usually causes his stage self to be riddled with anxiety. But Kornbluth the monologist should know by now that nothing is ever just a crisis. It's future material.

Those who enjoyed Spalding Gray's monologues and, to a lesser degree, the works of Woody Allen will enjoy Kornbluth's nervous, self-deprecating style and his naive attempts to find the big picture in what the audience knows is minutiae. To hear Kornbluth's next chapter of delightful misery, catch his performances Thursday through Saturday at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts (201 SW Fifth Ave., Fort Lauderdale). Tickets cost \$27 to \$29. Showtimes vary. Call 954-462-0222, or visit www.browardcenter.org.

{ <http://> }

For additional event listings, visit our website at newtmesbpb.com