

t h e a t e r

Twenty-something playwright Eddie de Oliveira questions the labeling of sexuality with his new work, *Lucky* By Michael Giltz

Defying labels



Omnisexual. Multisexual. Unstraight. Dodgy. Trisexual. Sam, the 19-year-old protagonist of Eddie de Oliveira's new play, *Lucky*, toys with all these labels but states simply, "I like tits. But I can't help peeking at pecs." And de Oliveira firmly embraces a postgay, postlabeling stance himself: His bio states that he uses no specific term to describe his sexuality.

The subject of sexual identity is vital to *Lucky*, which is taking de Oliveira back to the acclaimed Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland for the fourth year in row—at age 22. He was all of 18 at the time of his first visit and now has more plays and a short film under his belt. *Lucky*—written, directed by, and starring de Oliveira—runs in Edinburgh August 12 to 26, followed by performances at various London-area venues. It's a bit of a departure for de Oliveira, since there will be only seven actors on stage—a far cry from the 17 he used to create a stir during his debut.

"It was really daunting, quite scary," he says about that first Edinburgh trip. "The average company size at Edinburgh is something like five or six; we went in our first year with something like 17. It

was ludicrous—Cecil B. DeMille."

Lucky is the most personal of his plays and the first one written solely by de Oliveira instead of improvised along with his actors. He stars as Sam, an affable lad who talks to the audience about his sexual confusion—or rather, his confusion that sexuality has to be labeled. Sam plays on the local soccer team and fancies handsome new college player Toby. Complications ensue when his teammates have trouble with Sam's exploration of his sexuality.

"The more people try and find a term, not only the more upset they get, but eventually they realize, What the hell's the point?" de Oliveira says via phone from Surrey, England, where he lives and where his theater company, In Human Form, is based. "There is in some people no need to classify. Their behavior wouldn't even be classifiable. And, of course, it's no big deal."

De Oliveira doesn't talk much about his personal life (though he says he's not in a relationship) and prefers to illustrate the ideas in *Lucky* by talking about people he's known rather than talking about himself. One thing is clear: He definitely sees a generational change

in how people define themselves.

"I think the danger when you slap a label on—particularly when you're still young—is that you might have to go and reverse it. Then you feel like a bit of an idiot again. I know someone who is intersexed and never knows what to tick on a form. If they can't classify themselves—because they can't—it's ludicrous to think they should be forced to. I know some people would be happy to say they are out-and-out straight or out-and-out gay, but can you ever be 100% sure of that? And, of course, [*Queer as Folk* creator] Russell T. Davies's new TV drama is about that." (Due out in the fall, it's about a gay man who falls in love with a woman.)

"He's great," he continues about Davies, "and it's an interesting premise, which sums up the shambles that we're in—this lack of definition, which I actually think is great." ■

Giltz is a regular contributor to several periodicals, including the New York Post.



Find more on *Lucky* and other In Human Form productions at www.advocate.com