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THE THEATRE NOW PLAYING

## Paul Swan Is Dead and Gone

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Through May 19.

Torn Page  
435 W. 22nd St.

[Website](#)

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In her charmingly eccentric but frustratingly slack play, Claire Kiechel summons her real-life great-granduncle, Paul Swan. Once, he hobnobbed with Isadora Duncan and Andy Warhol; nowadays, this dancer, poet, painter, and actor is largely forgotten, even by connoisseurs of early-twentieth-century queer art. Hosting a salon that feels like a séance, Swan (Tony Torn, in whose home the show takes place) regales about thirty theatregoers at a time with flights of fancy and nostalgic reminiscences. His musings and reveries are backed by his devoted pianist, Bellamy (Robert M. Johanson)—or is it Bollany? Reality and memory are slippery for the aging diva. Likewise, the play, directed by Steve Cosson for the Civilians, never gets a sure grip on what it's trying to do—although Johanson and Avi A. Amon's music for various pieces of Swan's writings results in some lovely Michael Friedman-esque songs.

— *Elisabeth Vincentelli*

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