

## Fabulous fare at Fringe Fest



Randy Ross explores his singledom in *The Chronic Single's Handbook*. (photo by Sue Brenner Photography)

Enjoying the journey is a key message in writer/performer Randy Ross' *The Chronic Single's Handbook*. In it, Ross addresses the issues of relationships, examining why he's single, whether some people are meant to be single and whether we should always hold out hope for that oxytocin-creating state we call love.

Based on a book that he's been working on for seven years, called *God Bless Cambodia*, Ross places his quest amid a world tour where he strikes out with women on several continents but gets lucky (in many different ways) in Cambodia.

The play is not without its controversy. Because of its raw sexual exploration, some critics have called the work "misogynistic," while others sing its praises. (It's rated 18+.)

"The narrator's trying to figure out why he's still single," Ross explained. "He tells stories of past relationships that failed. One is a domination scenario/date. Another is with a sex tourist in Cambodia who gives him a tour."

In the end, you won't please everyone, he said.

"My mother has seen the show — twice. She just says, 'Boys will be boys,' and we're New York Jews, so this is our sense of humor. If you look at the whole Clinton/Lewinsky investigation, you could call most of the United States hypocrites."

In the end, one key thing Ross discovers is that being single may be who he is. It's a story of acceptance.

In the 35- to 54-year-old crowd, he said, one out of seven has never been married, so marriage is no barometer of mental health.

"Where I live in Boston, most of my friends are in their 50s and have never been married. And that number was comparable for women. You have 70 good years in your life, get on with your life."

At the same time, Ross believes we are actually meant to be in some type of relationship — whether it's marriage or not — and that everyone should experience the effect of the "cuddle drug."