

Q Culture

Lesbians and Lypsinka

by Brian D. Holcomb
Q-Notes Staff

DeLaria's Broadway debut delayed

Lesbian comedienne Lea DeLaria received rave reviews for her performance as a lusty female cab driver in the 1997 outdoor production of *On The Town*. The transfer of the show to Broadway has been delayed, however, due to a disagreement between director George C. Wolfe and choreographer Christopher d'Amboise. Scheduled to begin previews April 7 at the St. James Theatre, the production is now postponed until the fall of 1998, pending selection of a new choreographer.

On The Town has been plagued with choreographic problems since its debut in 1944. The show began as a ballet sequence that was expanded to an entire evening, requiring that almost the entire show be danced. Therefore, replacing the choreographer is a major setback, requiring a total re-thinking of the production. The Central Park production, in which DeLaria appeared, had major choreographic problems, and the choreographer dropped out of the Broadway transfer, being replaced with d'Amboise. No names have been mentioned as replacements yet, nor is there confirmation that DeLaria will still be available in fall 1998.

Pirates of Lesbos in Seattle

Vixen Productions, the award-winning alternative theatre company, premiered Jeff Rest's new comedy *Pirates of Lesbos* in Seattle on January 16. The campy adventure begins with a young English woman's voyage across the Mediterranean on her father's ship, the H.M.S. *Titanica*. The ship is attacked by female pirates, led by Cutthroat Catherine, the Vixen of Cyprus. Our young heroine is "awakened" by the

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pirates and changes the course of her life.

Lypsinka is back

Everyone's favorite show queen, Lypsinka, proved to the world (or at least the theatres full of queens) that she could do more than lipsynch this summer. On February 8, she is going to give audiences another chance to find out for themselves. *Lypsinka is Harriet Craig* returns to Mother (that's the name of the theatre) for a second engagement after twice extending its initial run at that location.

Lypsinka said in a statement, "I've received so many cards and letters from broken-hearted fans who were unable to procure tickets to our little entertainment. They've asked — nay, begged — me to reassemble our tattered troupe and tell our tale once more. Who am I to argue?" The obviously humble Lypsinka based her oeuvre upon Harriet Craig, a 1950 film starring Joan Crawford. The play follows a ruthless wife and her quest for a clean house and a well-run life. Fellow drag artist Varla Jean Merman plays Harriet's younger cousin Claire. Both Lypsinka and Merman appeared recently in HBO's special *Dragtime*. The show is currently playing through March 8. ▼

Correction

One line was accidentally omitted from "The Drag Rag" in the last issue of Q-Notes. The following information should have been included:

The 1st runner-up at the Newcomer Pageant at Oleen's was Deanna Nicole and the Miss Castle At-Large in Greenville, SC was won by Sasha and her RU was Porche DeParis.

We regret the error.

Style has a bit of substance

by Brian D. Holcomb
Q-Notes Staff

CBS has a hot new show on Monday evenings. *Style and Substance* is a witty mid-season filler that might just have enough steam to carry it through until next season. The show is by no means flawless, but the premise is promising and the leads are well cast. At least six episodes have been ordered, which is pretty standard for a show that debuts after November sweeps, and there is reason to believe it will make it through May.

Jean Smart, formerly of *Designing Women* and the short-lived sendup of *Absolutely Fabulous* that co-starred Mary McDonnell (the name escapes me), stars as Chelsea Stevens, a woman who is the absolute word on style, taste and homemade muffins. She is more Martha than Martha Stewart. She has not quite worked the deal that Martha has, however, because her magazine is owned by someone else...someone with a bit more of a corporate mentality than Chelsea has. And they have sent an office manager-type to look after her, played by *Facts Of Life* veteran Nancy McKeon. First Mrs. Garrett, now Chelsea Stevens.

No longer the tough girl Jo Polniczek from the Bronx, McKeon now plays a goody-goody from Omaha who is out to prove that she can make it in the corporate world, even when that

means taming the self-centered and insensitive Chelsea. Although Ms. Stevens has her public life in order, she is hiding the insecurities that everybody secretly hopes dog Martha Stewart. She doesn't sleep (it is rumored that she hangs upside down in a barn every few days), she milks her own goats, kills her own chickens, and makes scones for her staff to celebrate her divorce. It's a sham, though...her husband kept all of their friends and she realized that she has none. Cue the violins.

The show is full of jabs at Stewart, whose show also airs on CBS...one wonders what the politics of that deal are. Her groundsman is slowly driving her crazy by leaving a lace doily askew on a coffee table...because details are everything. Currently, the show focuses almost entirely upon the characters played by Smart and McKeon. Although hilarious, the show will have to open up a bit if it is not to become stale. Some other characters have been introduced, including the neeliest interior designer on earth, but they are only names and stereotypes right now. Hopefully in future episodes they will be given a bit more time.

With new television shows dying off almost daily, it is good to see that something worthwhile is ready to replace them. This show has its flaws, but has great promise. Give it a try. It's a good thing. ▼

Critics and public praise Tap Dogs

by Brian D. Holcomb
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Riding on the wave of popularity of *STOMP!*, a new group of urban dancers is touring the globe. There are those who would say that Tap Dogs has certain... "advantages" over that other group. Where *STOMP!* is a bunch of grungy boys and girls (talented, yes, but none too clean), Tap Dogs is all men. Sexy Australian men in shorts and boots, no less. Need I say more?

The show has already opened, and plays only two more nights (Jan. 24 and 25) at Charlotte's Ovens Auditorium. Tickets are available at TicketMaster at (704) 522-6500. You can also order tickets (and see some really great photos) at the official Tap Dogs website, <http://www.tapdogs.com>.

Tap Dogs is the creation of Aussie tapper Dein Perry, who began dancing at age four, and spent six years as an industrial machine mechanic (hence the construction-site set) before moving to Sydney à la Gene Kelly to break into show business. He found fairly continuous work in Sydney theatre and formed a men's tap group from among his friends before moving to London to choreograph the musical *Hot Shoe Shuffle*. After winning the Olivier (Britain's highest theatre award), he returned to Australia where he created Tap Dogs with director/designer Nigel Triffitt and composer Andrew Wilkie.

In addition to winning Perry a second Olivier, Tap Dogs has played to massive critical and popular success around the world. Don't miss this chance. ▼

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5. Do I - Gifted (Perfecto [UK Import])
6. Hey Girl - Bizzy Lizz (Progressive High)
7. Turn It Out (Turn To Sugar) - Kathy Brown (Strictly Rhythm)
8. My Love Is Alive - 3rd Party (DV8/A&M)
9. Breaking All The Rules - She Moves (Geffen)
10. All Cried Out - Allure (Crave)
11. Don't Go - Le Click (Logic)
12. Dirty Cash (Remixes) - Adventures of Stevie V (Clubtools [German Import])
13. Much Better - Club 69 (Twisted)
14. Respect - Aretha Franklin (White Label)
15. Breakaway (Eddie Baez Remixes) - France Joli (Popular)
16. Carnival - S. Cabar (Azuli [UK Import])
17. Been Around The World - Puff Daddy (Bad Boy)
18. It's Over Love - Todd Terry feat. Shannon (Manifesto [UK Import])
19. Dreams (Artful Dodger Remix) - Gabrielle (White Label)
20. Miracle - Olive (RCA [UK Import]) ▼



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There is a lot of theatre happening in the next few weeks. Here are a few suggestions:

To Kill a Mockingbird: one of the few great novels that translates well into film and stage. The Children's Theatre of Charlotte (not just for kids) presents a restaging of its hit production from six years ago. Jill Bloede, one of the sharpest and underappreciated theatrical talents in town, will direct. The cast includes Alan Poindexter, Steve Umberger, Kevin Campbell and Sidney Horton. The production opens January 30 and runs through February 8. Tickets and info at (704) 333-8983.

The Floatplane Notebooks: based upon a novel by much-loved NC author Clyde Edgerton premiered at Charlotte Repertory Theatre's 1996 Charlotte Festival/New Plays in America. Directed by Alan Poindexter, the cast includes Jill Bloede (see *Mockingbird* above), Jim Gloster, Barbi Vanschaick (the angel from *Angels In America*), and Gina Stewart. Doubling Thomas, a band led by Stewart, will provide original music for the production. Performances Feb 4-15. Tickets and info at (704) 372-1000.

An Ideal Husband: Theatre Charlotte continues to dissolve the "community theatre" image by attempting a show outside the usual realm of amateur groups. Oscar Wilde is très chic just now due to the success of *Gross Indecency*, a play detailing Wilde's trial for "crimes against nature" that is thrilling audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. Wilde's usual witticisms about art, politics, and the intellectual life are surprisingly apropos today. The cast, including Catherine Smith (a personal favorite), Polly Adkins and Mark Farmer, make it a sure bet. Performances are Feb. 5-22. Tickets and info at (704) 334-9128. ▼