

Night of the Divas

by Joy Liao

The lovely Melodie Hooker strutted her stuff for the audience at Union auditorium March 24 during Carolina's celebration week. After flaunting her fierce feminine prowess, Hooker, UNC's premier drag queen, became the poised and confident hostess of the Night of the Divas, the first drag show to be held on campus.

Four of North Carolina's most prestigious professional queens graced the stage that night: Brittany, Kirby Kolby, Sonya Simone, and Taylor Scott. In the packed auditorium, the audience roared its approval as the queens astounded and entertained. Skimpy thongs, elegant dresses, and awe-inspiring headgear were among the many sights to behold. One queen performed skillful

acrobatics that impressed us all, crowning her act with several splits.

After the performance, chairs were brought out to the stage, and a cozy Oprah-like atmosphere descended. Audience members were given the opportunity to satiate their curiosity by querying the queens through two microphones set up in the aisles. Many of the questions asked were about the lifestyles of the performers.

Why do they, as gay men, choose to dress so convincingly as women and dance, dance, dance? For the most part, the queens agreed that drag shows were a way to express the artistic and spotlight-loving aspect of themselves. Also, it pays well. Yes, however much they adore the glittering dresses and the loving fans, money becomes an important issue.

Another question burning in the heart of one audience member was how the heck did the queens get those outfits? A man doesn't just walk into

the women's clothing department and pick out a lovely dress or two, usually. It turns out that many of the queens are pretty skilled seamstresses and create their costumes by hand. Other queens brave the occasional odd glance, assume an air of appropriateness, and shop with the women in stores. I would think that the easiest way would be to shop in drag, but one does need the first outfit, doesn't he?

The queens were amenable and enlightening to all during the question and answer session. How long does it take to get into drag? As long as it takes! About an hour if need be. Are there drag schools? Every show is a practice. Are there drag role models? Each other.

Afterwards, the drag queens stuck around and chatted. They were a nice bunch. These divas. This night. This Night of the Divas. UNC's first drag show was a great success. λ

Queer Women Whine and Sing: UNC and Duke celebrate queer women's poetry and song

by Kristen Williams

Within the small, dark room of a coffee shop on Duke's campus one Wednesday, members of UNC's B-GLAD and Duke's Gothic Queers, as well as random students and admirers, gathered for a night of "whine, wimmin, and song." As queer groups at both campuses rejoiced in their homosexuality all during Celebration Week, that Wednesday's event seemed a quite appropriate celebration of lesbian and bisexual women's music and poetry.

Sponsored jointly by B-GLAD and Gothic Queers, the night's events included three guitar performances, one a cappella singer, one featured poet, and an assortment of other brave souls who took advantage of the open mike.

Allison Bates took the stage first to warm up the audience of nearly thirty excited music fans. She sang a throaty mixture of personal songs as well as several of Ani DiFranco's well-known tunes. The music reverberated off the wildly-painted walls as the shop's patrons sat down with their coffee and respectfully turned all eyes towards the stage.

After a brief intermission (in which this writer happily won an Ani poster as a door prize) Sarah Strauss stepped up to the mike. With a rawer style than the previous artist, she kept the audience hooked. Across the darkened room, toes and fingers kept the beat on tables and floor. From the enthusiastic response after every song, one can imagine they had heard her set before. As a first-time listener, Sarah impressed me with her playing, and I heartily joined in the applause when she finished.

After a brief, but excellently done, a cappella interlude and a word from the night's sponsors, Amanda Maris took the stage, to the delight of the UNC contingent. As usual, she offered a magnificent hour-long set, playing

through the favorite cuts from her recent CD, which I encourage all readers to run out and buy, and even including a new song she is working on for her next album. For all the B-GLAD members in the audience who had seen the performance before, I know they enjoyed it even more this time. It seems as if every time Amanda plays, the listener may hear something different in her words. And for all those present who had never heard her sing before, their response at the show's conclusion seemed a fitting testament to their admiration.

The night finished with an interesting poetry reading from the featured poet including acrostic poetry aimed at educating the audience about sexually-transmitted diseases and a selection of the memories of a field biologist's girlfriend. Several amateur poets then stood before the mike to offer up their poetic endeavors to a very receptive crowd. And as the crowd slowly drifted back to their dorms and their cars, all were talking enthusiastically about the night's success. The first-ever "Whine,

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