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ROMANOVSKY AND PHILLIPS PLAY AT THE UNION

Musical duo Romanovsky and Phillips came to the Student Union Cabaret in Chapel Hill on October 23. As always, their songs left me feeling happy and hopeful and a part of a large and loving community. They sang songs from their newest album, Emotional Rollercoaster, as well as material from two previous albums, I Thought You'd Be Taller and Trouble in Paradise. But though the songs came from different albums, certain themes ran through all their works.

First and foremost was unadulterated pride in being gay. No one could have left the concert without the message that it is OK to be who they are. The message came through in love songs like "The Prince Charming Tango" and in militant songs like "The Sodomy Song," an attack on the Hardwick vs. Georgia Supreme Court Case.

Romanovsky and Phillips's passion for gay rights is couched in their concern for the human rights of ALL people, regardless of race, age, gender, or sexual orientation; their repertoire include songs about battered women, a tribute to older gay men and lesbians, and a funny little anti-war pastiche of the US Army recruitment commercials.

The Union Cabaret was a vast improvement over Gerrard Hall and the local churches where Romanovsky and Phillips have performed in the past. The intimate ambiance of the nightclub-like setting was the perfect backdrop to their piano and guitar arrangements--not to mention Paul's rhinestones.

Although the music and setting were wonderful, the same cannot be said for the banter between songs. Romanovsky and Phillips, long a romantic as well as professional couple, cut their emotional ties several months ago. You can imagine the witty cut downs two gay ex-lovers can make. Now, certainly their biting remarks were not serious, and were only intended as humorous segues, but who really wants to hear two exes cut each other down between songs which try to build the community up?

On the whole, the concert was a blast. If for some silly reason you missed it, then do your record collection a tremendous favor and get a copy of any of Romanovsky and Phillips's albums.

--Monty Laycox