

Viva Variety 43

The Ultimate Talent Show

By Sister Dana Van Iquity

The latest Viva Variety show had for its beneficiary the AfroSolo Theatre, established in 1993 as a forum for African-American artists to give voice to the black experience in the U.S. The show opened with Harlem Shakes, an African-American women's burlesque troupe, shakin' it up 1930s style in an elegant strip tease using several old-fashioned white feather plume fans to cover and uncover themselves seductively, right down to white g-strings and silver pasties. Later they returned in hot pink and white marabou-trimmed negligee to do extremely sexy synchronized stripping.

Vocalist Benn Bacot recently performed at the Purple Onion and graced the VV stage for the first time with a jazzy rendition of "What a

Difference a Day Makes" and a heartbreaker called "You Don't Know What Love Is." "Second Kiss" was a stunning dance choreographed by Sean Dorsey of Fresh Meat Productions between him and his partner Mair Culbreth, in which a narrator described how, as a transgender ten-year-old, she had accidentally fooled a girl of nine into assuming she was a boy and wanting the youth so much that she allowed the girl to have her first kiss with her. Eventually the girl accepted this experience and even allowed a second kiss.

PA Cooley and Drew Todd, who are scheduled to perform a Christmas show at Theatre Rhino, acted out a hilarious scene from Brian Thorstensen's "Quite Contrary," laughingly showing how two uptight, superficial Castro gay guys could communicate effectively if not abrasively in one and two word sentences. Example: "New shoes?" "Kenneth Cole." "Expensive?" "Very." "New shirt?" "Saks." "Expensive?" "Very." Until the subject of a new boyfriend came



Reannie Roads, Blake, Spencer Day, Sean Dorsey, Mair Culbreta, Yair Evnine, Impressario Steve Murray and Geno Valle, onstage at Viva Variety at The Buriel Clay Theatre on Sept. 28.

up, and the sentences got longer and more vicious as the beau was revealed to be an ex of the other. Funny skit? Very! Comic Reannie Roads read from her safety manual for sex. "Use a net, because until you're good at it, you could break something," she advised. Her absurd advice continued with such

tips as: "To be safe, have sex under your desk during an earthquake or in the basement during twister season. During hurricanes, inflatable dolls are highly recommended as flotation devices." Blake is a very big and tall gay comedian who was already 6 foot 2 at 12 years old. He explained why he loved high school

football so much. It was the joy of wrestling down a guy, piling on top of a bunch of men, patting his teammates on the ass for every score, and then going into the showers with a couple dozen guys.

The show closed with singer/songwriter (and TV's handsome *Star Search* finalist) Spencer Day at the piano, along with skilled guitarist Yair Evnine, with an original composition, "The Movie of Your Life" about both the comedy and the drama of a person's life seen as a great film: "Did it make you sing with joy and laughter? Or did it make you want to cry? The final frame is fading. Did it leave you satisfied?" Day followed with another original, "Prisoner in Paradise," depicting the disappointment in his early career, at first excited in getting invited to his first Hollywood party but then feeling out of place around all the collagen faces and plastic chests. After tumultuous applause, he encored with Leonard Cohen's stirring "Hallelujah." What a sensational show that was! Don't miss out on the next Viva, which will be Nov. 6 on a Saturday for a change. ▼

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