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PENCIL ME IN

The Very "Dyke-ilicious" Charm City Kitty Club

by Scott Baum

It's been lauded nationally for being the best in lesbian theater and every show in its three-year history has sold out.

The Charm City Kitty Club was founded to showcase talent "by queers for queers," according to Kristen Anchor, the director of Creative Alliance MovieMakers. Creative Alliance hosts the quarterly cabaret shows in the old Patterson Theater.

Anchor is herself part of the Club and a musician, with a band called The Degenerettes. A native of Richmond and a filmmaker by training, Anchor has lived in Baltimore for eight years.

Founded in 1995, The Creative Alliance is a community-based, non-profit organization that presents and promotes the arts and humanities in Baltimore.

How did the Charm City Kitty Club get started?

The formation of the Charm City Kitty Club was a real interplanetary alignment that brought such a crazy, diverse, talented and creative group together.

About three years ago, not long after I started working at Creative Alliance, Jody Andrade, a member of Creative Alliance, approached me about starting up some sort of regular queer cabaret organized by queers for queers and at the same time the programming staff at Creative Alliance was brainstorming increasing our LGBT programming. We know a good idea when we hear one, so Jody and I teamed up, recruited other folks, formed a committee and got to work.

The committee is a real brain trust of the lady movers and shakers in the art, indie, DIY, and activist scenes in Baltimore. Lots of IQ in the room! Plus the shows are completely volunteer managed and powered. (About 20 volunteers per show!)

We knew we wanted to put on quarterly shows that were diverse and that



Kristen Anchor, of Creative Alliance and The Charm City Kitty Club. The next cabaret is Friday and Saturday, January 28 & 29, at the Creative Alliance (3134 Eastern Avenue). The cocktail hours starts at 7:00 p.m. and the curtain goes up at 8:00 p.m. For ticket info, call 410-276-1651 or click on www.charmcitykittyclub.com.

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interested us artistically. We also wanted to create an alternative social space and encourage folks who had never performed before to take the stage. We don't curate the shows, we just make an effort to make them as diverse as possible, both in terms of identity and art form. Our first show (and all shows since) sold out! We knew we were in trouble then.

Answer this multiple-choice question: The Carol Burnett Show is to the Charm City Kitty Club as Kool-Aid is to:

1. Water
2. Strong black coffee
3. Absinthe

Strong black coffee in one hand, absinthe in the other. (An 8-ball on a dyke's salary!)

What's been the most outrageous act to grace the stage at the Kitty Club?

There was the time the little pasty fell off during a burlesque routine (let's hear it for glue that doesn't stick), but probably the most outrageous act (on the what-the-heck-head-scratching scale) was Joe Medusa – a drag queen humping a toilet onstage... for several minutes. On the hot, hot, hot scale it would be the modern belly dancer Miasia. She has boobs and knows how to use them. She'll be back to perform again in May.

Who do you think is going to take home that award at the January 28 & 29 shows?

It is hard to say – we don't prescreen the acts (and they are all outrageous in one way or another), so we've learned to expect the unexpected and that's what we get! If I had to venture an outrageousness guess, I think it will be a toss up between Kelli Dunham our ex-nun, stand-up comedian and the video by Peter Pizzi, which includes a mom and daughter shoplifting team, bunnies with alchie boyfriends and more of the like.

The Kitty Club includes a mix of seasoned professionals plus some new acts. What up-and-coming local acts should we be on the lookout for at this show?

Definitely do not miss Wednesday Matinee – this is her premiere performance! She's singing her queered up versions of dirty Tin Pan Alley songs (she learned from her family) wearing her grandmother's old fancy dresses. I love Baltimore!

What's your dream act to book for the Kitty Club?

Mmm. The first to jump to mind is the band Le Tigre. They are such an important band and as individuals members of the band have been very vital DIY [do it yourself] rockers for many years (offering grrls like me much inspiration). Plus, they are awesome and the music is h-o-t. If time travel were an option, my dream show stars Talullah Bankhead, The Runaways (as in Joan Jett and the), Bessie Smith, and Gertie Stein. If hasbians are on the table, I want a Madonna and Sandra Bernhard reunion! If I-wish-bians are invited, then, Dolly Parton (her best friend *does* live with her and her husband, you know.)

The theme of this show is Grrri-Again's Island, a decidedly Charm City Kitty spin on Gilligan's Island. If you had to choose your celebrity dream date, who would it be?

1. Mary Ann
2. Ginger
3. Lovey Howell

The girl next door, the starlet, or the money is the question here. While I do have secret fantasies involving older rich women and I have dated the girl next door before (a couple of times), I have to say Ginger. Because: A. I'm a

film geek, ok? "I'm ready for her close up, Mr. DeMille" and B. I guess I'm a little bit of a star f***er. (Or so I've been told.)

I know that cocktails are at 7:00 p.m. and the show starts at 8:00, but what else is on your personal homosexual agenda?

Well, of course, we set out to change both the Baltimore queer scene *and* the Baltimore art scene and the landscape is looking a little different these days, so conquest of the world isn't far off. By the way, we just won a *Curve Magazine* 2004 Lesbian Theater Award for our last show. So besides making stars and winning awards, the next Kitty Club will probably also result in several long-term relationships and a dozen or so hook-ups the night of each show!

You use the word "dyke-ified" in your press release. I'm trying to introduce the word "gay-mo-sexual" to our lexicon. Are there any other new words you use for being queer?

Well, we brought back the old term "bent" in our show "Getting Bent," so I've been peppering conversation with that one for a year or so now. The term hasn't made the come back I had hoped. There's also "dyke-ilicious" and the sister term, "fag-ilicious." I was just thinking about the "light in the loafers" euphemism but for that to make a come back, loafers would have to come back in style too, and nobody, much less the queers, wants to see that happen!

Scheduled to perform at the upcoming Charm City Kitty Club, *Grrrl-Again's Island*, are:

- Lesbians on Ecstasy (www.lezziesonx.com)
- Kelli Dunham (www.kellidunham.com)
- Wednesday Matinee
- Peter Pizzi (www.magicclubfilms.com)
- Jay and Julie
- Aimee Norwich (www.aimeenorwich.com)
- Jane Cottis

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