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LOCAL FEATURE

Girls' (and boys') night out

Artists prepare for quarterly queer cabaret show

 By [YUSEF NAJAFI](#)
 Friday, January 28, 2005

IF YOU EVER wondered what a lesbian-themed Gilligan's Island would look like, look no more.

Baltimore's Charm City Kitty Club, a performance group for lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and transsexual women and their allies, is preparing on Jan. 28-29 to present its own "queered-up" version of the popular '60s television show as skits during its upcoming quarterly cabaret gathering, appropriately dubbed "Grrrl-Again's Island."

"The theme of the show was inspired by taking a queer bent on both reality TV shows and sitcoms," says Jody Andrade, one of Charm City Kitty Club's volunteer organizers (there are about 15) for the past three years.

"It's always fun to be able to look at the sitcoms we all grew up watching and re-position the characters to reflect a world closer to our own," she says.

But that's not all.

The campy "Grrrl-Again's Island" skits, performed by actors from the Charm City Kitty Club, take place between performances by the main acts.

Now in its third year, the Charm City Kitty Club's quarterly cabaret shows feature music, art and stand-up comedy by up-and-coming gay-friendly performers, including comedian Kelli Dunham, dance group Lesbians on Ecstasy, singer/songwriter Wednesday Matinee, filmmaker Pete Pizzi, performance artists Jay & Julie, video artist Jane Cottis and poet Lady D. The performers are from different cities.

The first "Grrrl-Again's Island" show is scheduled to take place at 8 p.m., Friday, Jan. 28, and again on Saturday, Jan. 29, at the Creative Alliance, a

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storyline

DURING THE SHOW, comedian Kelli Dunham, who is often mistaken for a 12-year-old boy, says her everyday life inspires her work on stage. The 36-year-old lesbian, who lives in Philadelphia, says she gets plenty of material from her daily routines, such as using public transportation and keeping her day job as a home-visiting-nurse.

Dunham used to write a humor column for Au Courant, a gay newspaper in Philadelphia, before taking her routine on the road as a stand-up comic three years ago.



Actors from the Charm City Kitty Club, (l-r) **Rahne Alexander, Denise Diskin, Audrey Chen and Jodie Zisow**, usually perform vignettes during the group's quarterly cabaret show, between each main act. (Photo by Jenie Yoon)

MORE INFO

'Grrrl-Again's Island'

Friday, Jan. 28, and Sat., Jan. 29
 Kitty Cocktail Hour, 7 p.m.
 Show begins at 8 p.m.

www.charmcitykittyclub.com

Creative Alliance at the Patterson

3134 Eastern Ave.,
 Baltimore, MD 21224

www.creativealliance.org

\$10 general public; \$7 members

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era premiere features gay

She says it's the odd moments of her life — such as getting kicked out of a missionary charity in Harlem, where she volunteered as a nun, for having too much self-esteem — that makes it easy for her to joke about her experiences.

"I like to dance on the comedic edge," she says. "I like to have people thinking about things they wouldn't think about."

Being a lesbian doesn't hurt either.

"I look so gay, it's not a choice for me to do 'gay' material," Dunham says. "I could be joking about peanut butter and it would be a gay joke, because I'm so gay."

"People say it's not a big deal, but I feel like being gay is who I am," she adds. "It's not just who I sleep with."

Lesbians on Ecstasy, a Canadian dance group from Montreal that recently toured the United States with the queer trio Le Tigre, also is scheduled to perform at "Grrrl-Again's Island."

Lesbians on Ecstasy takes popular songs originally done by lesbian artists such as k.d. lang and the Indigo Girls, and transforms them into dance songs.

Folk fans get a treat with the inclusion of Wednesday Matinee, a self-identified "interpretive songstress" who sings "naughty old tin pan alley songs" and adds her own gay flavor by changing the lyrics.

Other performers include gay filmmaker Peter Pizzi of Boston, who uses slide shows to tell stories, and Aimee Norwich, who is also known as the "Music Scientist." She not only performs with unique instruments, such as the piccolo bass, she also makes some of the instruments.

Jay and Julie, comprised of poet Julie Christopher and female performance artist Jay Brooks, offer a funny skit about finding the perfect lesbian relationship.

Jane Cottis, a video artist whose work focuses on the representation of lesbians in the media and film, also is scheduled to perform. She works as a video instructor at the Maryland Institute of College of Art, in Baltimore.

Andrade says though the majority of performers at "'Grrrl -Again's Island" are lesbians, the event is open to everyone.

"Not only do we have lesbians and gay men on stage, but we even have very queer straight people on stage and in the audience," she says.

"We have 17-year-old punkster dykes and 55-year-old gay couples laughing at the same things."

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