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eye -
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Cum to the cabaret

STRANGE SISTERS

Curated by Anna Camilleri. Featuring Lex Vaughn; Pirate Jenny Trio; Anurima Banerji; Leslie Peters; Anna Camilleri; S. Lynn Philips; DJ Wasabi; Tara Atluri; Ivan E. Coyote; Pretty, Porky & Pissed Off; Ina Unt Ina. June 21, 8pm, \$18. Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander. 416-975-8555.

TALLULAH'S SLEAZY CABARET

Featuring DJ Will Munro, DJ K-Tel, Merkury Burn, burlesque curated by Sasha Van Bon Bon and Shane MacKinnon and the Beefcake Boys. June 22, 10:30pm, \$12. Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, 12 Alexander. 416-975-8555.

BY GRAHAME RENYK

You know the Mudflap Girl, that large-breasted, sultry silver silhouette you see reclining naked on the mud flaps of 18-wheelers and souped-up trucks everywhere. She's the sexy siren of the big rigs, sentenced to an existence of mud and muck since, as Anna Camilleri will tell you with a twinge of sarcasm in her eye, "bad girls are punished." That's all about to change.

This weekend, as Buddies in Bad Times kicks off its week-long 2002 Pride festivities with Strange Sisters Cabaret: Revenge of the Mudflap Girl on Friday and Tallulah's Sleazy Cabaret on Saturday, being bad is what it's all about. How better to do that than with a wholesome helping of sexy lesbian cabaret and a healthy dose of burlesque?

"The Mudflap Girl is this female icon that, unlike Marilyn Monroe or Betty Boop, really has no voice," says Camilleri, "I would imagine that if I was stuck in her situation, sucking up road dirt, mud and sleet and salt and protecting the underbelly of big rigs, I would have something to say."



PHOTOGRAPH BY REGINA GARCIA

Van Bon Bon, Camilleri and MacKinnon

To give the "muse of the flatbed" her revenge, Camilleri has gathered a talented array of artists, including the outrageous performance troupe Pretty, Porky & Pissed Off, video artist Leslie Peters and, in their final performance, glam rock band Messy. Each will offer an interpretation of the Mudflap Girl that only the cabaret format can allow. The acts, she says, range from being irreverent and silly to sexy and downright dangerous.

Camilleri sees cabaret and its tradition of subversion as a good fit for queer culture. "A lot of cabaret happens in queer spaces. There is some kind of instinctive or organic knowledge of its political potential," she says. "I think it is about already being outside of what might be thought of as acceptable boundaries."

The boundary-breaking continues Saturday night as club culture meets art for Tallulah's Sleazy Cabaret. The funhouse-style evening will include projections of works (inspired by vintage porn) by local artist Paul P. and appearances by DJs Will Munro (of Vazaleen) and K-Tel, rock band Merkury Burn and performance artists Just Like the Movies

Also circling the poles at Tallulah's Sleazy Cabaret will be female burlesque performers led by Sasha Van Bon Bon (a performance incarnation of eye's sex columnist) and their male counterparts, Shane

MacKinnon and the Beefcake boys.

MacKinnon explains that, though he's not sure quite yet what the Beefcake boys will bring to the performance, it may involve either a Garth Brooks song or "Two guys who are going to end up getting into a fight and ripping each other's clothes off."

Not that ripping one's clothes off is the sum total of burlesque. Unlike what's usually wrapped around the Brass Rail, burlesque rarely involves full nudity. "We take on personas instead of walking around shaking breast implants, which can be very titillating, but this is more fun," says Van Bon Bon. "People forget that a lot of the time what is sexy about a stripper is the eyes and a consciousness of body moves. That gets forgotten in all the nudity."

MacKinnon agrees. "When I'm at Remington's with friends," he says, "everyone's kind of disappointed. They just sit there and pick apart the dancers on the stage. That's not even an issue for what we're doing. It's about relating to the audience, bringing them in and unraveling a fantasy before them."

Relating to that audience, if it's a Buddies audience, can be an adventurous experience. "At Buddies, you know that the people who are coming in the door are going to be receptive to what's on the stage," says MacKinnon.

And in keeping with this year's Pride theme of "uncensored," Buddies is making sure that bad girls and boys are welcome, and nobody's getting punished for it, unless they ask.

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