

Your Own Shit

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by Josh Schultz

Patrick's Cabaret

We are in the midst of a new theater. Again. This time there are no limits. "Nothing is real; everything is permitted" said Burroughs whose prophesies we are just now beginning to realize. Performance Cabarets, here and now, are the product of a highly computerized and economically suffocating culture that is overpopulated with real talent and creative energy. Performance Cabarets are usually held in theaters where performers of any kind are given fifteen minutes in which to: Go. Poetry, character monologues, performance art, dance, music - anything. Strange is standard. Performance Cabarets are the temporary Mercy that Malthus rallied against and said would be our undoing.

Or it could all be just a bunch of Jehovah Witnesses knocking on your door week after week saying that the end of the world is coming next week and you had better accept their humble literature and pay your goddamn dues. Or else.

At this moment, there are too many creative mouths that need feeding, and need to feed, and too few venues where one can regurgitate and release to an audience. So what do you do?

Make your own shit.

That's exactly what people are doing. These cabarets are unique to this time, but just another extension of historical theatrical movements. Mixed media and strange performance art is hardly new. In the fifteen hundreds Da Vinci was stretching out pig intestines much to the back weekends, he clears the floor of his studio apartment, brings in lots of chairs, unfolds the futon and he and a handful of local performers take the audience on a five dollar trip into their "community." Among the audience are some of the best in local performers, some of the not so good, a lot of artsy types, and just plain folk - mostly they appear to be a part of the cabaret community. The place is full (call and make reservations, don't count on there being tickets at the door) and throughout the performances, I was thoroughly impressed to see that everyone was captivated, except for some guy in a yellow wool jacket who was checking to see if I was captivated. The mood is informal as Patrick makes his opening remarks, Next week month will be there seventh year of the cabaret (so much for the

City Pages and my "new" theater movement) and don't park in the lot acrossed the street. The few adequate stage lights lower and David Lindahl begins. A thin, tall man dressed in various clothes of colors plus a gold lamay purse blows acrossed the stage and lies down on a single bed. Three poems later, he sits up and speaks to the audience as if he were at a party and speaking to a small group of friends. His poems were about gay urban love, and empowerment in the word "faggot". Lindahl is living with AIDS, and during one poem in particular had to pause after every few words to let his emotions catch up with his words. He would not quit. They were painfully honest. "It's really difficult, but I'm trying to be open."

The following act was Joe Chavala and Karla Larson, a pair of Turkish nightmares with a blue baby on a stick that tap danced a gender call and response show down that ended in astalemate nanny boo boo. The tap was nothing fantastic, but a hell of a lot more interesting than the tap dancing that I've seen at the show mobil back home. Entertaining...maybe. The act following was a dry folk wittist on a twelve string guitar named Linda Miller. She wasn't a very good singer or guitarist, but she told some funny stories about seeing David Lindahl for the first time riding a bike around the stage in red high heeled shoes. Many of the six or seven songs that she played were about relationships growing older and still remaining vital and fulfilling. A lot of her interplay with the audience came off as "you had to be there" jokes which were kind of annoying to those of us that were on there for the first time (about a third of the audience was new). Intermission and Tinkle time- notice the Mac postcard in Patrick's bathroom - The second half of the show ripped wide open with Bob Zinder on Kalimbas, a African thumb piano, and Friend on Kongos. It blew away any preconceived notions that I may have had about the Kalimba that were formed in second grade music class. Bob's goofy rocking back and forth was really showed up by the crazed Friend who just went off. A friend thought that it sounded like New Age water drops, but if so, then it was taken to its moment of crisis.

Patrick Scully was next, wag-

ing full blown performance art. Giving a history of the apartment building and intertwining his own artistic development, he reciting a poem by Garth Tate. Spinning a globe, with buying candles on the table, he asked the audience to think a country in which there has been a war for each letter of the alphabet. I was distracted from the poem because of thinking of a country for the next letter, but towards the end it didn't really matter. It was apparent to see what countries were on people's mind, and just how many wars there have been. Very disturbing. The last piece of the night was a direct descendant of the happenings that took place in the sixties, only this time the multi medium event included high tech video montages. It was called "Something About Brilliance" and was an experiment in Poetry (whatever the hell that means). It began with about six people hippie dancing in, saying a cut up poem, writhing and shouting. They all sat down at instruments and began to play, feeding off of each others energy, and sounding like it too. A montage of images came on the screen, and then the audience who, before the show, had been given slips of paper with fragments about mother earth and father son having illegitimate children or something began to saying what was on the slips of paper in unison. I didn't know what the hell they were saying, or if there was any kind of coherence to the piece, but it was interesting. Afterwards, horrific delight of audiences. The French were combining

Art, music, and theater in the eighteenth century which Daumier and Suerat continued in the nineteenth century. In 1917, Picasso premiered Parade, blowing everything out of the water. (NY Times, April 21, 1991) During the sixties, there were the happenings, Peter Brook, and John Cage and everyone was doing fucked up shit. These Cabarets are different from these other avant garde movements in that they are a eclectic combination of multiple mediums of performance. This diverse variety could create limitless possibilities providing an outlet for many different artists. Last summer, the City Pages in their July 22nd issue, legitimized performance cabarets to no one with their exposure of the scene. "In the last year and a

half, the number of venues putting these experimental variety shows has tripled; in addition, local coffee houses and alternative art galleries serve as relatively informal venues, while Walker Art Center lends its high profile to the annual Dyke Nite, Out There, and upcoming Summer Camp series. As a consequence, a whole new wave of performers - musicians, storytellers, dancers, and assorted combinations thereof - has come to light."

Patrick's Cabaret is one such local art house. Located at 506 E. 24th street in Minneapolis, two blocks off of Portland ("If you go any farther you'll hit the freeway"). The Cabaret is Patrick's creation and home which he shares with his dog, Boss. Twice a month, on back to Carey Thomas, the pianist touched on the profound metaphysical and mystical aspects of the time in which we are living. "You do own this time; that is infinity. Time is speeding up" and it's all stuck up your Uranus. It was pretty cool, gave me a headache which is a lot more than what most performers do for me.

The last piece was an experiment, cabarets are just as much about trying new things as they are about performing. There's a whole scene out there, waiting. Patrick's, I've heard, is supposed to be more sophisticated than the other performance cabarets. (Does that mean that it's "rather amusing" instead of "funny.") Each weekend of performances at Patrick's is different; some are really great and others aren't. Each theater has it's own community with it's own regular performers. Patrick is working to revitalize the neighborhood in which he lives bringing a new, real meaning to the word community. It's a word that gets thrown around a lot, but when Art is used as a way to bring people together which is what is going on at Patrick's the word takes on new meaning. Hey, and if you work up material you can leave the performing cabaret scene in ruins by making your appearances. All of the cabarets are open to new performers; as Patrick says at the beginning of each show "Welcome to my house."

Patrick's Cabaret runs Friday and Saturday night at 8.

