

The Barb Gay Pages

Reach The

AN EVENING OF PURE
"CHARLES PIERCE"
CRAZINESS

by Leonardo Madellani

It has become somewhat of a cliché to say that Charles Pierce is one of the best impressionists around, but in technical as well as entertaining terms, the brilliant comedian certainly is. What amazes me is the fact that it took so long for him to achieve the national recognition that he now enjoys.

He has been around for a long time -- playing mostly Gay clubs where his loyal followers could see him for the price of a drink. I first saw the versatile Pierce in Miami Beach many years ago at a place called the Onyx Room. At that time almost all of his material was pre-recorded and he relied more on the talents of people like "Rio Dante" and a drag called "Jackie" to help put the show over.

Now, many years later he is appearing at "The City." The formula is pure Pierce -- one that we are all familiar with. At "The City" Pierce makes his entrance from the back of the audience and glitters his way on to the stage to wild applause.

He is wearing a skintight dress with Green Sequins all over it. The spotlights bounce off of them filling the room with tiny lights. Over the dress the impressionist is wearing a white floor length fur coat. As he gets up on the stage he lifts the dress enough to show his legs. I must say -- that for a man he has fabulous legs.

Pierce is best when he throws out his one-liners. "Squeeze a fruit for Anita" and "Suck on an orange -- the one that sucks back is from California." He then whirls around to the audience and says, "See, I do have some new lines for the older people." The reference of course is to those that have seen so many of his shows -- and complain that he never has any new routines.

Charles Pierce unleashes his impressions of Gloria Swanson, Bette Davis, Mae West, Joan Crawford, Julie London and Talullah Bankhead. Wide-eyed, as Gloria, he tells the audience "people who remember me can't chew."

Most of his impressions are very very funny...giving famous people lines that they, of course, never uttered. The only place that the routine dragged a little (no pun intended) was during the Talullah Bankhead number.

Pierce uses every second of time on the stage to achieve his comic purpose. It all looks easy -- but the comic genius obviously takes painstaking care with every detail. He is a master of timing.

He had the audience in the palm of his hand on opening night as he threw out one-liners like "they are making a sequel to 'Roots' called 'fruits' -- tracing Gay History." And then as Bette Davis speaking to Talullah Bankhead "I bet you could sit on an Ice Cream cone and tell me what flavor it is."

In the show also is the cast of "Living Dolls" -- puppets that Charles hangs around his neck and manipulates their legs and arms. Especially good are his puppet routines on Shirley Temple and Rosemary Clooney.

And he is also now using slides behind his act, apparently to give him time to change to another fabulous costume. One of these mini slide shows projects him on the screen in a swimming pool in high drag -- as a shark is chasing him and finally devours Charles and ends up wearing the drag. Very funny.

It is a triumphant return for Pierce -- the darling of San Francisco. To watch this return were many dignitaries -- his

mother Jesse, Michelle (well-known to San Francisco Theater and club audiences) and writer of "Tales of the City" Armistead Maupin.

Charles Pierce is "Bitchy" humor at its best.

SAVE OUR CHILDREN FROM ANITA BRYANT - MINISTER ASSAILS ANTI-GAY DRIVE

A top official of the National Council of Churches recently said that the washed-up singer Anita Bryant and her anti-homosexuality campaign misrepresent certain Christian positions and stereotype homosexuals.

The Rev. G. William Sheek, director of the National Council's family ministries and human sexuality program, in a letter to the Dade County, Florida commissioners said he was deeply concerned "about certain myths and stereotypes that are being perpetuated in the dialogue over the ordinance concerning civil rights for homosexuals."

Dade County, which includes Miami, recently passed an ordinance which banned discrimination against homosexuals in housing and employment.

Bryant is a leader in a campaign called Save Our Children, which is seeking a county referendum aimed at overturning the ordinance. The campaign has enlisted the support of a number of religious leaders in the area.

During the campaign, Bryant has been quoted as saying that, "God puts homosexuals in the same category as murderers" and that the conflict in the county is "a battle of the agnostics, the atheists and the ungodly on one side and God's people on the other."

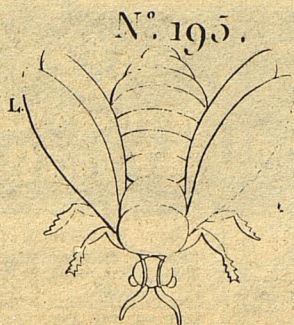
The Rev. G. Sheek, however, said it is "simply not true" that the Bible has a single and clear position on homosexuality is a "sin against nature" not to be tolerated in society.

MORE EVENTS ..

Opening this week "The Orsborn Tapes" at the Old Spaghetti Factory promises to also be an evening of zany comedy fun. It is described as a lost and found musicale. It must be because they tell me that a fish sings the blues and a woman levitates on her ironing board in this wacky musicale.

The musicale is based on the imaginative recordings of composer Daniel Orsborn who also wrote the music for the movie "Smile." It runs the musical gamut from Karate rock and Italian muzak to mock opera.

This is not a mis-print. It will be in the "Blue Boodle Theatre" in the "Old Spaghetti Factory" at 478 Green Street. Showtimes are Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 p.m. Tickets are available at all jamor ticket agencies. Bring your ironing board.



People The Other Papers Don't

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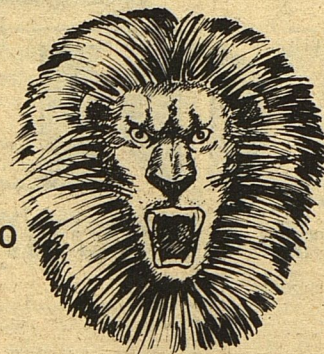
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