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'Chatter Box': Another Fabulous Fla...

'Chatter Box': Another Fabulous Flashback



Theater

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By K.D. Hopkins

I took a little field trip to the neighborhood known as Lincoln Park/Northpoint last Friday. It was a beautiful night and I looked forward to seeing another Mo' Roses Production starring the incomparable Pearl Pistol.

The evening's delight was titled "Li'l Miss Chatter Box" and did not disappoint. My traveling buddy and I pulled into Fizz way before show time. I always like to get a feel for atmosphere. There was another show playing upstairs in The Pub Theater called "Bye-Bye Liver." It was called a drinking play that was apparently targeted at the twenty-something party crowd.



After the Trixies and the boys who love them cleared the place, we went upstairs to the theater space. It was not the same ambiance as No Exit Cafe, but it did have a nice nightclub feel to it without the thick smoke. The premise for the show is a talk show hosted by Reba Quirke, a.k.a. Reba Van Vanderbilt.

Miss Reba is a hilarious combination of the SCTV character Edith Prickly and 60's "Girl Talk" hostess Virginia Graham. She sported big hair with a Bride of Frankenstein's beginner streak, a big faux mole, a tight gold lame top loaded with pearls, and a mildly profane vocabulary.

The asides being played as off-camera were great. She raged at the sound man and her beleaguered second banana played by Chris Damiano, demanding more whiskey between interviews. The show has an improvisational feel and takes questions from the audience.

Some of the audience was a bit pickled and the questions were on the lewd side. Sometimes the bit worked and others not. Such is the nature of audience participation. What definitely worked was the cast of dancers.

After reviewing other burlesque revivalists, I can safely say that there is a difference in the quality of a Mo' Roses Production. This was about the true art and paying tribute to a golden time in entertainment history.

First from the velvet curtain was Pearl Pistol, alluring with the feathered fans and a lovely sensuous dance. Burlesque is all about the tease and the graceful use of props, not how much one can get away with flashing at the audience.

This show did not have a live band, which was disappointing only in that the band at the No Exit show was extraordinary. The recorded music was good stuff from Broadway tunes to vintage techno/house.

Naughty Natanya paid homage to Gypsy Rose Lee by reciting verse as she peeled off her prim looking costume.



A crowd favorite was Lola Martinet who was toted onto the stage by Mr. Damiano. It was a surreal bit as Miss Martinet embodied an automaton persona with blue plastic hair and department store mannequin smiles. She used electronic pasties that whirred like personal fans and hilariously wound down as the robot ran low on batteries.

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All of the ladies were great dancers with true stage presence. The names were appropriately kitschy and fun – Backdoor Aly, Donna Touch, Siren Jinx, Natasha Minsk, and Special K.

The show deserves a bigger audience. It is definitely worth the train ride for an evening of classy and authentic burlesque. Catch the last shows on Friday Sept. 18 and 25 at 11pm. The Pub Theater at Fizz is located at 3220 N. Lincoln Ave. in Chicago. For tickets, call (773) 904-8777 or visit the Pub Theater Website: www.thepubtheater.com.

Photos: *'Li'l Miss Chatter Box' host Rebecca Quirke chats it up with dancers Teady Bare (top) and Lula Hoop Guru (bottom). (Credit: Paul Grigonis)*