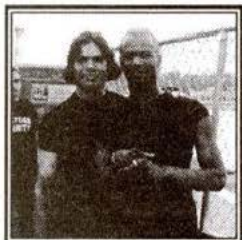


BY IVAN



WIGSTOCK '97 BRINGS DOWN THE PIER

For most people Labor Day Weekend symbolizes the end of summer, the start of the new school year, and television's fall lineup. But this year, though, Labor Day Weekend saw the return of Wigstock, the outdoor drag festival, hosted by its founder and driving force, the incomparable The Lady Bunny, that has become to the gay community what



Jerry Lewis is to the rest of the world. After a one-year hiatus (there weren't enough funds for Wigstock '96), Wigstock '97 took place on Pier 54 in Manhattan and quickly reminded everyone what they missed last year.

Virtually everyone who is anyone in the drag community was at Wigstock and performed under the hot sun like their lives depended upon it. From Sybil Barrington to Laritza Dumont to Kevin Aviance, they were all there and in top form. Rocking the first set was Ultra Nate, who sang her hit song, "Free," to the wildly enthusiastic crowd. During the brief intermissions, classic dance music was played and performers took the stage at random to dance and thrill the audience.

Jimmy James from Provincetown opened the second set with impersonations of seven legendary female performers including Cher, Mae West, Marilyn Monroe and Eartha Kitt, followed by performances by Flotilla DeBarge and the girls from Squeezebox. Raven-O and company would've made Tina Turner proud with their rendition of her classic, "Proud Mary," while Jackie Beat and Sherry Vine might have offended Ann and Nancy Wilson with their tribute to the group Heart. The Lady Bunny's nemesis Linda Simpson hosted "Jeopardystock," the Wigstock version of the TV show, "Jeopardy," complete with question-formed answers and swipes at the event's hostess. Paul Alexander performed his house hit, "Walk for Me."

Squashing accusations that Wigstock doesn't feature Latino performers, Lady Bunny introduced such acts as Perfidia, Adora from South Beach, and crowd favorite Laritza Dumont, who nearly took a tumble off of the Wigstock stage. Antoinette Roberson from the group Pulse followed with performances of her smash hits, "Shadows of the Past," and "The Lover That You Are." Taboo performed her tribute to Stevie Nicks, while Victoria Lace tore up the stage with two background dancers to the likes of Deborah Cox's "Who Do You Love." House music legend Jay Williams sang his new release, "Testify," and then graciously took the crowd back in time with the classic, "Sweat." Closing the second set was Shequida Ryzell de la Nuit singing her ass off with an aria that had the audience gagging long after she left the stage.

Naturally, the third and final set was filled with show-stopping performances by Lypsinka, Raven-O, Jackie Beat, Sherry Vine and John Kelly channeling Joni Mitchell, to name a few. Mona Foot shocked the crowd with the X-rated album version of Lil Kim's, "Not Tonight." "...Eat my pussy right," the crowd cheered along. One of the major highlights of the event undoubtedly had to have been Kevin Aviance's performance. Dressed in silver lame, Aviance tore through his hits, "Cunty," and "Din Da Da." Backed by four dancers, including Madonna's former voguer extraordinaire Jose Guiterrez, Aviance's energy, style and enthusiasm were incomparable. Varla Jean Merman had trouble with her track tape, but managed to perform a hilarious song entitled, "If I Only Had a Snatch." Jimmy James impersonated Eartha Kitt by singing, "Where is My Man," followed by Sade and company covering the Fugees version of "Killing Me Softly." Candis Cayne closed the show with "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy" backed by both male and female dancers who at first danced traditionally but eventually switched to same-sex pairings much to the delight of the captivated audience.

Wigstock '97 marked the return of the event that will hopefully be around for many years to come. This thirteenth year shows no signs of age, just a lot of fresh talent that knows how to entertain thousands of people under the blazing hot sun.

TURBULENCE '97

BY IVAN [REDACTED]

The fourth annual fund-raiser for Volunteers for AIDS Information & Services and the Pegasus Project took place at Twirl on Saturday evening, September 6. The event, called Turbulence, is sponsored by Skyjack magazine, the quarterly publication for gay people who fly, and raises awareness and money for HIV and AIDS organizations in association with American Airlines and The Association of Flight Attendants. In addition to bringing together flying enthusiasts and airlines', Turbulence offers a night of great performances by some of the industry's brightest talents, door prizes and loads of drama.

The show was hosted by Cappuccino who has been the hostess since the birth of Turbulence, and featured performances by Amber, Sheela the In-Flight Diva, The Pan Am Stewardesses 1970, Cinnamon, Mahogany and Rachel (The Mighty Three), The Boys from Concourse B, and a special appearance by Laritza DuMont, who tore it up with somersaults, splits and cartwheels. The Mighty Three paid tribute to girl groups of the '60s and '90s with fierce costumes, diva hair, and Diana Ross attitudes, while The Boys from Concourse B, along with Sheela the In-Flight Diva, gave 100% (pure love), not to mention peanuts and pretzels, with their well-choreographed performances.

Mark Chesnut, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Skyjack Magazine, is already looking ahead to next year's Turbulence. "It's going to be special because it will be the fifth anniversary," said Mark, adding that the event "also gives me a chance to dress like a flight attendant." Chesnut is also the author of *The Gay Vacation Guide* (Citadel Press, \$14.95, paperback), a book that explores different kinds of travel, covering everything from kayaking to gay cruises, to gay family vacations.

If you missed your flight this time around, be sure not to miss it next year as Turbulence '98 will surely rock your foundation.



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