

One Lana talks about her life with plenty of wit and bitterness...

by Josh Marans

LANA

Lana Lust: The Bitch Stops Here
 written by and starring Kent Staines
 Solar Stage
 until April 11

I went to see *Lana Lust: The Bitch Stops Here* prepared to have a great time. *The Globe and Mail* had described the one person show as "a cross between Madonna and Joan Rivers in a very bad nightmare."

Overall, what I got was disappointing.

The one strong element of the show was its humour. In fact, I found the show hilarious as did the womyn with me; but on reflection, that was what was so appalling. The show's humour is mainly derived by dehumanizing transvestites. At a time when society is starting to accept womyn as equals and homosexuals as something other than perverse, we apparently still seem to find derisive humour about transvestites acceptable.

The show is about Lana, a drag queen, portrayed by her creator Kent Staines. Chronicling highlights of her life, the show is filled with plenty of wit, sarcasm and bitchiness. Thrown in are some hilarious improvisational parts, including "Ask Lana," in which audience members get a chance to ask the character questions.

From the moment that he hits the

stage, Staines commands our attention, generating a lot of positive audience response. Unfortunately, the humor depends heavily on making fun of Lana's cross-dressing and homosexuality.

This caricaturization of cross dressers has all of the negative effects of an Andrew Dice Clay monologue: it re-inforces negative stereotypes, and effectively objectifies transvestites.

The message received by an audience member, both from the show and the audience's response, was that it is all right to laugh at cross-dressers for their differences, a sobering thought.

No doubt, many of you reading this will find the show a great evening out, providing plenty of laughs. It seems to me, however, that we need to stop laughing at people for being Polish, or Jewish, or Female or Homosexual. Until we do, there will never be an end to discrimination, racism and bigotry.



Kent Staines vamps it up as Lana Lust in *Lana Lust: The Bitch Stops Here*. He performs the one person play at the Solar Stage until April 11. The play is funny, but the humour is based on offensive stereotypes of transvestites and homosexuals.



Buddie's Feminine Mistake is a big mistake

The Feminine Mistake, the new work by Empress Productions at the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, is a waste of time — can I be more direct than that? To analyze the play in terms of narrative or structure would serve no purpose: there was no narrative or tangible structure. In fact, the play had no lasting effect at all, save for seeing it dissolve quickly into the mists of time.

The program notes tell us that there are seven sexual assaults reported in the Metro area every 24 hours; if I hadn't read the notes, I wouldn't have had the slightest idea of why a woman, dressed in white long johns, was hanging seven white sheets on meat hooks. It's commendable, but a statement is only good if someone else understands it. The program also states that violence isn't just a woman's issue, it's everybody's issue. But, please, tell me how this relates to three characters on stage throwing comments to the audience like "they should all be dipped in acid" while holding up a "limp" banana. You would think the playwrights would come up with something less tired, and a lot more intelligent.

— Michael Hussey

...and one Lana comes to terms with love

by Agnes Timar

Only the gutsy among us place personals ads in community newspapers. The majority of us want Divine Romance, not Divine Weirdness, so we opt to let other people do the experimenting for us. People like Lana, the lead character of Canadian film director Bashar Shbib's recently released *Lana In Love*.

No weirdos respond to Lana's lonely-hearts ad in this narrative. Only a square podiatrist named Phil (Ivan E. Roth), who makes his hilarious debut on her doorstep with a cough and, "I'm sorry, I just swallowed my mint."

But poor Phil arrives too late. Marty (Clark Gregg), the plumber bound on fixing Lana's kitchen sink made it to her door first. Mistaken for her blind date, Lana allows the sexual sparks to fly, until his true identity is revealed.

From this point, Lana is caught in a variation of the love triangle, made

LANA

Lana in Love
 directed by Bashar Shbib
 starring Daphna Kastner and Clark Gregg
 produced by Oneira Pictures International

up of Lana, Marty, and Lana's pre-conceived male ideal — which Phil only superficially represents because of his occupation.

Lana battles her feelings. Her intention was to meet a professional like herself, not to fall for a charming blue collar worker.

The film is charming — the delightful characters embody just the right amount of quirkiness, especially Lana, who is incredibly adept at manoeuvring her eyeballs.

Characterization reigns supreme, allowing us to ignore some of the belabored conventions of the film's genre. How many times must we be privy to that classic lovers' quarrel taken onto the streets, cranked to such a pitch so as to involve all innocent passerbys? Yawn.

Lana In Love does not have a sophisticated plot, yet it is a delight nonetheless. Missing as well, is the trademark of a Canadian "auteur," the sense of place. The camera barely leaves Lana's home — Toronto, L.A., the locale can be virtually anywhere.

Perhaps it's because the prolific Shbib feels no particular sense of connection with one given place. Born in Damascus to a German mother and a Syrian father, he schooled at McGill University, and now calls both Canada and the United States home.

Shbib's 1990 feature *Julia Has Two Lovers* put him in the international spotlight. But you need not track it down, since it's virtually interchangeable with this film — *Lana Has Two Lovers, Julia In Love... Easy title swap.*

Despite Shbib's repetitive style (his fixation for romantic comedies is pegged, once again, in his upcoming *Ride Me*), *Lana In Love* has a very 90s theme: the Yuppie realization that money and expensive toys don't necessarily make for a satisfying life.

Shape Up for Summer!

Summer Memberships starting as low as

\$249.00 (for 4 months)*

*Offer Starts April 15, 1992

**HURRY!
 LIMITED
 TIME
 OFFER**

- Cybex circuit-training equipment • Microfit computerized fitness assessments • Stairmasters • Lifecycles • Treadmills • Personal training • Aerobics • Squash • Racquetball • Tennis • Whirlpools • Saunas • Swimming • Aquatic classes • Massage • Nutritional counselling • Restaurants & lounges • Childcare • Social activities



BRING THIS AD IN TO ANY ONE OF THE FIVE LOCATIONS BELOW FOR ONE FREE GUEST VISIT FOR YOU & A FRIEND!

DUNFIELD CLUB
 110 EGLINTON AVE.
 2 BLOCKS EAST OF YONGE
 485-0343

BLOOR PARK CLUB
 HUDSON BAY CENTRE
 YONGE & BLOOR
 922-1262

NORTHTRIDGE CLUB
 XEROX TWR,
 YONGE & FINCH
 222-9500

BLOOR VALLEY CLUB
 555 SHERBOURNE
 SOUTH OF BLOOR
 961-4695

PARKVIEW CLUB
 BEHIND INN ON THE PARK
 EGLINTON E. AT LESLIE
 441-6163