

Caustic Gostick set to appear at the Underground

by Harry Rudolfs

I caught Sheila Gostick's show last Friday night in a warehouse in a back alley off Spadina. The art film crowd was just drifting out as Gostick's fans were piling in for the ten o'clock performance.

Gostick, who performs at the Underground this Friday, set herself up at the front of the stage and pulled out a pile of newspaper clippings which she used as props for her shtick, which she calls "The Friday Night News."

Sheila hit fast and hard. No establishment target is safe from her acerbic wit, whether it be cops, June Rowlands, or vaginal pouches (the newest form of birth control for women).

She began by taking on Mayor Rowlands' proposal to build more parking spaces at Bloor and Yonge: "Subways are a communist idea, anyway." Quoting from an article in the *Toronto Star* which says the TTC is losing money, she said, "How much does it cost to lose two skydomes full of people every day? As though this is the international measure these days, the big scrotum at the base of the CN Tower."

Next, she took a swipe at the Reform Party and its infiltration by the Heritage Front in a Beaches riding "where ethnic food is like 'give me a tea biscuit and hold the raisins.' Droeg (one of the infiltrators) is a past Imperial Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, but so is David Duke; they're just politicians. They (members of the Heritage Front) flew to Libya for Khaddafi's birthday. The Reform Party had no idea who these guys were and had them looking after se-

PREVIEW

Sheila Gostick
with *Mourning Sickness and Pandom Order*
The Underground
Friday, March 6

curity at meetings. They just hired these guys as bouncers."

Even Premier Rae wasn't spared from her iconoclastic tirades. Holding up his picture, she said, "Look at him — he looks like a muppet, singing 'we're all Tories now.'"

On George Bush, she read a headline that said he has 'Deregulation Fever.' "So that's what he had in Japan. You know there was a report by someone that he had actually died. The guy that phoned it in was immediately put in a mental hospital. It's not up to CNN to check their sources."

And more on Bush: "Remember he went on TV holding up a bag of crack that someone had bought in a park across from the White House? I wonder why he had to go across the street when he could have just gone downstairs to the National Security Office?"

Then she quoted from an article on breast implants: "One implant shifted under my armpit and dragged my nipple with it. If they want big tits so much why not get these bags of toxics sewn up inside themselves? And they're not guinea pigs, no way — guinea pigs don't have tits that big! And why test on animals when you can get women that pay? Animals don't have money. Doctors are ones who had to get rid of witches in the first place."

From there, Gostick launched into a diatribe on one of her favourite



This is a portrait of American President George Bush. Bush is a favourite target of comedian Sheila Gostick, who appears at the Underground Friday night with *Mourning Sickness and Pandom Order*. Some day, you too could grow up to become famous and a target of Gostick's humour.

topics: female condoms. "They call it the reality pouch." She held up a large Labatt's ad showing mirrored images of a busty woman and a man staring at her. "That's what girls are — a pair of implants and a vaginal pouch. And you know who sponsors all the bookings in comedy clubs, don't you?" referring to the brewery giant. "That's why I'm working!"

On Mulroney spending \$5.5 million on a museum of humour in Montreal, she said, "Sure, \$5.5 million to build a dick-joke shrine!"

Gostick saved some of her best ammunition for the police: "It's like they're always stopping you on the street and asking who you are, what are you doing in this town without a car, let's see some I.D. But I'm Canadian, I don't have an identity."

She was scathing in her denuncia-

tion of the latest Metro Police budget. "He (Metro police chief Bill McCormack) has got to keep up with the latest in police chief office furniture." Gostick also targeted "Metro's Finest" spending \$2 million on a publicity campaign. "All we hear about is their morale is very low. It's like we're here to cheer up cops. Maybe we should just get concentric circles tattooed on our backs."

Regarding the demonstration by 2,000 cops in Montreal: "They're demonstrating for the right to shoot innocent Black people; but of course, it wasn't a racial incident," she says, biting.

Lastly, she commented on what to do about the dispossessed. "They'll just freeze the homeless and find a cure later."

Gostick is not a mainstream performer. She shuns reviews and pub-

licity — I took notes while hiding the pad on my lap. Nonetheless, she attracts a cult-like following which includes feminists and the politically aware. She rarely turns down a worthy benefit, perhaps at her own expense; the world of comedy has certainly not made her wealthy.

But she is a sharp dresser. When I saw her at the warehouse, she wore a brown suit with a red shirt and a silver bolo tie. Once, at the Rivoli a few years ago, she wore these wild buckskin chaps that made her look sort of like a goat, which I spilled a beer on (accidentally, of course). She never noticed.

Interestingly, her cowgirl chic predates K. D. Lang, and her Tall Girl Corral has passed into history — along with Handsome Ned, rest his soul — as one of the cornerstones of the rockabilly renaissance that hit Queen Street a few years back. It's a well-kept secret, but K.D. couldn't shine Sheila's spurs.

It will be interesting to see how she likes the Underground, one of the most absurd pieces of architecture at York — and you don't have to go far to find absurdity around here. I wonder how she'll enjoy playing to those ludicrous marble columns and the dehumanizing, empty atmosphere of a place that looks more like an edifice to Italian fascism than it does a night club.

Something tells me Sheila Gostick will be one of the better things that ever happened to York. She appears in concert this Friday night, along with *Mourning Sickness and Pandom Order* ("the official Random Order cover band") in a benefit performance for Femfest '92. It could be the best four bucks you ever spent!

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