



Culture (east of the Hudson)

Our intrepid theatre person's search for culture in New York is cut short by social experiments with a native.

BY DOUG E MARTIN

Needing to escape the winter doldrums recently, I took advantage of cheap airfares to have a long weekend visit in New York. The high point of the trip had to be Angelo, who looks like a very young (and more attractive) Omar Sharif, but this is supposed to be an arts column and what you really want

Theatre

to hear about is Culture, right? New York, of course, has a lot of that, in every shape imaginable. A few things I really would like to have seen simply because of their names are the New York Chamber Symphony of the 92nd St. YMCA (which is actually supposed to be quite good) and "Vampire Lesbians of Sodom" (now in its "2nd Smash Year" at the Provincetown Playhouse), but I just didn't have the time. The following is a brief run-down of things I did get a chance to see, a sampling that runs from the ridiculous to the sublime.

Starting with the sublime, there was (besides Angelo) an exhibition of Van Gogh in Saint-Remy and Auvers showing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art through March 22. The show covers the last 15 months of Van Gogh's life, most of which was spent in voluntary confinement at the asylum in Saint-Remy. These are my favorites of his paintings. Since his mobility was greatly impaired by his hospitalization, his choice of subjects was limited, and what resulted was a very closely studied series; the Cypresses and the Olive Groves, the Enclosed Fields and the Self-Portraits, and of course, "The Starry Night." A great deal of detail and life is crammed onto each relatively small canvas, and they seem to move. I found that I could not get too close to them, or I was overwhelmed.

"The Road to Immortality: Part Two (. . . Just The High Points . . .)," performed by the Wooster Group at the Performing Garage in Soho, is very off-off-Broadway theatre. The *Village Voice* describes the play as a "bad LSD trip," and they are right, but I think that is what is intended. The evening started with random readings by a very relaxed panel of actors portraying Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, and other Beat Generation authors. The panel had to contend with no set speaking order and a 45 second limit (which seemed to change depending on the moderator's whim) in order to get their favorite bits out. At one point, the audience could make requests of author, subject, or book color for readings. I asked for the green book, which was

interesting to watch them deal with, since none of the books was green. This, interspersed with reminiscences by the Leary household babysitter, provided a very odd foundation for the play, indeed, and things got progressively stranger. We got to see a speed-through (where lines of a play are read as fast they can be while hopefully remaining intelligible) of excerpts of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* mixed with bits of HUAC hearings, with occasional cries of "go to page" whatever, causing the performers to rapidly search their books for the new starting place; and with one character played by two people reading two different parts that said essentially the same thing. From here the show moved to pure chaos and cacophony by the ending. I am not really sure why I liked this play so much, it was indulgent, more substance than form or meaning, and at many times it was dangerously loud (i.e. permanent damage could have been done to the ears). But it was well-performed by an excellent and charming cast, including Willem Dafoe of *Platoon*, and it will probably continue to play to standing-room-only houses for some time.

Homo Video, a program of videotapes by gay men and lesbians, was showing at the New Museum for Contemporary Art. I saw about an hour and a half of a five plus hour collection, a varied and interesting statement of current gay culture. The first piece I saw was *Just Because of Who We Are*, by Heramedia, a verbal history piece on the current forms of discrimination and societal abuse of lesbians. In some ways I found myself thinking, "I've heard all this before," but that realization really saddened me because it all still needs to be said. The next piece, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Queers* by John Greyson, was a semi-serious telling of a Canadian gay man's experience speaking at an international youth congress in Moscow. Much of the video was just the man talking about Russia to a sex partner in bed "afterwards." The last piece I saw was *How to Seduce a Preppy*, from *The Closet Case Show* by Rick X, which is produced for a local New York cable television network. It was a very funny "how to" guide, which told us that the best place to find closet cases is Columbia University freshman courses in social psychology, and that the best methods of seduction are still the old standbys, get them drunk and stoned.

That's about it for this trip. I am afraid that after I met Angelo I got more into social experiments in comparative cultures instead of going out to see plays and things. I am trying to get him to come to Portland so we can continue those experiments, but he says, "There's just no Culture west of the Hudson." •

DeLaria and Edwards head East

Everybody knows that Lea DeLaria and Kelley Edwards are a couple of lesbians. What they may not know is that soon they will become "Dos Lesbos."

os Lesbos, a musical comedy by Terry Baum and Carolyn Meyers, concerns two women exploring the different realms of lesbian life. Featured will be music by such artists as Suburban Lawns and Patti Smith. On March 27 DeLaria, a well-known comedian and Edwards, a seasoned local performer, will bring the 1982 play to life for two performances in Portland.

In Lea's words, "*Dos Lesbos* is an un-stereotypical view of lesbian life as seen by two un-stereotypical lesbians." Lea plays Peg, an unemployed and sarcastic "bulldagger" while Kelley plays Gracie, a neurotic Jewish writer. Through the course of the play the two grapple with such subjects as men, coming out to parents, and sex. These topics are anything but new, but *Dos Lesbos* works because of its vital, three-dimensional women. As Kelley explains, "Both characters are extremely witty and funny." She and Lea will portray the characters accordingly,

rather than as butch-femme stereotypes.

Lea has wanted to perform *Dos Lesbos* for some time but was unable to find a suitable Gracie. That was until her recent move to Portland where she met Kelley at a local comedy showcase. They hit it off and decided to revive *Dos Lesbos*. Although it's a collaborative effort, Lea's the director and declares somewhat jokingly, "My word is God."

"I won't say anything . . ." Kelley adds with a smile.

Dos Lesbos plays March 27 and 28 at 8 p.m. at the Columbia Theatre Company, 2021 S.E. Hawthorne. Tickets are \$7 in advance at A Woman's Place Bookstore or \$8 at the door.

After the Portland run, Lea and Kelley are taking the show on a nationwide tour, and will be playing throughout the summer in Provincetown. •

— Howie Baggadonutz and Michele Lenguabush

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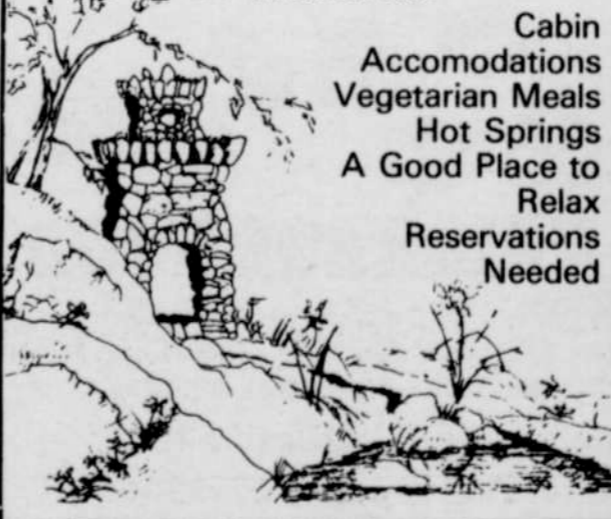


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