




Show Guide

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East
Off-Off Broadway July 02, 2003

Mini Red Satan

Reviewed By Aliza Mills



Photo: Ted Read

The sketch comedy troupe, "Mini Red Satan," has returned to wow audiences once more with writer/director Ty Burgess' edgy, over-the-top skits. Featuring many fresh new faces, the show is an hour and 20 minutes of serious comedy.

It starts strangely: T. Berry, "storyteller extraordinaire," opens the show with an oddball, convoluted story about a man who finds himself in a compromising situation -- to say the least. But the vivacious cast quickly follows, filling the stage with a series of very funny, very observant skits, running the gamut from "Fat Attack," a war on obesity instead of terror, to "Shit Shovellers Local 232," which finds the honor in shoveling horse manure. Nine in all, each skit was followed by funky music or short films.

Standout performances include Erica Herd, who perfects the old Jewish New Yorker in "Bingo Bitch," and Pat Swearingen, who's crackhead Easter Bunny in "Meeting of the Holiday Icons" and gay dance instructor in "Cubby Baxter's Dance Academy" were the most developed and risqué performances of the evening.

On the downside, the cast would sometimes take the humor too far, or simply too loud, but mostly they managed to stay balanced. With more shows soon to come, keep your eye open for the hilarious "Mini Red Satan."

www.miniredsatan.com



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"Mini Red Satan"

Theater: Kraine Theater
Location: 85 East 4th St., NYC

Director: Ty Burgess
Starts: September 06, 2003

Ends: September 13, 2003

Price: \$10-\$12

Presented by: Mini Red Satan

Show Guide

East
Off-Off Broadway December 16, 2002

Vulvis Presley

Reviewed By Tom Penketh



Photo: V. Jane Windsor

"Vulvis Presley"

Theater: WoW Cafe
Theater

Location: 59-61 E. 4th
St., NYC

Phone: 212-330-6868

Starts: December 12,
2002

Ends: December 28, 2002

"When I was a little girl, my daddy used to tell me inappropriate stories about Elvis Presley."

Imagine a world where Elvis is a pill-poppin', girl-chasin' woman and his gang of toadies, the Memphis Mafia, consists of a leggy brunette in a slinky gown, a ponytailed blonde in a tight angora sweater, and a gangly young girl with black sideburns. In writer/director Emily Rems's buoyant new comedy "Vulvis Presley," nothing is quite as you remember it--but it's so much fun, you won't care.

"Vulvis" begins with a young girl (a wonderful, wide-eyed Ami Young) listening to stories of her favorite '50s singer, whom her daddy (wryly played by Erica Herd) has remade into 'Vulvis'--a joyous female reflection of the late king of rock 'n' roll.

But this isn't the 'movie Elvis' he's describing: Using real stories told by the original Memphis Mafia, 'Vulvis' (a marvelous Joanne Cunningham) is shown as a swaggering, sex-crazed, pill-gulping lunatic with a taste for young girls who is also wracked with poor 'plumbing' and multiple substance-abuse issues. Playwright Rems does a terrific job exploring all the comic possibilities of Vulvis's buffoonish traits, but also deftly balances it with real poignancy, primarily through the daughter's view of her outsized icon.

The multi-tasking Mafia trio (played with incredible verve by the statuesque Kris Wiebe, a ponytailed Katherine Sanderlin and the sideburned Melissa Shimkovitz) act as confidante, security force and cleaning squad for the spiraling superstar, and, much like the real yes-men, are unable to control the singer's self-destructive tendencies.

The cast is uniformly excellent, with special mention to Shimkovitz, whose sharp comic timing makes the most of her slight role as a jittery sidekick. The only downside is the show's length--just under an hour--for which the subject, and the audience, seemed to want and deserve much more.

www.wowcafe.org/vulvis