



Not your everyday divas

3 Mo' Divas
Directed by Marion J Caffey
Starring N'Kenge, Jamet Pittman,
Laurice Lanier, Gretha Boston and
Andrea Jones-Sojola
Runs 21 October-12 November
Citadel Theatre

MARIA KOTOVYCH
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Bitch. Prima donna. Those are just some of the words that many people associate with the label “diva.” Marion J Caffey, creator, director and choreographer of the upcoming show *3 Mo' Divas*, makes it clear that these skewed perceptions don't really describe a diva, and they certainly *don't* apply to the Divas in his theatrical concert.

With *3 Mo' Divas*, Caffey promises that Edmonton is about to see something completely new. The divas are classically trained singers—meaning they're tuned to styles like opera—but in this particular show, they'll sing a total of eight different musical styles.

“It makes it an extraordinary concert,

a spectacular concert, because this isn't an ordinary thing for opera singers to do,” Caffey explains. “Edmonton will get a taste of something being done for the first time worldwide.”

The musical styles mastered by the divas range all the way from blues to Broadway to spiritual. Singing in English, French, German and Italian, the divas perform everything from operatic pieces by Puccini, Verdi and Gonoud, gospel songs such as “Go Tell It On the Mountain,” to music from *The Wizard of Oz*. Caffey also emphasizes that the show features music that younger crowds will recognize.

“We do an off-Broadway from the musical *Wicked* and from *Rent*, and Gladys Knight and Tina Turner,” he says.

In fact, Caffey promises that the show is suitable for the whole family, because it doesn't contain adult language, and he thinks that everyone will have a good time.

“Well, if Edmonton is like the rest of the human beings that have seen this show, the effect will ... [cause] people

to do odd things like stand up in the middle of a house and scream, really weird things like 500 people jumping up in the dark at the end of the show, waiting for the lights to come up so they can applaud more,” Caffey says excitedly.

“It causes people to do some wacky things, have a great time, not wanna watch CNN when they get home, really crazy stuff like forget about the Iraq war for a couple of hours.”

But we still haven't answered one question: just what is a diva?

“It's just a matter of confidence on the verge of arrogance, but not crossing the line,” Caffey says.

And according to Caffey, the divas' strong onstage confidence is necessary for this particular show to have its intended effect on the audience.

“I think these divas are defined by transforming the music that allows the audience to be transported,” he says. “There are moments that will take your breath away, and moments you will want to shed a tear, but most of the moments, you'll just wanna smile.”

Shortbus shallow, but sexy

Shortbus
Directed by John Cameron Mitchell
Starring Sook-Yin Lee, Paul Dawson,
Lindsay Beamish and PJ DeBoy
Opens Friday, 20 October
Princess Theatre

DANIEL KASZOR
Arts & Entertainment Staff

Does the idea of one man singing the American national anthem into another man's erect penis make you uncomfortable? Would seeing Sook-Yin Lee have hardcore sex make you ill at ease? Could the sight of a man masturbate to conclusion onto his own face make you squeamish? If the answer is yes to any of those questions then you might be a bit wiggled out by *Shortbus*.

Of course, that's sort of the point. *Shortbus* is all about people pushing their boundaries, both sexual and emotional, and it definitely plays out as the film pushes what's acceptable to be shown in a film, as well as the boundaries of what an audience is comfortable with. And in that respect, it succeeds. Even in a popular culture saturated with pornography, *Shortbus* probably pushes at least a few things that a mainstream audience hasn't seen before. Unfortunately, though,

once you get past the sex, the rest of the movie feels somewhat scattershot.

The movie centres on a group of hipster/yuppies in post-terrorist New York. Primarily, the film follows the story of Sofia (Sook-Yin Lee) as a marriage counsellor who has never had an orgasm, and then relates her story to several others such as Severin, a dominatrix who takes pictures of ground zero before having sex, and Jamie and James, a gay couple dealing with James' predilection for depression.

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When separated from the relatively shocking depictions of sex in the movie, everything hinges on the audience's ability to relate to the characters on a basic level. And at that level, the film is inconsistent. At some points, such as when James is talking about how he used the amount that

his johns would pay him as a way of validating his existence, are poignant. Other times, such as how James finally gets past his depression, are much less effective.

And that's the crux of the film's problem. I was often wrapped up in the problems and emotional lives of the characters, but just as often I wanted to tell them to get over themselves.

So, if the emotional lives of the characters aren't worth going to the film, is it worth it for the titillation? The simple answer is no, as the sex isn't especially appealing, but the question is deeper than that. Does the sex enhance the rest of the film? That depends.

If you're going to see the film because it has a lot of sex in it, you'll probably be disappointed. If the idea of the kind of sex described in the first paragraph of this review is unsettling to you, then it will probably help you get alongside what's going on in the heads of the characters in the film, all of whom have to confront something that makes them uncomfortable on a fundamental level.

If you want to see a piece of rebellious art, check out *Shortbus*. If you want to see something that has consistent emotional depth to it, you should probably keep on looking.

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OCTOBER featured STUDENT GROUP

PSUA Political Science Undergraduate Students' Association

Established on U of A Campus: 1999
Membership: 250 +



Purpose of the Group:

The PSUA is a department association that represents all political science students at the University of Alberta. Our group provides academic and social functions for our members, in addition to being the undergraduate student liaison with the department.

Recent events provided by the PSUA include the End of Summer Picnic and an outing to Heritage Days. The PSUA helps out the Department of Political Science with Open House and the Department Speakers' Series. We also hold a Graduation Gala at the end of each academic year. Upcoming events include the brown bag lunch discussion on the Liberal Leadership Race on October 12th from 12:30-1:50 in T B 104 and an Aristotle themed toga pub-crawl on October 20th. All events are open to the public!

For information on joining PSUA contact:
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