

'Torch Song' valid for modern times

Review

By TOMMY JOYNER
Assistant Features editor

Homosexuality. It's had a bad rap. Even in light of National Coming Out Day and the Gay Rights movement, there has been Liberace, art-deco and disco to poison the heterosexual mind on the whole schmeal.

The era is over. Popular cult figures that epitomized the late '70s sexual revolution — Lou Reed, David Bowie, Andy Warhol — slowly brought the moth ball-packed coat out of the closet where it has been stored since the ancient Greeks. With the appearance of AIDS came respect. Any population group with enough influence to get Trojan ads on the tube deserves it.

Torch Song Trilogy by Harvey Fierstein at Trustus Theatre is a play about the "coming of age" of homosexuality. The '90s are here and "those damned queers" are an integral part of American — and world — society. The main

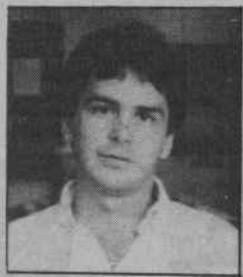
characters, Ed and Arnold, were as real in their pursuits as any heterosexual could be. Of course, you say, people are people and all that rah-rah, but the typical portrayal of homosexual relations generally bring words like "flaming" and "pink" to mind. This was not the case with *Torch Song*.

The cast of three carried this light comedic drama along with utter professional ease. Arnold, played by veteran actor Scott Blanks, is a prissy drag queen who, strangely enough, comes across as sincere, honest and likeable, though he is something that could probably never exist in a place like Columbia. Identifying with his love problems, namely Ed, played by Tony Lucci, is made easy through the author's use of universal-type love themes. Although it is applied to a situation

that most of the populous never deals with, Fierstein cleverly has Arnold using lines that everybody has or will say and hear.

Stan Brown plays Lady Blues, a faceless bystander who acts as a narrator. In between every scene, Lady Blues comes onstage and sings an explanatory song about what one of the protagonists is feeling. The acapella songs were generally light, and sung mightily well in smooth bluesy time. This unusual use of a narrator in a modern, post-preschool play is a credit to Fierstein's interesting style and makes for easy, compelling transitions.

Torch Song Trilogy is not a play for everyone. It is the late show, 11:15 p.m. curtain time, and therefore there won't be many younguns attending, and it is a good thing. The play is very well staged and, though highly humorous in many parts, thought provoking. Tickets for the Friday night late show are \$5 and \$10. Call 254-9732 for information and reservations.



chuck dean's

Random Patterns

"...I try to imagine another planet, another sun, where I don't look like me and everything I do matters..." — Rickie Lee Jones

When I was a kid, my cousin Duane got a new haircut; he called it a "style." Duane came over to the clubhouse to show me and my other cousins his new style, but my mean cousin Juan didn't think much of it. Juan got Duane in a vicious headlock, messing poor Duane's style up something awful. Duane went and told on all of us, and we got our butts beat for ruining his style.

Word got back to the Random Patterns headquarters that a girl was in a tiff because I called Janis Joplin ugly last week. She thought my remark was sexist, and this weighed on me. I started thinking about Janis, then Duane, then Janis again. You see, Janis is one of my favorite singers. She fanned those adolescent fires that used to be inside me, and to this day, she has an incredible calming effect on me.

But to be honest, I don't think Janis would have created music if she had been beautiful. She was born different; thus, she was either ostracized or tormented by her fellow peers. In turn, the desire to rise above such people and pain was instilled in

Janis, and she did exactly that.

We at Bryson Middle School had to sell candy — Pecan-nut Logs — to raise money for the school. All classes competed against each other because a prize was awarded to the class and individual who sold the most Pecan-nut Logs. All my classmates were out for blood, selling Pecan-nut Logs like wildfire. It was a race, and everyone wanted to be No. 1.

On the day the awards were announced, the whole student body crammed into the school's gym. The winning class was called out — it wasn't my class — and a lot of booing and cheering filled the gym. Then the big prize was announced; the person out of the whole Bryson Middle School who sold the most Pecan-nut Logs was named Barbara. The gym grew silent.

Barbara was in the special-education classes. She was the big girl who couldn't talk right. Plus, she had legs that were supported by big, metal braces.

All proud, Barbara hobbled her way to the podium to get her award, and soon everyone was cheering instead of surprised. She had done what no one else had done. She sold the most Pecan-nut Logs at Bryson Middle School, and she was happy.

Daisy, my aunt, once told me that the good Lord never put anything on us that we couldn't handle, and I used to think that was sort of mean of the good Lord. Now I'm not so sure. Maybe the people who have to struggle to overcome barriers tend to be more beautiful in their ability to live.

Janis didn't make it. She dealt with the pain through a bottle and some needles. But Duane made it, and Barbara made it. My hat goes off to the thousands of other people who are living differently in this beautiful world.

Comedy to hit campus

From staff reports

Forget about those pre-warm weather blues, the three papers due Wednesday and the seven parking tickets — comedy is coming to town.

Taylor Mason, musician, ventriloquist and comedian, will bring his one-man entertainment show to the Golden Spur Tuesday.

Mason brings with him sturdy credentials. He has been nominated 1989 National Association of Campus Activities Comedian of the Year and has appeared at the Comic Strip in New York and at the Improvisation in Los Angeles.

He is the first comedian to appear as part of the Comedy Corral of the special programs division of the Carolina Program Union. Four other comedians are scheduled to appear throughout the semester.

Just weeks ago, John Pinette

cancelled to appear in order to work on a new sit-com he will star in. Special programs was able to sign Mason and not skip a beat.

Mason, who bills his act as commando comedy, began his career as musical director of Second City Theater in Chicago. He then began writing material for the group and his own act.

He soon played clubs in Chicago and subsequently moved to New York. Mason has since then worked with the likes of Robert Klein, Jay Leno, Emo Phillips and Yakov Smirnov.

One of his songs about the demented king of Christmas, "Psycho Santa," received national radio airplay, and he appeared at the MTV 1986 Video Awards.

The show begins at 7:30 p.m., and tickets are \$1 with student ID and \$2 for the general public.



Legscellent

A pair of dancers from the Southern Belles puts its best feet forward while performing at halftime of the USC game Wednesday night at Carolina Coliseum.

TEDDY LEPP/The Gamecock

Some beers, leers; 5-points bar trip

By JACK & HENRY STREET
Staff writers

Henry said, "Remember Picasso?"

"How could I forget?" I asked.

"He has only been dead for about 10 years."

"Well, I wanna make pictures like him," Henry said. So he headed out to where the light is good for sketching and putting on the paint.

And I thought "Hey, I wrote that crap about 'Roll over Beethoven' in the Picasso review without even consulting Henry." Now, Henry, mind you is the expert on art. If I had asked, I would've learned about Picasso's history and techniques, and it would have been a better review. Henry is one of those people you appreciate most when he's not around.

We did get to Rockafellas' once before Henry headed out to where the pavement turns to sand. (Henry had better not get the Mustang stuck in the sand.) We were so pleased with the place that we asked if we could carve our names in the long wooden bar. Pictures on the walls of Dylan, Springsteen and Lennon made

Henry's day. Carolina is great! We had thought only Charlie Daniels and televangelism would be allowed.

Another thing: Us guys are lucked-out here. Every woman I met was appealing. Dig it, no more cold, cold northeast.

Rockafellas' has a small dance floor and stage which accommodates bands. French fries and chicken wings are available. A raised dining area allows snackers to eat without dealing with the happy hour types. Live entertainment is offered nearly every night.

The city and siren noise of Cola Town unsettled Henry. He doesn't share my enthusiasm for train whistles. I have no idea how he will pass university courses without being here. Maybe you are wondering the same thing about yourself. But I never sell Henry short. When I ask about these things, he is evasive. "Memory is like the L.A. freeway system. There are many ways to get downtown," he says. I have seen Henry put textbooks under his pillow at bedtime.

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The Application Deadline for May Graduation is January 27



THE GAMECOCK

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This Weekend At The Koger Center

Friday and Saturday, January 27 & 28

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On Broadway, in the *Pirates of Penzance*, *Big River* and *Leader of the Pack*, with Meatloaf on the *Bat Out of Hell* Tour, stealing the show with rock classic "Paradise by the Dashboard Light."

Now, here at THE USC, Karla Devito sings for you at the Koger Center 8:00 pm this Friday and Saturday. (student tickets: \$4, \$8 and \$10 - For reservations 777-5111)

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* Taylor Mason has replaced John Pinette.