

furry follies

Five, burly, hunky bears who sing, act, do comedy and even perform aerial circus routines! Meine Dammen und Herren, Bearlesque!

THREE of the founding members of Bearlesque were all finalists of the Mr Bear Beauty Competition in 2005, who, as Fred (the founding Daddy of the group – a hairier version of Liza Minelli) confesses, “drank too much that night in the dressing room and decided to conquer the world”.

The other Bearlesques are: Luke (the current Mr Bear Beaut) suave, sophisticated and urbane, a real smoothie, famous for his classical Sultry Fan Dance to the British Airways’ ad classical music – the brains of the operation.

The third Bearlesque bear is Simon who was educated in theatre design at RADA! Simon is the third of the founding bears. An expert in classical Bearlesque, he’s not only Bearlesque’s main designer, responsible for the Bearlesque look, but also a mean can-can dancer and a real hottie.

Bearlesque bear number 4 is Justin, tattooed and exuberant, he’s been described as Bearlesque’s answer to Tim Curry. Huge smile, great legs and a real mover! He’s famous for his legendary balloon-

dance (where his clothes lift off on helium filled balloons.)

And, last but not least, Bealesque bear number 5 is Dan, the blonde bombshell and the youngest member of the troupe. This bear-cub has more stalkers than you can shake a chocolate éclair at. Expert in dance – anything from ballet to crunking – he’s living proof that fat-boys can dance!

Booked as guests during Vauxhallville’s first season on a recommendation from Duckie, host Nathaniel de Ville had not seen them perform. “However, we just seemed to click and fit in. Nathaniel offered us the chance to be their regular dance troupe,” says Fred. “A bit like Pan’s People, but without the waxing – we jumped at the chance.”

With acts like ‘Viking Pole Dancing’, ‘Splashdance Spectacular’ and the ‘Sultry Fan Dance’, you can’t help but be intrigued. After all, these are hefty homos up there on the stage, not extras from *Cirque du Soleil*. Please elaborate! “Viking Pole-Dancing was our first big hit at Duckie’s Euroshame event,” explains Fred. “Dressed as sexy

disco Vikings we represented Denmark and, not only danced for five hours, but also cooked and served three hundred bacon sandwiches! [They try and involve food in all their shows]. We learnt from a professional pole-dancer and some of our many moves include: the “fireman”, “round-the-world” and the “rape & pillage”. *Splashdance Spectacular* is Fred’s own interpretation of his favourite scene from *Flashdance* – where Jennifer Beals strips and finishes with a whole tank of water dumped on top of her – but done in a beary way. It won Fred the Mr Bear Beauty title. *Sultry Fan-Dance* is a classical bear re-interpretation of a classic burlesque fan routine. Elegant and sophisticated, it won Luke the Mr Bear beauty crown last year.

So are rehearsals akin to five hunky hirsute Darcy Bussels in lycra and leg warmers, gracefully practicing arabesques at the barre? “Actually we usually rehearse in our pants,” corrects Fred. “Lycra can be so chaffing on our chunky thighs!”

Bearlesque’s latest piece is caused a tsunami on the avant-garde performance scene. “Bearbarella: In space no one can hear you eat” (their own interpretation of *Barbarella*) is a mid-air, zero gravity striptease with heroic space antics and a lightsabre fight!

Airborne bears? Whatever next? “I can see us in the Albert Hall,” predicts Fred. “Maybe a TV series like the ‘Black & White Minstrel Show’... bears and pretty ladies... ahh. Or even a film? Something like ‘Spiceworld’, but better and fatter. Oscars all round. Why not?” “Why not indeed? Today Vauxhall, tomorrow the world. Bear power!”

Bearlesque perform at Vauxhallville every Thursday night at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 372 Kennington Lane, SE11. Doors at 7.30pm, show at 8.30pm, party ‘til midnight. £5 entry, but free if you dress accordingly with the night’s theme – see Musts & Maybes for each week’s theme.



photo by Mike Kear

CABARET HIGHLIGHTS

Sunday 25th March

• **THE STAG**

15 Bressenden Place, Victoria, SW1.

JOIN the delectable Bette Rinse for song, comedy and hi campery at her weekly Sunday residency with guest vocalists and drag performers. Show starts at 8pm.

Monday 26th March

• **SHADOW 54**

Shadow Lounge, 5 Brewer Street, W1.

KICKSTART your week with a double dose of diva. Lock up your hubby and hide the gin, Kandi Kane’s on the prowl. Then fluff up your ‘fro and bring your bling. Miss Laquisha Jonz (pictured) is in da house. £3 entry, members free. 10pm-3am.



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