



DAVID LAURENCE

Curators Kelly Thornton (left) and Moynan King celebrate sisterhood in *Hysteria*.

festival preview

Estro extravaganza

Buddies and Nightwood team up for multidisciplinary female fest **By JON KAPLAN**

HYSTERIA a multidisciplinary festival of female artists. Presented by Buddies in Bad Times and Nightwood at Buddies (12 Alexander). Opens tonight (Thursday, October 23) and runs to November 2. Free-\$20, day pass \$15, festival pass \$60. 416-975-8555. www.buddiesinbadtimes-theatre.com; www.nightwoodtheatre.net

FOR THE NEXT TWO WEEKS, THE theatre spaces, halls and even washrooms at Buddies in Bad Times will be filled with 100 hysterical women artists.

Don't miss a visit, or several. You

won't have any problem finding something of interest among the various talents on display in *Hysteria*, the first multidisciplinary festival of women. The fest is curated by Nightwood artistic director **Kelly Thornton** and Buddies associate artist **Moynan King**.

On tap are theatre, film, dance (performance as well as breakdancing and belly dancing classes), cabaret, music, visual arts, panels, even a fashion show. The offerings change daily, with King and Thornton intentionally juxtaposing genres and styles within each program works

range from 90 seconds to 90 minutes – to give a kaleidoscopic feel to the creations of artists who've come from across North America.

"Women's work is under-represented in Canada," says writer/performer King, who's had a hand in organizing Pride week's Cheap Queers and Strange Sisters, Buddies' annual lesbian cabaret that's part of *Hysteria* on Friday (October 24, 8 pm).

"Vancouver's Women In View festival is now defunct. Femfest in Winnipeg is theatre-specific, while Montreal's Edgy Women is a performance art festival. We want *Hysteria* to have a

wider scope and take in every art form in which women engage."

"And Buddies recognizes the need for female representation," adds Thornton, whose directing projects include *The Danish Play Nightwood*, she points out, has always had the mandate to present women's voices on-stage.

In fact, the collaboration between Buddies and Nightwood echoes events in 1979, when the two companies were part of the group that began the Theatre Centre. The following year, they joined forces in the first *Rhubarb!*, a festival that then and now features new work with a queer sensibility.

"The marriage between the two companies was important back in the 80s and today as well," continues Thornton, who's also organized *Rhubarb!* fests. "It's awesome to put, maybe even smash, all these disciplines together and see the creative cross-pollination that happens among artists."

King follows up quickly on Thornton's point, after apologizing with a laugh that the two of them have been learning not to talk at the same time during interviews.

"It's not just the artists who share, but also the audiences. You might come for a theatre piece but find that a dance work on the same program really turns you on. I think people attend a show based on their comfort level and expectations. Here we'll start viewers with material they know they'll like and then introduce them to something different."

A mainstage evening called *Electro-Shock Therapy* (October 30, 8 pm), for instance, offers dances by **Yvonne Ng** and **Karen Kaeja**, a 10-minute opera by **Marjorie Chan** and **Wende Bartley**, a monologue by **Dawn Whitwell**, a film by **Lisa Karen Cox** and a play by **Teresa Pavlinek**.

Both King and Thornton point out that while *Hysteria* features work initiated by women, they don't intend to exclude men on either side of the curtain. The festival involves male actors and directors.

"Though it's a political act to organize a festival of women's work," offers Thornton, "feminism isn't just a woman's thing." ©

jonkap@nowtoronto.com

Hysterical highs

Can't catch everything at *Hysteria*? Here are some highlights.

BABOOM! Subtitled *F*cking Good Fashion*, this show of models and clothes – complete with runway – features an extravaganza of diversity, both in terms of women and style. Who said fashion shows aren't theatre? (October 25, 8 pm)

WINGS OF TONGUE Puppetmongers'

Ann Powell and Threshold Theatre's Suzanne Hersh collaborate on an adaptation of an Adele Wiseman story about a girl raised during the Depression by the women of a rooming house. (October 26, 4 pm)

POETIC LICENSE Erika Batdorf (*Mr. Raisinhead*) plays a lecturing poetry prof who undergoes a breakdown in this look at an education that has nothing to do with the university system. (October 26 and 29, 7 pm)

CAST IRON Lisa Codrington's fascinat-

ing piece in which an elderly Winnipeg woman recalls her youth in the Barbados features Alison Sealy-Smith, with ahdi zhiina mandielia directing. (October 28, 7 pm)

KINGSTONIA Ann Holloway gives a comic spin to a herstory about life in small-town Canada. (October 30, 7 pm)

TITS UP An evening of porn storytelling curated by Erika Hennebury features Sonja Mills, Mariko Tamaki, Zoe Whitall and others. (October 31, 9:30 pm)

ROSE IS A ROSE A look at adolescence includes Martha Ferguson's film *The Wet Season* and Corrina Hodgson's *Recess*, about teen girl angst, with Natasha Mytnowych directing Lindsey Clark, Charlotte Corbeil-Coleman and Jordana Commisso. (November 2, 4 pm)

CLEAN IRENE AND DIRTY MAXINE Anna Chatterton and Evalyn Parry's *SummerWorks* hit alphabetically kills off a string of comically obsessed women. (November 2, 8 pm) ■