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KITSCH & MAKEUP

By MANDY STADTMILLER



"SHOW" TIME: Gina Gershon and Elizabeth Berkeley get the mock treatment at "Showgirls: The Best Movie Ever Made. Ever!"

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**GUILTY-PLEASURE
FILM AND TV TAKES
CENTER STAGE**

CANCEL your Netflix - now you can watch all of the brilliantly crap-tastic sex and violence of "Showgirls" re-created live and right in front of your very eyes.

With a few creative liberties, of course.

It's Ultimate Guilty Pleasure Theater - and it's hilarious.

"It's not so different from Broadway," says actor and writer John Flynn, who co-created "Showgirls: The Best Movie Ever Made. Ever!"

at Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre (307 W. 26th St., [212] 366-9176), which is running Thursdays at 9:30 p.m. through June.

"Audience members know the story, and the stories around a movie or TV show. With 'Showgirls,' it's just like watching a car wreck, but without any of the guilt."

Three wacky adaptations of film and TV shows are taking center off-off-Broadway stage as sleeper hits in sending up the popular culture you know and love - or know and love to hate.

Keeping in the spirit of camp value, "Point Break LIVE!" at Galapagos Art Space (70 N. Sixth St., Brooklyn) allows an audience member to actually play the dim-witted undercover surfer agent made famous by Keanu Reeves. Over at The People's Improv Theater (154 W. 29th St.), audiences also get in on the action - and solve the crime - as part of an interactive spoof on the ever-addictive Dick Wolf series "Law & Order."

"Everybody secretly wants to be Keanu Reeves," says "Point Break LIVE!" co-creator Jamie Hook, a 36-year-old Brooklynite who directs the play, running Sundays at 8 p.m. through the end of April. "Who wouldn't want to be him? He's a big great famous action movie star and 'Point Break LIVE!' gives you that chance. We are saying, 'You don't have to settle.'"

Although a procedural drama junkie probably could settle for sitting at home watching "Law & Order" almost 24 hours a day, the new live-stage parody at The P.I.T. allows audience members to solve crimes not so much ripped from the headlines but rather bastardized from the weekly news. One recent whodunit? A murder mystery involving Slobodan Milosevic on alternative Spring Break. The accused culprit? None other than ALF.



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"Our show is like fantasy camp for 'Law & Order' fans," says co-creator Jamil Ellis, 28, whose improv group Experimental Troupe Comedy developed the show, which runs the last Saturday of each month at 7 p.m., through July. "People get obsessed with 'Star Trek' conventions and hang out with other people who are fans and dress up. So we're up there dressing up in our own 'Law & Order' personalities."

Indeed, obsession is a key factor in bringing these pop pleasures to the stage. In the UCB "Showgirls" adaptation, fellow die-hard junkies are often recruited to participate in the staged reading, with a new special guest every week. Legendary celebrity gossip columnist Michael Musto actually reached out to the creators of the parody to participate. After "Valley of the Dolls," he considers the bawdy box-office bomb to be his favorite movie of all time.

"I grew up not knowing good from bad taste," he said before the show began last week. "I actually think 'Showgirls' is a quality film. The great thing is, people who have never seen it come here, and they're on the floor laughing. It's a guilty pleasure, no matter what point of view you're coming from."

The delightfully raunchy post-modern take on the film that essentially killed "Saved by the Bell" wunderkind Elizabeth Berkley's career includes an over-the-top portrayal of the notorious screenwriter Joe Eszterhas (John Reynolds) as well as an incredibly dramatic reading of his stage directions. These include such bon mots as "She is very fat. Unf---ably fat." Tying it all together is a rabidly worshipful Queens Community College feminism professor who declares the film to be one of the greatest portrayals of females and minorities of all time.

Playing Berkley's Nomi Malone ("Know me. I'm alone.") is Lennon Parham, who, true to the film's cringe factor commits 200 percent to every terrible line. Her eyes practically popping out of her skull with focus, Parham intermittently lets out intense little animal-like shrieks and frenziedly bats around stage props in a fury.

"With all these shows, there needs to be a genre that you are exploiting and heightening," says the "Showgirls" parody co-creator Jackie Clarke, 30, who plays the deluded feminist professor. "The thing that we really have fun with is how Elizabeth Berkley was directed in this incredibly manic way. Even when she puts ketchup on her fries, it's like the ketchup was the father who abused her. It's not even melodramatic. It's like melo-violent."

Equally train-wrecky in its appeal is the absurdism of "Point Break LIVE!," which brings to the stage the classic 1992 cinematic tale of extreme sports rife with bankrobbing, skydiving, car chases and explosions aplenty.

"Audience for theater is being stolen by Hollywood because people want to go see these big blockbuster movies," Hook says. "'Point Break LIVE!' is saying put action back where it belongs: on stage."

Featuring fake blood, extended fight choreography and even an indoor monsoon, "Point Break LIVE!" is built around the notion that playing Reeves demands a special kind of acting. One of complete and utter cluelessness.

"People's secret, innermost desire is to be Keanu," Hook says. "I bet if we could get Tony Kushner in the theater, he wouldn't pass up the chance."

There is truth to the irresistibility of playing - or reprising certain pop culture roles - on stage. In the "Law & Order" spoof, each show features an actor who has already appeared on the long-running NBC franchise to add an extra level of crime-solving finesse. For "Showgirls," not only has Musto played the role of uber-skeevy casting director Tony Moss, but so has Zulema from "Project Runway" and upcoming weeks feature Frank DeCaro and Rob Corddry of "The Daily Show."

While slated through July, co-creator Flynn says he already has his eye on future possibilities for guilty-pleasure theatrical remount. While nothing could ever live up to a movie where Berkley is naked for one-sixth the entire running time, he says he and Clarke just may have stumbled upon a new muse.