

Stuffed shirts, stuffed pants to stuff Harris seats

BY CHEVON CHATMAN

The idea for a campus drag extravaganza came to Indi Vazquez '07 last semester after viewing a drag show at the annual Midwest Bisexual Lesbian Gay Transgendered Ally College Conference (MBLGTACC). Inspired by the fun and interactive show, she thought it would be a great idea to bring what she called "an important component of queer culture" to the Grinnell campus.

Early this semester, Vazquez brought her idea for a drag show to the residents of Multicultural Manor, the campus-owned house where she lives. She also sent e-mails to the memberships of various multicultural and GLBT student organizations. Many of the people who signed on are active in one or more of the organizations, and many also live in Multicultural Manor, so the various groups, especially Queer People of Color (QPOC) and the new Transgender Advocacy Group (TAG), worked with the house to plan the event.

Although Grinnell students are used to cross-dressing at the popular Mary B. James party, Vazquez noted that drag has an entirely different focus. At Mary B. James, she said, there is "no underlying political statement in many peoples' minds."

Performing drag, she said, is a political statement that gender is a show, which serves to deconstruct the gender dichotomy and disrupt conventional gender stereotypes. "The queer community has historically forced people to question gender norms and made people think twice about their own assumptions about gender," Vazquez said.

"Drag is very liberating to me," said Vazquez, who has contemplated pursuing a career as a professional drag king. "Gender fuck and taking on a male persona is very fulfilling to me. I enjoy it very immensely." Vazquez said that drag relates to GLBT issues, especially transgender issues, because it "can provide a sense of comfort for those who are gender variant to

explore that side of themselves."

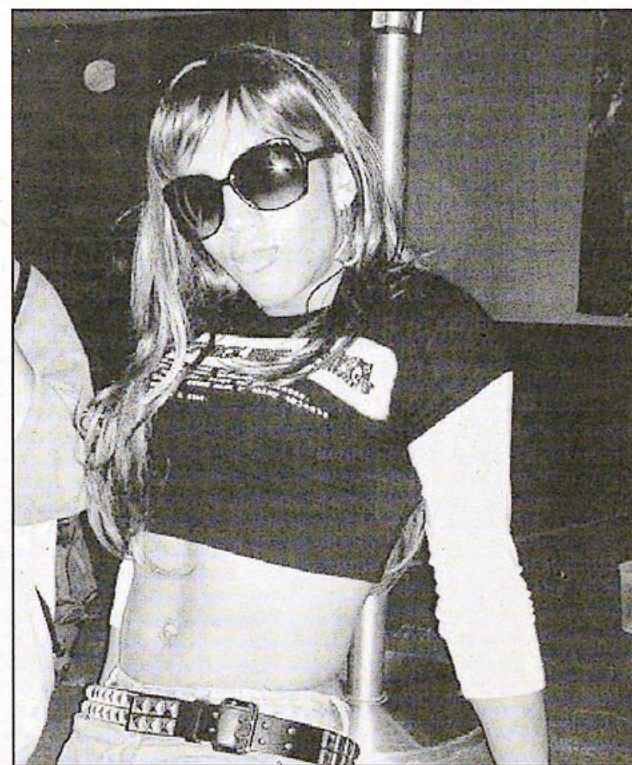
With the tips the performers earn, the organizers hope to raise enough money to provide the campus with free HIV testing during the week of Nov. 27 to Dec. 1. For this goal they are teaming up with the Health Center, which will already be providing testing for \$10, half of the college's usual fee, during the week.

The show will feature lip synching and dance performances to music by artists like Beyonce, Prince and Erykah Badu. There will be 10 performances by nine performers, with one or two performers per act. The show will also include an encore appearance by Courtney Moore '09, aka Marissa Beverly, who was the winner of last year's Mary B. James cross-dressing contest. His fellow performers have also taken on snazzy drag names like Jackawanda Jones, Papa Cherry and Mike Hunt. Most performers have not had previous experience with drag.

Although the organizers had originally planned to bring in professional drag kings and queens, they ran into difficulties communicating with professional groups. Vazquez said that professional drag performers are rare in rural Iowa. They had communication problems with a group in Des Moines, and found out that the main Chicago group recently disbanded. They decided to continue without featuring professionals. "We can all be amazing drag people too," said Lindsay Robinson '09, one of the performers and the spokesperson for QPOC.

Many of the performers expressed excitement about the show. Wesley Jenkins '09 is particularly motivated by his unique role in the drag show. "I'm one of the few queens," he said.

The drag show takes place tonight in the Harris Concert Hall, beginning at 10 p.m. There will also be a workshop at 4:15 in Younker Lounge which will provide information about the history of drag and its importance within the queer movement.



Courtney Moore '09, a.k.a. Marissa Beverly, who won the Mary B. James cross-dressing contest last year will perform in tonight's Drag Extravaganza in the Harris Concert Hall.

COURTESY COURTNEY MOORE

Tuvan singers belt out overtones of tradition

Huun Huur Tu will offer a concert and master class this weekend in once-banned art of Tuvan throat singing

BY ALYSIA VALLAS

If you feel smug about your ability to hum or whistle in tune, prepare to have that smirk wiped off your face. Huun Huur Tu, a quartet of Tuvan throat singers, takes vocal music to a new level. The group, which performs in Herrick Chapel this Sunday, gives an astonishing display of the wonders of the human voice.

Throat singing is a traditional form of music from Tuva, a small republic of the Russian Federation, situated north of Mongolia. The U.S.S.R. kept Tuva under artistic restriction for several decades. After the formation of the Russian Federation in the early '90s, groups

like Huun Huur Tu have emerged in full force, ready to revive their cultural heritage through traditional song.

Throat singing involves changing the shape of the mouth to highlight overtones and create multiple pitches simultaneously. The effect is that of a bullfrog-like bass and a whistling flute (think didgeridoo). The artists, Kaigalool Khovalyg, Sayan Bapa, Radik Tolouche, and Alexei Saryglar, accompany their sound with a variety of guitar-like Tuvan string instruments and traditional percussion, all of which are used to perform representational songs of Tuva's scenic landscape and colorful history.

This group is unusual in that they have preserved elements of their ancient culture while experimenting with modern musical techniques. Huun Huur Tu has influenced many musicians, and continues to perform with artists like Frank Zappa, the Chieftans, and the Kronos Quartet.

The group's visit is sponsored in part by Asian Students in Alliance (ASIA). "Through extensive tours in North America, Asia, Europe, and the Pacific, Huun Huur Tu has been able to transmit the culture of Tuva to the world and has succeeded in capturing the world's interest not only in the music, but also in the Republic of Tuva itself," Anne Lam,

ASIA Vice President, said.

In bringing Huun Huur Tu to Grinnell, Lam said, ASIA hopes to add to the musical diversity of the semester's concerts and to "show that an understanding of Asian cultures can be achieved through a multidisciplinary approach."

Huun Huur Tu will perform on Sunday, November 5 at 8:00 P.M. in Herrick Chapel. There will be a post-concert lecture regarding Tuvan culture.

The group will also conduct a master class for the course Music of East Asia. This lecture is at 10 a.m., Monday November 6 in Bucksbaum 101 and is open to the general public.

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