

IMPERIAL
COURT

NEW YORK

The Court Circular

Volume Three, Issue Nine

March 1998

Night Of A Thousand Gowns - Event Of The Year

Saturday, March 28, 1998
Marriott Marquis Hotel

Prince & Princess Show -
Wednesday, March 25 - 10:30PM
Splash - 50 West 17th St., NYC -
\$3/Door

Jose Honors - Friday, March 27 - 6:30PM
Marriott Marquis Hotel-\$30
Out Of Town Show - Friday, March 27 -9PM
Marriott Marquis Hotel - \$8/Door

Tough Drag Show -
Wednesday, April 1 8PM
The Web - 40 East 58th St., NYC -
\$3/Door

Emperor VII Tomas
Empress XI Gianna



New York Hosts Jose Honors Empress IX Philomena to receive award.

By Charles Ching

The Imperial Court of New York was selected by the International Court Council of Heirs Apparent to host the prestigious Empress I Jose Honors. The second annual Jose Honors, which will recognize outstanding achievements in the International Court System, is scheduled for Friday, March 27, at the Marquis Ballroom of the New York Marriott Marquis Hotel.

Our very own Empress IX Philomena will be among those receiving the award. Empress Philomena not only created an impact on the international court scene during her reign, but she is also one of the most popular Monarchs in New York. After her stepdown, she continued to be very active in the organization. She served as Secretary of the Board of Directors for five years, and produced and co-starred in two successful cabaret shows - "One Night Only" and "Panzi & Philomena... Together Again for the First Time". "I am very honored to be included in such a prestigious group of dedicated court members. I regard this not so much as an award

for what I have achieved, but as a standard to hold up against what I have yet to accomplish," remarked Empress Philomena.



Empress IX Philomena

Empress I Jose - The Widow Norton, Founder, and Empress Nicole the Great - San Diego, will be presenting the Empress I Jose Honors to Rose Empress Maria - Portland, OR; Empress Judy Jive - Vancouver, Canada; Empress Jessica St. John - Dallas, TX; Emperor Craig Morgan - San Diego, CA; Empress Natali Gay - Lexington, KY; Empress Ginger - San Francisco, CA; Empress Dawn Valley Parkway - Toronto, Canada; and Empress Philomena. The awardees will receive a bust replica of Empress Jose, commissioned by the Court and created by MansART.

"We are expecting a lot of visiting royalty to attend this event, as well as the Night of a Thousand Gowns the following evening. This is not only going to be a fun event, but the award itself will serve as an inspiration for all court members to aspire to," says Empress Coco, Chairperson of the Host Committee.

The Court Circular

The Official Newsletter
of the Imperial Court of New York



New York, NY 10003

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To raise funds for Gay & Lesbian Community and social service organizations; to provide a safe, social environment for people with the same interest as those of the corporation; to create and promote positive Community awareness of the ideals of the Imperial Court System.

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The Executive Board of the Imperial Court of New York meets on the third Thursday of each month.

The General Membership meets on the first Wednesday of each month at The Center, 208 West 13th St. at 8:00pm.

Courtiers' Accomplishments

by Grand Duchess Tori Adore

We are fortunate to count among our members so many talented and active people, whose achievements are of note. If you wish to share your exploits with the court Circular, please call and tell Tori, as we hope to develop this into a regular feature



Grand Duchess Bella

The Grand Duchess Bella (Richard Iorio) was recognized this past summer for more than a quarter century of commitment to the Arts Project of Cherry Grove. The Arts Project will be celebrating it's 50th Anniversary this year, and the legendary Bella has performed at hundreds of shows to benefit this community organization, which supports the Doctor's Fund, the Dunes Fund, The Fire Department and PAWS, just to mention a few. Godmother to T.M.I.S.M. Emperor Tomas and Empress Gianna, Bella has been a 26 year resident of Cherry Grove and earned her recent honor for her superlative entertainment and unstinting volunteerism for this worthy cause. Congratulations, Bella, for sharing your beauty and talent with so many!

Countess Jacqueline Jonee (John Nieman) was acclaimed as well this past year on Fire Island, capturing the twin titles of Miss Cherry's and Mrs. Fire Island. On August 18th, Jacqueline competed with 13 others, including Princess Fabu LaRue and Princess Royale Josie, in the pageant which was hosted by H.I.M. Empress Ran-Dee, with a special guest appearance by H.M.I.S.M. Empress Bambi Lee of Connecticut. Jacqueline was crowned by the 1996 title holder, H.M.I.S.M. Empress XI Gianna.



Jacqueline Jonee

Then on September 6th, at the 32nd annual Miss/Mrs. Fire Island Contest, Jacqueline was chosen from a field of 15 contestants, including Viscountess Nana, Princess Royale Josie, and Lucky Darling (Baron Angelo in drag!) as Mrs. Fire Island. Crowned by H.I.M. Empress IX Philomena, Mrs. Fire Island 1996, Jacqueline deems poised to capture the crown of 1998 Queen of the NYC Gay Men's Chorus! Best of luck, darling, and congratulations!

The Gender Identity Project

by Lynn Walker

Over the past several years, the Gender Identity Project at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center has been the



Lynn Walker

recipient of considerable support from the Imperial Court of New York. Major financial support has assisted the GIP to widen its focus to include the entire spectrum of trans feelings and behaviors. Our programs strive to welcome and include any who feel the need for support, counseling, information, or fellowship; any who feel the pain of isolation or the need to connect; and any who may need a referral to a medical or other service provider. We provide support groups and individual counseling for women and men of drag and trans experience. In addition, we serve to assist, support and educate community organizations, educational organizations, and service providers throughout the metropolitan area. One of the most important aspects of the GIP is that we make a particular effort to include a full spectrum of participants in all of our programs. We include persons from many age groups; from social, economic and educational levels; from various lifestyles; and from different expressions of sexual orientation and gender identification.

Our commitment to public and community outreach has found expression in our three annual Drag and Trans Health Empowerment Conferences, and has led to the production of a major video on safer sex for drag and trans people, which featured our own Empress IX Philomena. In addition, our peer counselors help to support the Community Health Project's Transgender Health and Education (THE) Clinic. We also distribute safer sex "kits," to any member of our community who may want them.

New York's Drag and Trans Communities have gained the attention of a host of service providers and health professionals, by means of the video, and as a result of the GIP's leadership and participation in symposia and workshops at national and international conferences of the Harry Benjamin International Gender Disphoria Association, the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality, the annual "Creating Change" conference, the annual conference of the International Foundation for Gender Education, and many more.

Over the past several years, the GIP has grown from a fairly small affair to a major component of The Center's Office of Mental Health and Social Services, with a full-time Director. Our focus has also grown, such that we now find that we are called, not only to serve, but also to facilitate the personal empowerment of the people who come to us as clients.

A BEJEWELED REVUE

November 16, 1997 - a salute to
H.M.I.S.M. Empress XI Gianna
a benefit for Center Kids

by your fabulous reporter, Fabu La Rue

The evening was cold outside, but hot and steamy inside. "Splash" is one of the few places that seems to have something for almost everyone. The show began at 11:30 P.M., and was hosted by the incomparable Empress I Sybil, the Atlas Empress. Empress IX Philomena kicked off the entertainment in the number one spot, and was followed by Morgan Stevens as Ann Margaret. Bella, as herself, was ensconced in a flowing lavender ensemble and Anne Tique performed a spectacular number all



Lady Clover Honey

decked out in white like a Greek goddess. Anne Tique also joined forces with Josephine Boner Parte with the crowd-pleaser, "The Grass is Always Greener". Empress Gianna was in store for a great surprise: Empress Dusty of Toronto flew down just for the occasion. Lita Austin woke them up and the end of the second set, as did a new member, Lady Julie. Princess Royale Josie was her usual dry self - a hard act to follow! Finally, the evening was complete when the battling Empresses themselves, Ran-Dee and Gianna, wowed the crowds with a wonderful medley. A final tribute to Gianna from her counter-part in life, Ran-Dee rounded out the extravaganza with that very special touch.

There was a raffle for some exquisite jewelry, graciously donated by Robert Sorrell, David Mandell and Larry Vrba. The lucky winner was Lady Clover Honey. What a way

to start off your jewelry collection!

The evening was a financial success thanks to the co-producing efforts of the Princess Royales, Anne Tique and Trompe L'Oeil. A very special thank you to Brian, Harry and Mark of "Splash" for the use of their establishment and continued support of the Court.

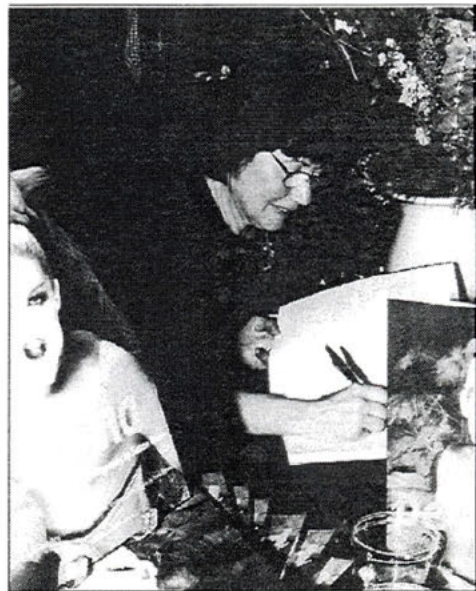
PERSONA BOOK PARTY

by Zondra Foxx, Declasse Descriptor

Wine and cheese gathering: the usual. A photographer with a new book: the usual. Milling crowds waiting for inscriptions: the usual. FABULOUS DRAG QUEENS: definitely not the usual!

What better locale for a book signing bash than Rizzoli in Soho? Susan Brown's new essay *Persona* had its official New York debut on October 6th and the turnout was great! The affair was populated with people in the book in drag; people in the book in mufti; dragsters not in the book; tranny officionados; photophiles; literary types; the gamut, all eating, drinking, signing, posing and doing all of it! Many of the pics were shot at Night of A Thousand Gowns in 1996. An even dozen courtiers from the book turned up, six dressed to the hilt - or beyond: Panzi, out for a trip to the mall; Philomena, ultra glam with the biggest jewelry; Shonda, orange of course; Nana, a woman of certain, well, you know; Brini Maxwell (Jackie O. had better watch out!); and Zondra, vamp-style, what else? Overall, 30 of the 86 models managed to make it; seven others equally fab in their finery.

It took a while to build, but the crush



Susan Brown

—continued from page 3

eventually got intense. Books were passed hither and yon, pens brandished and introductions made. No body knows everybody and there sure was alot of everybody to know! Since many of the photos were taken under studio conditions away from the ball, only now could one get acquainted with the folks behind the fabulous faces.

There were those who were left out - making the cut wasn't easy per Susan. Who knows, if it does well, there just may be a Persona II, and we don't mean a compilation of split personalities!

DINING IN DRAG-

Ecco L'Italia

by Lady Carol and Baroness Babs

We were first attracted to this restaurant several years ago, during one of our first "dressed" weekends in NYC, by a smiling doorman who entreated us to come in as we passed by one Saturday night. "Are cross-dressers welcome?", Carol asked on behalf of her equally semi-secure mate. "Everyone is welcome!", he replied with a big smile. We took him at his word a couple of weeks later and were not disappointed. A friendly staff, from the manager to the hostess who

took our coats, greeted us warmly. By reserving a table for 6, we were given comfortable seating in the rear, conducive for conversation and far away from the live piano music that enhanced the overall ambiance. Over the years we have come with parties as large as 14, and we were well accommodated. However, on one occasion a dinner party of 23 was just too much for them to handle.

We normally start with complimentary "bruschetta" appetizers that are so well received our request for seconds are courteously fulfilled. Appetizers such as shrimp cocktail, mozzarella in carozza and stuffed mushrooms are favorites, as well as the Caesar and tricolor salads. The best values are the well prepared entrees: almost all the veal dishes are \$11.95!

The chicken dishes are usually \$10.95 with the house dish, Pollo alla Ecco (with artichoke hearts, peas, mushrooms and of course, prosciutto) being our favorite. Most seafood dishes are similarly priced, ranging from \$10.95 to \$15.00. Even those steak eaters among us were pleasantly surprised at the quality and cut of the filet mignon in an Italian restaurant. Desserts that we've particularly enjoyed (but paid for afterwards!) are tiramisu, Italian cheesecake and zabaglione!

What sets Ecco apart from most restaurants is the fact that on weekends, during dinner, it's a jazz club! Expect to find an accomplished jazz trio, usually with a singer. Expect also at any time to find a talented musician to just pop in and "jam" at least a few numbers. Unlike other places in the area, there is NO music charge! Normally, if you are not sitting next to the musicians, conversation is possible. Sitting three or four tables away makes for incredible ambiance.

Ecco is one of those places where we feel welcome and special when we are dressed. It's really nice when the owner and manager greet both of us with a warm, "Good Evening, Mrs. ..." - and a kiss on the cheek! Additionally, the bartender is our very own Countess Diva - and she makes a mean Absolut Gimlet!

One note of caution for the frugal diner: since most of the entrees are quite reasonable for the City and there is no music charge, they make up for it with the beverages - that includes milk and tea! Reservations are suggested on weekends.

Ecco L'Italia - 289 Bleecker Street (near 7th Avenue South) 212-929-3355.

MEET THE NEW MEMBER...

by Grand Duchess Tori Adore

One of our more visibly prominent (6'5") new members is Lady Viva Sexx, the big blonde with the bigger hair! Viva began her journey on the drag strip of life ten years ago, and has always favored the downtown funky diva look, which she wears so well. A hairdresser by profession, with access to all those fabulous tricks of the trade, she has perfected the living large look in her hairdos and with her made to order clothes designed exclusively for her by David Dalrymple from the House of Field. (She confided to me that it was a little difficult to find pret a porter in her size!) Viva, who chose her appellation as an affirmation of the joys of lovin', has attended the last two Nights Of A Thousand Gowns, and joined the Imperial Court last Fall, sponsored by her friends, the Princess Regina Carter and Grand Countess Patrice Roberts. Viva is a performance virgin and is ready, willin' and able to be sacrificed on stage at one of our legendary fund-raising shows. She's actually a little shy about strutting her stuff, but she is hoping that some veteran Court performer might utilize her talents in an upcoming event. A frequent club-goer, Viva Sexx decided to join the Court to meet others who share her love of dressing-up and her commitment to fighting AIDS/HIV. Viva hopes to use her energy to raise even more money at Court-sponsored events, have alot of fun doing it, and see the Court grow larger and more prominent in the coming years.

Viva was telling me how impressed she was at the warmth and camaraderie she felt at the recent Holiday Party. She is busy marking her date book with all the upcoming Court functions, and is thrilled to be a member of the Court. Viva Sexx, it's a pleasure to welcome you to the Imperial Court of New York!



Viva Sexx

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