

“Scheherazade is easy; a little black dress is very difficult.”

Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel
Celebrated French Couturier

ICNY

CONNECTICUT CORONATION

by Lady Josie

A contingent of 36 from the Imperial Court of New York attended “A Night in the Ruby Rose Garden” in Hartford on Saturday March 1. Under the able leadership of Empress VII Coco LaChine, Queen Mother of Connecticut, 31 members were presented to Emperor III Savvas and Empress III Jessica. Coco was truly a mother hen, fussing about protocol and making sure we were presented to our best advantage. Did I mention that Coco looked stunning in a clingy black sheath with a pearl embroidered bodice? And that the ICNY won Best Court Presentation? The crowd cheered as our reigning monarchs made their entrance: Emperor VI Steven, most dashing in full regalia; and Empress X Ran-Dee a vision in a shimmering copper satin ball gown. People exclaimed, “Now that’s a ball gown!” The Imperial Crown Princess Royale Gianna wore a stunning gold satin and lace gown (designed and executed by Her Highness), perfectly offset by jewels from Lawrence Vrba, Ltd.

Entertainment was on a grand scale, and I can’t be accused of being partial when I say that all three numbers presented by our Court were show-stoppers! Ran-Dee and Steven were joined by Coco, Gianna, Princess Royale Lita Austin, Princess Royale Trompe L’Oeil, and Lord Bobsie Colon to reprise the number that they performed the week before in San Francisco to great acclaim. This number captured the Best Performance Award for the evening, and was choreographed by the multi-talented Opulent and Ethereal Broadway Angel Empress Ran-Dee herself!

Coco took the stage again with Empress IX Philomena and Princess Royale Panzi for a saucy rendition of “You Don’t Own Me” which brought the house down! Comtesse Trixie DeLite performed a flower-decked version of “Mama’s Good To You”, and last but never least, the fabulous Princess Royale Victoria Weston wowed the crowd with a live interpretation of “The Best is Yet to Come”. But the biggest surprise of the evening was the song styling of Our Founder Empress I Jose, the Widow Norton, who regaled us with a bawdy rendition of “Bye, Bye Blackbird”.



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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.

All of the Connecticut Court made us feel welcome and I wish to thank Emperor Savvas and Empress Jessica for their hospitality, and congratulate the new monarchs, Emperor IV Michael and Empress IV Bambi Lee and wish them a great reign and a wonderful year. As a new member of the Court, I made my first out of town coronation and witnessed the spirit of friendship and camaraderie that should be experienced by everyone. Furthermore, the surge of pride that I felt while on stage surrounded by the Imperial Court of New York was all too real, especially when the announcer bid us farewell with, "See you in New York City in three weeks!"

day boy next door! Many happy returns to Sybil and Ran-Dee, the first and the reigning Empresses of New York!

COURT ETIQUETTE

by Grand Duchess Swana Swarovski

I know that all of you are thinking of how to put your best foot (heel?) forward at Night of A Thousand Gowns. I will offer a few suggestions, reminders and a couple of orders! Remember while dressing for such a "formal" event that attention to detail goes a long way. Replace those missing beads, put lifts on those shoes, and don't wear that glove with a snag in it! Try to allow enough time to take a little extra care with hair, face and nails so you can be just right. We do want to see your best gowns and jewels on our coronation night. As for the gentlemen, polished, pressed, starched, gloved, manicured, clipped, and perfumed are a few words in your vocabulary for this evening. We love you that way!

Now that you're gorgeously arrayed, boned and stayed, we come to my next point – punctuality! Fashionably late does NOT apply to this evening. Many of you have guests coming from outside Court and you really should be in the ballroom to greet them when they arrive – that is, after you have signed in at the Protocol Desk! Remember, you must do this or your titles will not be announced during the protocol

Which brings me to my next point: let's remember to live the fantasy. For instance when you approach H.M.I.S.M. Empress Ran-Dee on the receiving line, "Hi Ran-Dee" is out of order. "Good evening, Your Imperial Majesty" is the order of the evening, accompanied by the first of many court'sies (or bows for the gentlemen). Try to play the part of the titles you carry – it enhances the atmosphere of the whole evening. Then meet, greet, mingle and dance. They don't call it a "ball" for nothing!

During dinner, along with your best table manners, please remember to be courteous to the hotel staff. A great lady is always good to the servants and they will be good to her. Lipsticks may now be refreshed at table, but please look after your hair in the powder room, if needed. Soon after dinner you are going to make your bows to Their Most Sovereign and Imperial Majesties, Emperor VI Steven and Empress X Ran-Dee. Remember that while onstage is not the time to tug at your girdle or scratch anything! – it can wait!! Smile, think glamorous thoughts, and feel comfortable in the knowledge that you've practiced your low court bows in high heels all week. The monarchs love a graceful court'sey and it looks so nice onstage. I have circulated a more specific etiquette guide so that anyone who has paid attention will find it difficult to commit a social gaffe. In the meantime, I am looking forward to

a magical night which will provide gossip for months to come, and I hope you are too! 

'97 BALL JOURNAL GOES TO PRESS

by Princess Trompe L'Oeil

Well...the final pages of this year's *Night of a Thousand Gowns* Journal made it to the printer - with a few hours to spare before boarding the flight to San Francisco.

This year's journal is the largest and grandest we have ever produced - with over fifty pages of advertising and twenty-six pages of member photos! You all owe yourselves a great round of applause.

I certainly could not have done this project alone this year. Fortunately, I had the help of several dedicated Court members. My thanks go out to Robert Nowack, Billy Little, and Bruce Monroe for laying out the bulk of ads; Billy Little and Bruce Monroe for the montages; Vice President, Fred Frick for organizing the photo shoot; Secretary, Victor Grossetti for being so very organized and helpful in every way imaginable; Tom McNamara for being so thorough and organized with this year's advertising materials; Johnny Cella for his unending help and prodding; and Randy Riggs & Steven Frear, my co-chairs, for all their input and support. And a special thank you to Steven for saving my sanity! (Ed note: Brian's modesty is matched by his generosity and hard work, for which we are all truly grateful!) 

SAN FRANCISCO CORONATION

by Princess Tedi DeBare

On Friday, February 21st, 16 members of the Imperial Court of New York descended on "That City By The Bay", for the Charity Coronation Ball of the "Uptown Downtown Empire" of the Imperial Court of San Francisco, and home of our founder, Her Most Gracious Imperial Majesty Empress I Jose of All the Americas, the Widow Norton. After checking into our hotels and having a bite to eat (naturally), nine of our star performers began preparing for the ICNY's production number at the Out of Town Show. As usual, hard work, dedication, red dresses, feathers and glitz paid off - New York was named "Best Out Of Town Production" and asked to perform again at the Ball the following evening!

Saturday, we all cabbed it (ask Lita about her trip!) over to the Gift Center for the Ball. Thanks to Sal and Tommy (friends of the Imperial Crown Prince Royal Tomas and Count Wolfgang von Busch), we had wonderful platters of sandwiches, fruit and cookies to sustain us during our long evening. Empress Ran-Dee's first appearance at the Ball was in a wonderful creation designed and executed in orange Naugahyde by Empress Cockatelia of San Francisco. The Opulent and Ethereal Broadway

Angel Empress was quite colorful with a becoming coif in a lovely shade of lavender! Her Majesty's next appearance with the rest of the Court was in full dress regalia. After our presentation to the Monarchs of San Francisco, it was time again for our performers to change for their Command Performance. The audience went wild over the number, rising for a well-deserved standing ovation. The evening was enjoyable, if a bit long, and we all retired to our hotel afterwards to prepare for the next day's events.

Sunday morning, bright and early, we attended a graveside tribute to honor Joshua Norton, "Emperor of America and Protector of Mexico" and Empress I Jose's long-long-long departed "husband". The lovely spring day was heralded with a marching band, singers, food, a fifteen gun salute, and Our Founder's performance of some of her legendary (and bawdy) club act. Following our cemetery trip, we all partook of the Victory Brunch and back at the host hotel. Awards were given, best of all in the form of "Jeweled Glamazon Rocks" made by the Empress' own hand! Empress X Ran-Dee was awarded one for wearing the most jewelry in the Court System! Emperor Steven and Empress Ran-Dee were named Brother Emperor and Sister Empress to Cockatelia, and New York was once again presented with the award for Best Court Walk, a tradition of the Angel and La Scala Empire! 

PANZI & PHILOMENA...AND FRIENDS

by Lady Freeta Chews & Angela Mercy

Not a seat was left empty as the crowds packed in to see the show at Triad Cabaret on 72nd Street on Manhattan's Upper West Side. The reservations numbered 121 the day before the show, but at curtain call, "Together Again for the First Time" starring Panzi and Philomena was a sell out performance to benefit the P.W.A. Coalition of New York. The audience was teaming with court royalty, past, present and future; T.M.I.S. M. Empress Ran-Dee and Emperor Steven were escorted by Johnny Cella and Fred Frick, (Gianna and Lita were curiously absent). Empress VII Coco and Empress VIII Billie Ann were there. We also spotted the I.C.N.Y.'s own Vivica Fairfax, starring in the upcoming "Brinnie Maxwell Show", look for it on cable T.V. Doug Wirth, P.W.A.C.'s extremely handsome Executive Director was in attendance; did we mention that he was extremely handsome? One of the greatest thrills of the evening was having Broadway Diva, (not to mention OUR personal favorite gym teacher from "Carrie"), Betty Buckley in the audience. The show starred Panzi and Philomena, featuring Victoria Weston and Eric Larivee with, yours truly, Freeta Chews and Angela Mercy on backup vocals. The show's musical direction was the work of the ever popular and extremely talented Vernon Larsen; he always strikes a chord with us. Eric Larivee was

accompanied by his pianist Fred Barton. Red ribbons were donated and distributed by Josephine Boner Parte and Bill LaMonica. The 50/50 raffle was coordinated by the breathtakingly lovely Jacqueline Jonee, a vision with her large basket... of raffle tickets.

As the show opened, Philomena and Panzi set the audience on their ears with a hot rendition of "Who's That Girl" (Applause). Next, Victoria Weston percolated with a piping hot number about coffee in Brazil. She wore a fabulous ensemble that was good to the last drop; a bustier which would make Bustelo jealous and a sombrero which was Choc Full O' everything



from a cup and saucer to a bag of coffee beans. This "Java the Hat" was designed by none other than the I.C.N.Y.'s favorite camp costumer extraordinaire, Brenda Starr. Victoria may not have that heavenly coffee, but a better voice a millionaire's money can't buy. (If you remember that advertisement then you're older than we thought, girl!) Panzi's monologues and songs - especially that little French number - were all about her keen sense of comic timing as she wore, among other things, a Dalmatian outfit fit for Glenn herself! Perhaps a little too "Close" for comfort. "I like That In a Man" featured all the girls, (Philomena, Panzi, Victoria, Freeta and Angela) delivering on those "delicious" harmonies you've only heard talked about! Also included were songs from such memorable

movies as "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" and "The Perils of Pauline" ("I love What I'm Doing" and "Rumble Rumble Rumble", respectively) sung by Empress IX Philomena whose dazzling performance was only equaled by her striking stage presence, her wit, grace and charm. Victoria belted "What Did I Have That I Don't Have Now" (On A Clear Day), "Broadway Baby" and "Pour Me A Man" written by Fred Barton. Eric Larivee did a set of five songs which took the crowd through a variety of moods in true cabaret style. The show's finale was "I Want It All" (Baby) again featuring the entire cast giving it's all for a very worthy cause. Panzi exclaimed, "It was a massive success!", grossing \$1744.00 and after lighting and sound expenses, \$1644.00. Twenty percent went to the Imperial Court of New York and the balance went to P.W.A.C. The gowns were shimmering

and the hair was too fierce!!! Thanks to Jacques Beaulande, Victoria Weston and Freeta Chews. All in all, a great show with great people for a great cause from a great organization. 

INVESTITURE DINNER

A welcoming celebration for our new monarchs, T.M.I.S.M. Emperor VII Tomas, the *Emperor of Courage and Survival* and Empress XI Gianna, the *Sapphire Heart Empress* on Sunday April 20, 6-9pm at Cucina Della Fontana - for reservations contact Michael Orsini, 15 Sheridan Sq., NYC, NY 10014 (212) 255-5781/753-0088 or Bella (914) 359-0975. Checks or cash due by the April 2nd General Meeting. Bring your appetite and *be prepared to kneel!* 

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M A R C H C A L E N D A R

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
23	24	25	26	27	28	1
Command Imperial Farewell Gala - Ecco L'Italia Restaurant - \$10. donation/\$10. min. LaDiva						Hartford, CT Coronation San Jose Coronation Victor Grossetti
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Board Meeting - 5pm-7pm	Carnegie Hall Rehearsal 7-10, Musical Theatre Works, 440 Lafayette St Ran-Dee	Opening Number Rehearsal 7-10, Musical Theatre Works, 440 Lafayette St Ran-Dee	8:00 PM - General Membership Meeting @ the Center.			Long Beach, CA Coronation Victor Grossetti
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Gay Men's Chorus Carnegie Hall - 8 pm, \$50. Victor Grossetti	Opening Number Rehearsal 7-10, NY Hilton Ran-Dee	Prince & Princess Show Splash, 50 W. 17, \$3. Joe Conigliaro	State Dinner LIPS, \$25. Johnny Cella/Bobbie Colon	Hospitality Suite - NY Hilton, #4417 Out-of-Town Show - 8pm The Web, 40 E. 58 St, \$8.	Hospitality Suite - NY Hilton, #4417 Coronation - 6:30pm NY Hilton	Vancouver, BC, Canada Coronation Victor Grossetti
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Victory Brunch New York Hilton, 11:30, \$25. Don Tolipani Tough Drag Rome, 290 8th Ave, \$3 Tom DeConza						