

Imperial Court The Circular

*"I am all that ever went with
evening dress!"*

Rudyard Kipling
1865-1936

from *The Song of the Banjo*

C N Y

CABARET GALA SET FOR WORLD AIDS DAY, DECEMBER 1ST



Empress Philomena recently announced that *"One Night Only"*, a cavalcade of cabaret talent, has been set for Friday, December 1, 1995 at the Triad, 158 West 72nd Street, at 10:30 p.m., with the Court as co-producer, and President Thom Hansen as co-chair.

Scheduled to perform are KT Sullivan, (a noteworthy Broadway and Cabaret performer), Joey Arias (who, in his own words, "channels the spirit and voice of Billie Holliday"), Mark Alan, the talented gay comedian, and Rick McKay and Bonnie Scher, both notable performers on the New York Cabaret scene, with Joel Maisano as musical director. Empress Philomena will be the hostess for the evening, which will include some surprises from the theatre community, as well as a fabulous and fun auction of celebrity memorabilia, donated by Broadway and Hollywood personalities.

The beneficiary of this gala will be the Tijuana AIDS Project, of Tijuana, Mexico, a struggling grassroots organization which receives no support from the national or local governments and undisguised animosity from its own community. "Their battle to provide even the most basic medical and social services to their HIV-affected client base is truly heroic, but they are aided in their endeavors by the various chapters of the Imperial Court across the United States and Canada, notably the Court of San Diego," said Thom Hansen, President. As a show of solidarity in recognition of World AIDS Day, the East Coast Coalition of Imperial Courts (which includes chapters in Canada as well as the United States) specifically selected this beneficiary as one most urgently in need of help. "Ordinarily, we hold to the belief that charity begins at home," said H.M.I.S.M. Philomena, "but on World AIDS Day, it's appropriate for us from the United States and Canada to look beyond our own backyards to find people even more in need of help. We realize that the problem of AIDS is not under control in our own communities, but it has given us a tremendous feeling of accomplishment to know that we are helping a truly desperate situation – honestly, a Third World situation. It would break your heart."

Come support the Court as we recognize World AIDS Day on December 1, and enjoy a wonderful evening of Cabaret. Recommended donation for the evening is \$10., with a \$10. food/drink cover charge. (Pre-show dinner, downstairs, also satisfies the minimum.) For reservations, please call The Triad (212) 799-4599. *RK*

The Court Circular

The Official Newsletter
of the Imperial Court of New York



New York, NY 10003

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*The Executive Board of the Imperial
Court of New York meets on the
fourth Wednesday of each month. The
General Membership meets on the
first Wednesday of each month at
The Center, 208 West 13th St. at
8:00pm.*

HALLOWE'EN AT THE CENTER

The night was Saturday, October 28, and excitement filled the air – not since the lineup at the Academy Awards had there been such a crowd! Who says no one dresses up for Hallowe'en anymore? This was the annual Hallowe'en Ball at the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center, and the Imperial Court of New York made it a special night indeed.

On the first floor, some of the girls set up a makeup and costume shop for those poor souls who ventured in without either (see ICNY's First Annual "Boo-ty Shop of Horrors" at Center, by Lita Austin, in this issue). As I ventured through the crowd I spotted creatures straight from the fires of hell: a demon named Nicodemus walked by licking a skull-on-a-stick; Brenda Starr herself dressed in golfing attire tried to play through, asking everyone if they'd seen her ball; and out of the blackness walked a man dressed in leather that protected him from evil (and so good looking), who bore a strange resemblance to a girlfriend of mine named Panzi. But Panzi has no moustache...what was I thinking?

At the Theater of Blood on three, the

Court hosted a special show, with the girls acting as hostesses and performers for a most appreciative audience. As the show was about to begin, I found Ann Tique with her boa looking fabulous, all dressed up with definitely some place to go. We were both filled with anticipation as Court hostesses and show producers Vivica Fairfax and Leeza Monet welcomed the crowd and announced the first performers, beginning with Charlene Chivoe in a tight body suit, who survived a major sound disaster but rose above it all in style. Chiclet performed a fabulous routine with a can of hair spray without setting herself on fire; Billy Little did a Michael Jackson better than Michael himself, and Gianna appeared in a sexy white dress doing the "Hanky-Panky" as Jean Harlow.

There were also skits based on television shows, including a fantastic dance number by our Empress Philomena and Fabu La Rue as Ricky Ricardo and Lucy, and a Charlie's Angels skit that featured Victoria, Leeza, Vivica, Fiona, Ann Tique and Fabu. Fiona hosted the costume contests, which featured New York's most glamorous drag Queens, and costumes ranging from Amanda's Aladdin to a Lily

COURT FLOAT RECEIVES "OUTSTANDING NYC FLOAT" AWARD FROM HOP

The Imperial Court of New York's entry was named Outstanding New York City Float by Heritage of Pride, Inc., organizers of the annual Gay & Lesbian Pride March, Rally, Dance & Festival in June.

A Summer Garden Party was the theme of this year's float, with Court members performing the entire length of the parade route amidst fluttering swags of ribbons and garlands of flowers, on a grass-green carpet, with a white lattice-work gazebo, all surrounded by white fencing. The award presentation was made at HOP's annual Thank You Party/Awards Ceremony at the Palladium on November 5, 1995. Also nominated in two categories was the Miss NYC Float, (organized by Court



Photo by Ann Meredith

members Randy Riggs and Johnny Cella), for Outstanding NYC Float and Best Use of Theme, for their tribute to Hollywood entitled *From Silence to Celebration*. Congratulations to all – and special thanks to Jeffrey Wallach for his help in decorating our "Garden Party". Additional thanks to all those who arrived so early in the morning to help him; those who escorted the float so proudly; rode the float so decoratively, and to all those who entertained the hundreds of thousands along Fifth Avenue: Empress Philomena, Emperor Ron, Leeza Monet, Charlene Chivoe, Vivica Fairfax, and Shonda Lear.

Tomlin impersonator, who took top honors for costume, fabulous sweetie!

The party was great, and we all had so much fun, it will be hard to top next year. I spent the rest of the evening in the coat check room bidding all goodnight. My feet will probably hurt for the next week with all the running around, but it hurts sooooo good!

Well, 'til next time girls, goodnight-I love you all. *AK*

— Lady Tammie Recine

Cella and Steven Frear...these girls know tacky) or our Black Widow receptionist Josephine Boner-Parte. Soon, and to my delight, we had a line of customers anxiously awaiting our artistic spackle-and-paste jobs.

Special commendations must go to our resident mad-beautician Shonda. She was resplendent in hair dryers and crinolines. "Vampy" Victoria worked absolute wonders with those mangled balls of nylon mod-acrylic, and Miss Kitty Fouché

amount of artifice, neither editorial nor cosmetic, could possibly improve the subject of this month's featured courtier, Charles Ching, aka H.I.M. The Absolute Empress VII of New York (The Celestial Dragon Empress, don't you know), Coco LaChine:

KAY SERA: Charles, you are our first profile. You are a highly visible person in the Court and the community at large — what led to the fabulous creation we all know as Coco LaChine?

COCO LaCHINE: I grew up in Manila, and can remember, oh — way back — I experimented with crude drag when I was about ten years old. I had dolls and stuff, and I began to make my own wigs. My favorite costume motif was Hawaiian, both for me and my dolls. I took two-foot lengths of manila rope, tied them together, and, you know, unbraided the strands; teased and frayed it out so it made like hair. My first wig. To complete my Hawaiian outfit I made skirts from newspaper — cut into strips with a waistband at the top, like a hula skirt, you know. My mother found them and threw them out, but I just made new ones. I never wore my mother's or my sister's clothes, just what I made myself.

When I was in high school I learned something about gay life, and in college I began to experiment with drag through friends who were beauticians — hair and makeup people — and dress designers. I was pretty good at art and design and started on my own outfits; this was not like what we know in the Court — the drag scene there was just a kind of blue collar, neighborhood thing — we didn't go to clubs, but beer gardens, to do acts and hang out. But the scene at the beer gardens was lovely, especially late at night, when the bottles started flying.

KAY: When did you come to the U.S.? Did your coming to New York raise your DQ (Drag Quotient) right away?

COCO: Well I came over in 1980, I think, and went to school, had relationships, but kept drag to a sort of Hallowe'en level. Then I added New Year's Eve. And maybe Valentine's day. And in 1987 or 88, I was crowned the Center's first Prom Queen.

KAY: That's quite a distinction, considering your roots in a rope wig and paper hula skirt. Where did that lead you (heh-heh)?

COCO: I entered the first Miss New York City Pageant, and was first runner-up,

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KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE

Greg Schultz (Ginger Snap) was a talented member of the Imperial Court of New York who passed away this summer.

Greg's talents as an architect, interior designer, artist, song writer, and performer were seemingly boundless. Many friends will miss his gentle presence. Two of them, Kay and Clyde Davis of Pound Ridge, New York, have generously made a donation to the Imperial Court as a way of honoring Greg, keeping his memory alive. The Board wishes to thank the Davises, with



the announcement that those funds are being used to launch *The Court Circular*. Communication, both within our organization and with the general public, will help to increase the outreach the Court, and at the same time make the philanthropic mission of the Court more accessible to all.. Thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Davis for this opportunity to reach out with our message, and enable us to do even more for those in need. This is your living, ongoing memorial, Greg. We miss you, Ginger.

BOO-TY SHOP OF HORRORS AT CENTER

Mascara... STAT... Dermablend (and plenty of it)... STAT... Lipstick... STAT... quick, we're losing this one! This may sound like a scene from *E.R.*, but it is actually the 1st ICNY "Little Boo-ty Shop of Horrors" at the Centers' annual Halloween dance.

The idea behind the "shop" was to provide costumes and face painting (for a small fee) for people who arrived at the dance undone. It also served as a much needed touch-up station for the Novice Drag Queens or Ghouls (and believe me, it was hard to differentiate).

Members generously donated wigs (girls...where were you keeping these dead animal acts!?!), makeup and clothes which were all used to make the shop a success.

I really feared no one would get the concept (and at first they didn't), but as the party got underway and the libations flowed, curiosity and courage surfaced. At first they just peeked in to see the fabulous decor of the shop (thanks so much to John

aka "Erna" laid on the makeup in her own inimitable style (with a trowel). I thank each of these girls—without them it would have been a *real* beauty shop.

The response was wonderful and very encouraging. People said they were looking forward to seeing the "Boo-ty Shop" next year.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone involved especially Bruce Monroe and Chris Lepari of the Center, for allowing me to contribute to this wonderful event. *AK*

— Countess Lita Austin

TEATIME WITH KAY SERA

Sequins and Politics:

H.I.M. Empress VII, Coco LaChine

It is one of your humble editor's tasks to see that you all look as good in print as you do in sequins. However, not being one to disregard Disraeli's maxim concerning royal flattery (see last month's quote-of-the-month), we must hasten to add that no

PHOTOS, PLEASE!

The Journal committee is looking for photos that represent the past ten years of our history. Anyone who might wish to lend photos of past monarchs and/or Court members should submit them to either Bruce Monroe or Brian Crede as soon as possible. All photos will be scanned-in and returned to you unharmed. Please avoid labeling photos with any felt-tip, "Sharpie"—type, or roller ball pens, as they tend to imprint on the faces of other photos when stacked. Information should include your name, the date of the Ball or event; and any other pertinent comment.



NIGHT OF A THOUSAND GOWNS

APRIL 20, 1996

THE OUT-OF-TOWNERS

Connecticut

On Friday, July 21, the Barony of Fairfield County held an Adornment at a local bar, The Brook. After a very festive evening, Baroness Sharon was installed for her second reign. In attendance were the reigning Connecticut Monarchs and the Faith & Hope Ambassador to Connecticut, Comtesse Trixie DeLite.

On Saturday, August 19, the Barony of New London County of the Imperial Court of Connecticut, the Nutmeg Empire, held their election and Adornment. Jessica was adorned as the new Baroness and Michael as the new Baron. In addition to the reigning Empress II (Mucha Mucha) and Emperor II (Toby) of Connecticut, many nobles from Rhode Island attended, including Emperor III Stephen.

The Barony of New Haven County was officially established with the Adornment of Baroness Balsa Wood and Baron Carlos at Cafe 1150 in downtown New Haven. Attending were Nobles and Monarchs from neighboring Empires, including Comtesse Trixie, who presented her documents of office to the reigning Monarchs. In addition, letters of congratulations were presented to the new Baroness and Baron from HMISM Philomena. Formal letters were also presented to the monarchs of New London and Fairfield.

— Comtesse Trixie DeLite

FROM THE DESK OF THE GRAND DUCHESS

I am pleased to welcome all Courtiers and other interested parties to *The Court Circular*. As Minister of Protocol to the Imperial Court of New York, it is my aim in this column to examine the historical courts of Europe and the Byzantine machinations of the International Imperial Court System. It will illustrate the historical role of monarchical society, showing that many royal persons can be at once both ordinary and extraordinary. My column will be educational and entertaining, combining historical fact, anecdote, etiquette, gossip, and possibly a forum for questions and answers.

As a first offering, I submit two quotes from the Court of Roumania — one from Princess Marthe Bibesco, the other from her Queen, Marie, of the House of Hohenzollern, herself:

"The affairs of the Royal House form a subject of conversation for those who, as a rule, would have no conversation."

Princess Marthe

"I am said to be the most beautiful woman in Europe. About that, of course, I cannot judge because I cannot know. But about the other queens, I know. I am the most beautiful queen in Europe."

Queen Marie

In future, I hope to offer many such tidbits about what the Royals thought of themselves and what others thought about them. I also invite your comments and inquiries.

— Grand Duchess Swana Swarovski



LET'S ASK PHILOMENA

"Advice for the Lovelorn and Others from Empress Philomena"

Dear Philomena: I have been recently married. My problem is, my new husband is very upset because he discovered I like to do the housework in the nude. I keep all the blinds drawn, I just like the feeling of freedom it gives me. What do you think? Signed, "Lady Godiva."

Dear Lady: Well, I certainly do see some-

thing very, very wrong there. I think it's disgraceful that you've married a man who's too cheap to pay a cleaning lady! I don't see anything wrong with being nude, but if you must do the housework yourself, might I suggest wearing a high, cobble s-style apron while frying bacon.

Dear Philomena: With Thanksgiving coming up, we are having a big fight in my house. Must I serve a turkey at Thanksgiving dinner? Signed, "They're Trying to Give Me the Bird."

Dear Trying: Certainly not. Only invite people you like.

Write to Philomena with your questions regarding love and romance, or general questions about life in the '90's at c/o ICNY, Box 149, 61 East 8th St., NYC 10011.

COOKIN' WITH KITTY

Anything goes in gumbo, an African word for okra. Back home in Louisiana no one makes gumbo the same. Try adding a couple pounds of smoked kielbasa diced and sauteed or even fresh gulf shrimp, about 2 pounds medium size uncooked but shelled. Even try adding boiled eggs. Yum, Yum!!!

Kitty's Secret Okra & Chicken Gumbo

1 really large yellow Spanish onion
1 really large or 2 medium green peppers
4 to 5 celery stalks
4 cloves fresh garlic
1 1/2 to 2 pounds boneless chicken breast
2 pinches salt
1 pinch ground black pepper
1 pinch ground red pepper
1/2 cup cooking oil
6 cups chicken stock
2 cups sliced okra (small mess) or one 10-ounce package frozen cut okra, thawed
4 green onions, sliced
1/2 cup fresh snipped parsley
Hot cooked rice or homemade (or deli bought) potato salad

- Chop onion, green pepper, celery, and garlic. Reserve until later.
- Sprinkle boneless chicken breasts with salt, black and red pepper. In a 4-quart Dutch oven brown chicken in hot cooking oil. Remove chicken and set aside. Reserve drippings in Dutch oven.
- Add flour to pan drippings in Dutch oven, scraping bottom of pan to loosen drippings. Cook over medium-high heat 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Reduce

(continued on pg. 6)

GAY MEN'S CHORUS BENEFIT AT SYMPHONY SPACE

24 • X • 95

Most Glorious Imperial Majesty—

On behalf of my royal subjects, I offer our sincere thanks for your glamorous contribution to our benefit last evening. Your personal charm, charisma, beauty, and talent lit up the stage and was magnificently enhanced by the fabulous members of your court.

Please convey my gratitude to them all, and particularly to your predecessors Empress Billie Ann and Empress Coco LaChine.

My thoughts will be with you December 1 as you perform at Triad. The Chorus departs that day for our annual retreat upstate and I shall crown my successor the following night.

The Imperial Court has provided some of the highlights of my reign: our presentation at the last 'Night of a Thousand Gowns' and your Coronation: your presence at 'Out With Our Friends' at Carnegie Hall in June; and your wonderful performance last night.

The glamour and grandeur of the Imperial Court is equalled only by your visibility and generosity to the Lesbian & Gay Community. Thank you Empress Philomena and thanks to your Imperial subjects.

Love.

Tori Adore.

Queen of the NYC/GMC



Photos by Richard Eagan & Steven Frear

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 10

Shuffle Off To Buffalo benefit show,
Buddies, Buffalo, NY

Saturday, November 11

Leather & Feather Ball, Providence, RI

Monday, November 13

Cooks for Kids benefit at the
Artists/Designers Building, NYC, 8:00

Thursday, November 16

ICNY Board Meeting, NYC, 7:00, at
Philip's

Saturday, November 18

Coronation South Ogden, UT

Sunday, November 19

Denim & Diamonds benefit for
Miracle House, NYC, 4:00-8:00

Monday, November 20

Imperial Command Opera Gala at
5 Oaks, NYC, 8:00

Saturday, November 25

Coronation - Los Angeles, CA

Sunday, November 26

Fiesta Night, benefit for Tijuana AIDS
Project, Club 121, Hamilton-Wentworth

Sunday, November 26

Hearts & Voices performance at
Roosevelt Hospital, NYC, 6:00

Wednesday, November 29

The Gay Market: Arts & Crafts Sale,
the Center, 6:30-9:30. \$5. first drink free

DECEMBER

Friday, December 1

One Night Only, Philomena's Cabaret
Show at Triad (to benefit Tijuana AIDS
Project), NYC, 10:30

Wednesday, December 6

ICNY General Membership Meeting at
the Center, 8:00

Friday, December 8

St. Vincent's AIDS support services
Holiday Party, NYC, 8:00

Saturday, December 9

SAGE's Holiday Party, NYC

1996

FEBRUARY

Saturday, February 24

Connecticut Coronation, Hartford, CT

MARCH

Saturday, March 2

Brian & Donna's Excellent Adventure,
San Francisco's Coronation, SF, CA

APRIL

Saturday, April 20

Night of a Thousand Gowns, ICNY's
Coronation Ball, NYC

TOYS FOR TOTS REMINDER

Please bring a new, unwrapped toy for a child age 0-18 to the December 6 meeting. Remember, we have the ability to make this holiday a happier one for some hospital bound children. Thank you.



H.M.I.S.M. Empress Philomena
and
the Imperial Court of New York
cordially invite you to the 10th Annual

NIGHT OF A THOUSAND GOWNS

Saturday, April 20, 1996
Sheraton New York Hotel

Seventh Ave at 52nd St., NYC

For more information call:

H.M.I.S.M. Empress Philomena

Thom Hansen, President

Empress VII Coco

Imperial Crown Prince Royale Steven

Imperial Crown Princess Royale Ran-Dee

JACKETS, T's, & SWEATS

Fred Frick announces **LAST CALL** for jackets, T's, and sweats. The final sign-up sheet will be circulated at the Wednesday, December 6 meeting for anyone who missed it the last time. After the December 6 deadline, orders are closed!

(Teatime - continued from pg. 3)

and it was all downhill from there. I had been going to Night of a Thousand Gowns from the beginning, when the Court was just like a club, just a group of friends, and I met (Empress IV) Camille Beauchamps and (Empress V) Razor Sharp who were judges in the Miss New York City Pageant. They asked me to join the Court, to come in with them at that time, and we worked to re-organize the Court into the form it has today. I remember that I set myself a goal, I wanted to become Empress in three years.

KAY: And you were, of course - Empress VII the year I came into the Court 1993 - you achieved your goal! How did your work, at the Center, your activism, come into play?

COCO: I had been volunteering at the Center since 1984, and became a board member in '89. You know, in those early days of the Center and the Court, GMHC for example was not so big, there was no Dance-A-Thon, the community did not have all that it now has by magic. We all worked for it - trained ourselves as activists by doing, by trial and error. A group of us, Camille, Razor, Saleen (Empress VI) and whoever, began to reorganize the Court with our own money, money lent from the Center, and money we raised from a show Anthony Wong put together at the Roxy. Those of us who organized at the Center provided the organizing skills, the grassroots volunteerism for the HOP Dance on the Pier, The Aidswalks, for many things that people may now take for granted. We spread our experience through the community and became directors of other efforts. I myself was on the board of the Gay Games and am currently a director of GLAAD. I like to set a goal, and I go out of my way to get it, I like to seek people out, offer help, not just sit home and wait for an engraved invitation.

KAY: Drag seems to be everywhere, Coco. I wonder how "mainstream" this

will all go before it collapses; I mean in the culture at large. We skip from fad to fad "out there". Yet the transgendered will endure - we're not in it for the money, so to speak.

COCO: We will be the flavor of the month only if we don't keep up the pressure, the work. Fads will come and go. We need to be visible, responsible, professional. We aren't special, we just *are*. We need to not be afraid, to organize and reach out. We need to educate, entertain, just be there, good and bad. The Court and the drag community should respond to the work that needs to be done. Come to meetings, speak out, write checks, organize and come to events. Never sit back and bitch, there's too much to do! KAY: Thank you for your time, Coco. And thanks for all the hair advice. *AK*

(Cookin' - continued from pg. 4)

- heat to medium. Cook and stir about 15 minutes more or until dark reddish-brown roux forms. Watch very carefully because to high heat will burn the roux.
- Add onion, green pepper, celery and garlic to roux. Saute over medium heat for 3-5 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
- While vegetables are sauteing cut chicken into bite size cubes.
- Add 4 cups of chicken stock. Add diced chicken to the Dutch oven. Bring to boiling. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 1 1/2 to 2 hours or until chicken gets very tender, adding more stock (or water) if necessary to keep the pot full.
- Stir in okra, green onions, and parsley. Cover and simmer 30 minutes longer. Remove from heat and skim off fat. Let stand 30 minutes covered after skimming fat.
- Serve over rice or in true Cajun style over a big scoop of potato salad. *AK*

