

Kelly Gabrielle slips into songs like sheer negligee.

BY ADAM BLOCK



It was a prize sight at San Francisco's gay parade: an ominous black banner, hoisted by a multiracial crew, proclaiming DYKES FOR MADONNA. In its wake, one redhead, sporting a crucifix, bustier, and hiking boots, carried a sign reading MADONNA-

HOLICS ANONYMOUS RULE #1: WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER MADONNA AND THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.

That vision took me back to a scene the night before, when a diminutive raven-haired diva startled the Castro's immense Pink Saturday street party with a haunting rendition of Madonna's "Father." She followed with a nervy version of the Kinks' love song to a transvestite, "Lola."

The spunky songstress was no dyke for Madonna, no drag queen—but a friend to both. It was Connie Champagne, the invention of actress Kelly Gabrielle, nearly stealing the show from the night's fierce headliners, Voice Farm. Champagne had dedicated "You Made Me Love You" to Doris Fish, the city's late peerless queen. "Doris taught me about glamour," she explains, "that you could put on your drag and have permission to do what you wanted."

Gabrielle wanted to reinvent cabaret, and, as Champagne, she has. The evidence is all over her 15-song debut disc, *La Strada* (Heyday). Her delivery is seductively conversational, never histrionic. She slips into songs like sheer negligee, inhabiting with equal élan the Velvet Underground's "All Tomorrow's Parties," David Johansen's "Frenchette," and Dinah Washington's "Drinking Again."

Two new numbers—the sturdy send-off "More Than I Will" (which she wrote with guitarist Jeff Trott) and the Piaf-worthy lament "Don't I Have the Right"—are standouts. This is neotorch, a reinvention of the cabaret repertoire. Like the singer, *La*

Strada is a witty, luminous inspiration.

BONERS

Progressive funk rockers Fishbone offer an "ode to heterosexuality" on their new LP, *The Reality of My Surroundings* (Columbia), titled "Naz-Tee May'en," boasting the chant, clearly indicated on the lyric sheet, "Me Gay? No Way!" But the offense is sunk so deep in the mix, it would take an audio archaeologist to decipher it. Is this subliminal bigotry or just a nasty bonus for the literate? In either case it's rank from an act that rails so inventively against hatred and the glorification of crack-head macho.

The lyrics on Glen Meadmore's *Boned* (Amoeba) are impossible to miss and are meant to offend. Meadmore looks like a mad, hick Morrissey and sounds like a cock-crazed Gomer Pyle. If a hetero artist put this out, he'd be branded a homophobe.

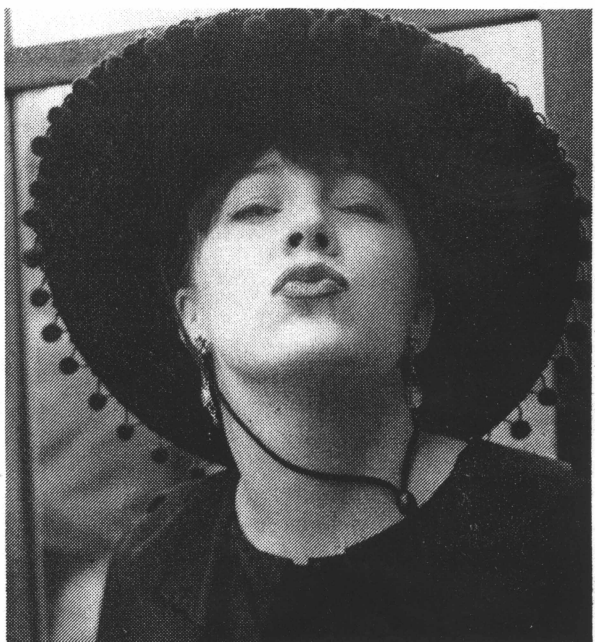
On the cover, Meadmore is painted as a crazed, pointy-eared demon, which seems to be what he is aiming to imitate: every mother's *Deliverance* nightmare. On back-road hoedowns, over an unrelenting fuzz-tone guitar, he hee-haws about his quest for "beer-can dicks" and begs for someone to "take me outside and tan my hide!"

He laments acerbically, "I used to be a gay swinger, but now I'm just a bitter queen/ When you see me down at the wrinkle bar, you'll know exactly what I mean." He closes the disc with a chaste Appalachian hymn, making a poor boy's quest for cock and for salvation seem equally desperate.

Jesse Helms wouldn't like this disc, and you may not either. But if you're in need of goony queerabilly music, well, Big Glen may have the only pop stand on the turnpike.

'ZINE QUEEN

The most poignant, profound, original dyke 'zine I've seen, *Sister Nobody*, is finally



Singer Connie Champagne

Her repertoire is neotorch, a reinvention of cabaret.

back with a second issue featuring cover girl Frida Kahlo. It boasts a hip profile of Madonna's art heroine, the true tale "How Sinéad Helped My Dad Understand Me," photos of preteen dykes in Kiss drag, a pervert nun's tale, and a brilliant broadside at queer dress codes. The editor is currently soliciting material for a Patti Smith issue. (Send submissions for the next issue, or \$2 cash for number 2, to *Sister Nobody*, 2336 Market St., #128, San Francisco, CA 94114.)

BEFORE AMYL RULED THE DISCOS

Rhino Records has finally issued all 15 volumes of *Didn't It Blow Your Mind: Soul Hits of the '70s*. The 175 cuts cover tracks only from 1969 through 1975 and don't touch the Motown catalog, which means they are packed with hard-to-find and half-remembered wonders. The set serves as a prequel to the two-volume *The Disco Years (1974-1982)*, having only two cuts in common: Gloria Gaynor's "Never Can Say Good-bye" and Shirley and Company's "Shame, Shame, Shame."

Discover the tunes that rocked the gay dance clubs before the era of the endless remix. Ah, sweet innocence. ▼