

A Mixed Review For A Mixed Bag Of tricks.

By CELESTE-MONIQUE LINDSEY

Wed. April 7th was the date for the second performance of *No Entiendes* at Danceteria. My reaction at the time was negative due mostly to circumstances which may not have been the producer's fault. We arrived two hours early for a show that was scheduled to begin at eleven (remember this is the club which advertises that all shows begin on time), only to be told that all the tables around the stage were reserved. These tables being the only place close to the stage from which the spectator gets an unobstructed view of things, we spent the whole evening leaning against the door to the men's room, craning around fat pillars, glad to see a almost anything. And at the evening's end we were treated to an incredible display of rudeness on the part of the coatcheck woman. After keeping us waiting a good fifteen minutes in a deserted and freezing basement she demanded a tip for no other reason but that I had checked a fur coat.

As for the show itself, I think the basic idea is a good one: to provide a

showcase for unknown performers whose repertoire falls neither completely into the domain of music or of theater. Some of the acts were outstanding and some were mediocre but the main problems were production flaws: the show started late, the spacing of the acts was terrible and the host never really seemed in control of the proceedings. Haoui's hosting of the show was very funny at times, he had tremendous gaps to fill and he did so pretty well for the most part — commenting on such topics as pederasty, the Manhattan Mindset, and nepotism, but when he did lose hold of his audience we were left asking the question "whose fault if not his own is this poor pacing anyway?" I was surprised that someone who must face many unpleasant moments in his nightly work would be so unsure of himself before an audience.

Most of the acts selected were pretty good. Except for the opening one: imagine a girl about thirty pounds overweight, laced up in a black leather bathing suit doing a half hearted tap dance with a pair of electric scissors. Attractive! The most outstanding performance of the evening was a mime/dance piece by Nell Stewart intitled *Disposable Bedtime*. It had a

haunting quality unsettling in a rock club. There was a Passover Plot called *Mendel The Hassid Rocker* — odd to see my Canal Street landlord cavorting up there among the stars. Fellow roommate George Haas did a reading of his poem "Strange Guy". The piece concerned a mid-american Odyssey through a world of dinners and roadside stands. It was funny and sad all at once. The reader kept his audience moved in spite of continued heckling by a pack of pickled preppies (and *who* let them in?).

Haoui did two of his poems, one an amusing bit about the trials and tribulations of doordom and the other one, about the problems of nightclub addiction, this second reading done with a friend against a backdrop of slides of Manhattan club life. (The pictures were marvelous!) Unfortunately because of the late hour I missed the second half of the show — 7 AM comes early in the working world.

All in all I guess I liked the show, I'll be there for the next one on May 5th. The main thing *No Entiendes* needs is a dictator — a host who controls the reins of the proceedings and imposes his will on both the performers and the audience. Come on, we know you can do it Haoui!



ELLEN BERKENBLIT

NO ENTIENDES, an Emerging Cabaret

Hosted by Haoui Montaug