

Queen City Craving

Well, Constance has been enlisted to do a little column in our fabulous paper, since she is the premier behind the scenes drag queen.

So lets get to it. Well the exciting news has been the fabulous performance of Yolanda and The Plastic Family at 135. My dear that girl has come into her own, pure entertainment with an edge. Her own songs mixed with some revamped standards had the packed house in a frenzy. Nothing like a Leo on a stage. Look around for her schedule, and don't miss her next show. Well, Constance has also learned that our own Yolanda is going to be the featured unsighned artist at this years Billboard



Dance Music summit in Chicago. When asked about it Yolanda was excited but nervous to perform on the same stage with such diva's as Martha Wash, and Christine W. "It's like the biggest event of my life. I'll be the only white boy playing at the whole event." Lets see how Larry Flick put it in Billboard magazine, "A quirky and endearing lad named Yolanda." Who knew the boy who couldn't keep his eyelashes on just a year ago would be getting better press than her TV sidekick. (Whats her name, anyway?)

But I do love Miss Tartt, don't get me wrong.

Rumor has it too that, Miss Yolanda will be in Nunsense with those big girls, um, big stars, Amber and Marguerite, and the twink super star, Venus Botticelli. This will definitely be a sight to see.

Many acolytes of the local scene may have

noticed the absence lately of that Coffee House mainstay, Tamah, whose voice soothed us on "You'll See." Well not to worry, she will be back. Here is what she told her dear friend Constance, when she was asked, "Where Ya been?"

"Walking up the twelve step staircase, communing with mother Earth and looking forward to a very healthy future."

Tamah's only performance in the last year has been at Constance's own Winter Is a Drag Ball, and you will next be able to catch her at the AIDS walk in September.

Constance asked Tamah if she has been writing music, to which she responded, "No just journal and poetry, but it will all turn into music eventually." Well, I guess we'll see.

Well, another rumor has been confirmed. The Plainfield dance/performance sensation, Agnes and Sticky are headed to greyer pastures. According to the most recent FaerieGram, Central Vermont's drag supernova and destroyers of set dressing, are headed back to New York, where they will not be at risk of frightening the dairy cows. Constance can't help feeling a bit sad over this, and will have to travel to have an Aquarius drag-queen cat fight.



Constance was all ready to go on and on about her dear friend Steph Pappas, but not a day after handing me a list of places to see her perform

she ripped it out of my hand. It seems she will be just about everywhere. But wherever she is, make like Odetta, and find her and listen. It's worth it.

Ellen Hart's newest book, *Faint Praise*

Review by Donna Freeman

The first indication I had that I really was not in the mood to read this book was my reaction to the author's choice to quote Alexander Pope. I have one recollection of Pope from school days: boring. Although Hart's quote from An Essay On Man seems appropriate, what place does an eighteenth-century Englishpoethave in a twentieth-century lesbian mystery novel?

My attitude and Hart's passive writing voice combined to offer a good sedative-I kept falling asleep. I didn't even appreciate the wry, dry prose that kept creeping into the relatively inert pages. At one point, I convicted Hart of the crime of attempted imitation of one of my favorite authors, Sneaky Pie Brown.

I am an unforgiving bitch, but I kept reading, even when I believed Hart guilty of not knowing her own characters. Too many subplots; where is the focus? I kept reading. Then I discovered myself flipping pages back to catch things I'd missed. In her rocking chair style, Hart had lulled me into not paying attention.

Jane Lawless, restaurateur extraordinaire and Hart's sleuth in *Faint Praise*, spends little time in the kitchen or running her local eatery. She also gives little effort to playing detective. Trouble, however, always seems to find her.

Sometimes it's the woman who thinks she's Jane's girlfriend, but who Jane can't seem to politely get rid of. Other times it's a mugger threatening her in the alley or a car following her everywhere, giving chase when she tries to lose the tail.

Always, when she thinks she is getting close to finding the mysterious visitor/burglar of the small condo building where her friend Roz lives, something else happens-usually someone gets mugged or dies. Jane temporarily moves into a loft left vacant by the building owner's suicide, and, with the help of her flamboyantly devious lesbian friend, Cordelia, begins to dig for clues to identify the burglar. Soon all residents are suspects or they are dead. And, it appears the building owner was coerced into committing suicide.

At the end, all the seemingly unrelated crimes appear to be related and the perpetrator, lowlife boyfriend of the building manager, is not responsible for most of these crimes. It is only at the conclusion that the importance of Pope's words becomes clear. It is also at the conclusion that one can hear my very *Faint Praise*.

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