

2 EVENTS

Comedy: Up-and-coming comics cross cultural barriers with humor

Every
Friday

Continued from CUE-1

the stand-ups are imaginative, polished performers who seem to have bright careers ahead of them.

Others lack stage presence or are clearly new to the comedy game. Most of the stand-ups use "The Other Comedy" as a training ground, notes Fanusie, and they receive feedback from Sparks and Fanusie after the shows. Many of the performers have gone through a comedy workshop that Sparks teaches in San Francisco.

Two of the stronger stand-ups were Kevin Avery and Bryan Kellen, comedians who came from the San Jose area for the show. Avery did some impressive physical comedy, imitating a guy riding a mechanical bull in one gag and aping a practitioner of Tae Bo in another. A light-skinned African American with blond hair, Avery also did a sharp-witted bit about how lots of people come up to him and press him about whether he's of mixed-race heritage.

Kellen adopted a geeky stage persona and did a clever bit on a guy who grows increasingly uninhibited at a dance club.

Quincy Reyes looked like a performer to keep an eye on. A young man who appeared to be in his early to mid-20s, Reyes

IF YOU GO

"The Other Comedy"

■ **Where:** Mana Sawa restaurant, 1803 Webster St., Oakland

■ **When:** 8 p.m. every Friday

■ **Tickets:** \$5

■ **Call:** (510) 832-9422

did some dazzling vocal impressions. Originally from Puerto Rico, he did several gags related to Spanish speakers.

A comic who goes by the name of Aundre the Wonderwoman also had some fine moments. In a playfully gruff manner, she ranted through such topics as the need to discipline children, people who are obsessed with animals and the skinny body of Calista Flockhart (of "Ally McBeal" fame).

There was lots of irreverent humor and profanity-laced jabs during the evening, and ethnic material was a common link. Tessie Chua, who is Asian American, made fun of "round-eyed" American drivers; Derrick Richardson, a black, gay comic, talked of ethical codes in the "ghetto"; and two Irish-American comics skewered "Riverdance."

David Kleinborg, 56, seem-

ingly the oldest one of the bunch, took some jabs at the ungainly celebration dances of 49ers quarterback Steve Young. Sparks complained during a interview that there's hardly any diversity among most headlining comics at the big Bay Area clubs. World problems aren't going to be solved in a laugh joint, he says, but "The Other Comedy" can broaden people's awareness to some degree.

"Comedy is definitely not going to break down any major racial barriers, but in some way you'll learn a little bit about another culture," said Sparks.

"We're sort of creating the bridges of understanding," said Fanusie.

Flores says it's liberating for her to talk about transgender life through comedy. And audiences are usually pretty open and responsive to her act, she says — some members, in fact, are powerfully affected by what she says.

"I've had people come up to me after a show and say, 'I'm living in the closet and I want to come out. What you're doing really helps me to get to where I need to be.'"

You can reach Paul Stermann by e-mail at psterman@ang-newspapers.com or by phone at (925) 416-4842.

The Other Comedy!

8pm - 10pm
Host: Tony Sparks
Comedy Donation \$5



DANCING

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San Francisco Chronicle

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

Undiscovered Talent

Last week at A Fool's Paradise, the recent Atlanta transplant Kevin Avery, who is black, joked about white kids who use meaningless hip-hop slogans like "True to Da Game." "What game?" he wondered, screwing his face up in bewilderment. "Yahtzee?"

Avery was amazing, a very physical comic who had great bits about riding a mechanical bull and getting flustered by the teenage girls when he taught high school. He was the night's "headliner."

Alternative Comedy Circuit Requires a Sense of Humor

By James Sullivan

CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER