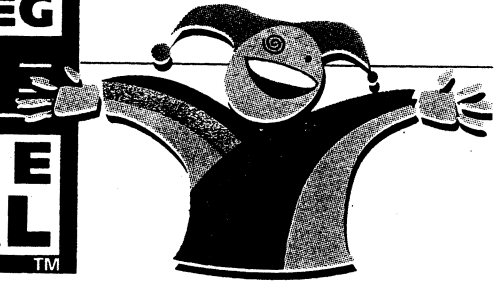


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A FESTIVAL FOR THE SENSES/A.C.E. (Playhouse Studio, last show today at 1:30 p.m.).

You won't find any fringe show at this year's festival as interactive with its audience as A Festival for the Senses.

No sitting back in this one as viewers sing the national anthem, are videotaped for television, sample some questionable culinary concoction and fork out a nickel to question three old ladies in a bit called Ask the Biddies.

This energetic, Denver-based trio work hard at involving patrons in their entertaining, one-hour variety show. It is not a slight to note that the better the audience the better their show.

A.C.E. reciprocated with its patrons through amusing set pieces about a high school mermaid named Aqua Marie, who has a hilarious waltz to Stairway to Heaven, and the spoof Something's Cooking With Julie, starring an overly-effervescent host.

They save the best for last with a well-aimed lampoon of the gravely serious antics of Cirque du Soleil. It alone is worth the price of admission.

Former East St. Paul resident Barbara Gehring, the C in A.C.E., returns with an impressive performance, especially with her improv skills. Her name can be added to the list of entertainers who have gone off and made good. ★★★

Kevin Prokosh