

THE EDMONTON SUN

CIRQUE du FRINGE

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Tori King takes a close look at life in *The More Men Weigh*.



King Weighs in

THE MORE MEN WEIGH - Stage 6

By STEVE TILLEY

There's no better weapon against despair than humour, and perhaps no situation that cries out for humour more than the sudden implosion of a relationship. If you can't laugh, you're just gonna cry.

L.A.-based writer/actress Tori King has done her tour of duty through the delta of despair after the meltdown of her two-year marriage to her rock-band bassist husband. Now, she's picked herself up, dusted herself off and turned her experience into this heartfelt, funny-sad (but more funny than sad) one-woman memoir.

Tori's story sort of creeps up on you, as she morphs from an actress on the stage doing an animated monologue to a friend telling you the most mesmerizing and human story you've ever heard, full of laughter and heartbreak and, ultimately, triumph. Oh, and stink ants. The stink ant is an important metaphor here.

The story begins and ends in the apartment of her estranged husband, Scott, on the eve of an attempt at reconciliation. Tori has shown up a day early with the intent of sneaking into the place and bugging the phone, possibly catching her ex in the act of further infidelity. You see, if he's still cheating on her, the peril-fraught decision to attempt to get back together will be out of her hands. And maybe, deep down, she wants it that way.

In between, Tori takes us on a journey through her childhood, her early womanhood, the first meeting with her future husband and the eventual discovery of his affair. She switches deftly between characters, bringing her mother, her lisping husband and the other woman to life instantly and memorably.

The title is a mis-hearing of "the Mormon way," which Tori's mom interprets as "the more men weigh," figuring the bigger the man, the bigger the liar. But while the humour is woman-friendly, this isn't an hour-long man-bashing session. It's a newfound pal making the gutsy leap of letting all her foibles and foul-ups hang out, so that we might learn something from it. Or, at the very least, be engaged and entertained.

King's bittersweet learning experience and the honesty with which she shares it leaves us feeling sorry for only one person: her ex-husband. Dude, you were a fool to let this one go.

rating du

CIRQUE
4 SUNS out of 5

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2000

FRINGE FEST

If faith flies away, neuroses stream in

Tori King's look at marital infidelity even has a 'stink ant'

The More Men Weigh

★★★★

Stage 6 (Strathcona Centre Community League)

This soulful, little monologue by Los Angeles playwright/actor Tori King takes you crawling across the shattered crystal of infidelity, betrayed trust and heartbreak.

Remarkably, it all turns out to be a wryly amusing, emotionally satisfying journey, leading to one inescapable conclusion: somewhere out there in the wilds of Arizona, there's a plaudering, skinny rock guitarist who made a big, big mistake in his life.

King isn't the first Fringe performer to spin a riff off the suspicious wife routine but it's clear, early on, that she speaks from bitter experience. This play opens with her recounting the night she snuck into her estranged husband's apartment in a sadly underhanded bid to place a tap on his telephone.

Two years after she found him sleeping around with some vapid band groupie, Tori is trying to give due consideration to his offer of reconciliation. When faith goes out the window, you see, all sorts of neuroses come streaming into the void.

This is a brave, bittersweet confessional, a rueful portrait of a young woman who comes to realize that she's becoming just as manic and mistrustful of men as was her poor, unhappy mother. (It was mom who advised her that the more a man weighs, the bigger the liar.)

It's a one-woman show, but King plays a cast of characters, including her lisping, wayward ex and, not entirely incidentally, a world-weary sink ant. She's a fresh new talent along Fringe row, well worth the acquaintance.



Richard Helm
Fringe Fest

Concert and, of course, *Phantom 309*, is worth the modest price of admission alone.

The band, also including Cam Neufeld as fiddler Sleepy Side Rivers, Chris Smith as guitarist/steel player Jimmy Day and legendary local drummer Stu Mitchell as Pig Roberts is hot and up to the task.

Brown is a perfect Red, with just the right touch of bar-band cynicism and stage courtliness, with an accent that actually sounds believable.

Even if some of Red's Interstate material was penned some years after 1950, touches of period accuracy remain, from costumes to the instruments to the mikes, not to mention the threat of vintage feedback that continued through the show.

The bridge dialogue between tunes could stand some work, but there are some unassailable moments too: "The cheese just slipped off Red's cracker," deadpans J.W. at one point. Once again, the long coattails of *Jr. Gene Wild* and director Wes Borg continue to entertain the home town — and anyone else in need of a solid hour of entertainment.

Alan Kellogg

Altire

★★★★

Stage 0 (Walterdale)

What's good for the multinational corporations of the world equals capital G Good, right?



FILE PHOTO

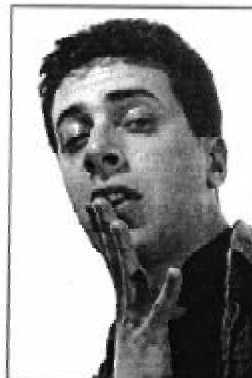
Tori King proves that a spyglass is a girl's best friend in *The More Men Weigh*.



IAN JACKSON, THE JOURNAL

Toe Jamn has lots of happy feet.

points of view, clearly but stridently expressed. Partly it's because the performances tend to the shrill. Partly, I think, it's because the play hasn't found its



FILE PHOTO

Talented T.J. Dawe in *Labrador*.

ables of life: why is the sky blue, laugh tracks, the sensory capabilities of canines, et al. Then we move into the tour, which involves a cast of

guilt-ridden Pal, and Pamela Raven needed to speak up more as the wife Liza but they made a convincing, loving couple who eventually make a deal that the state fair will be the determining factor in what happens to the chickens.

All this is related as Lewis Frere, Ingrid Thornton and Patrick Stauch play a lively blend of original bluegrass and rock 'n' roll (Sproule joins in on guitar occasionally, and Stauch takes on some pretty funny birdlike qualities of his own in the end). The music does much to transport us to another homier kind of farm than the one in the movie *Chicken Run*, and by the end the world unfolds as it should.

Roger Levesque

Machiavelli
★★★★

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The More Men Weigh (stage 6) Tori King battles deception, infidelity, mother issues and continuing cycles. King wrote and performed this monologue about a cheating but repentant rock-star husband and her drive to catch him in the act. This piece is well-done, funny and, despite the unusual situations the character gets herself into, rings true. King is buoyant and full of a gleeful mischief, but she can turn on a dime and the true loneliness and pain of her characters' situation hits hard. A neurotic, fun journey. ★★★★★—KW