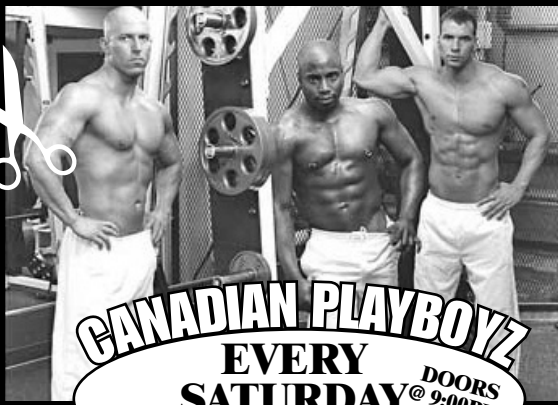


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-Alternative Press

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SUGAR

She wants revenge

"She Wants Revenge... out-interpolated Interpol, deploying snippets of Joy Division, Bauhaus, the Cure and other dark New Wave acts..."
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review

cd Carrie Catherine *Venus Envy* (Out Loud Music)

With a voice somewhere between Joan Osborne and Bonnie Raitt, Carrie Catherine (Horachek, which explains why she's going with just "Catherine") belts out some sweet tunes on this, her follow-up to 2003's *Out the Car Window*. Slickly produced—but not over-worked—by John MacArthur Ellis (Be Good Tanyas, Jeremy Fisher), *Venus Envy* is the kind of disc Liz Phair used to make before she started churning out Clear Channel crap. And you've just gotta dig anyone who's not only got the guts to cover the Supremes' "Baby Love" but also be able pull it off with style and sass. If Catherine is half as good live as she is on these 11 tracks, her show at Lucky this week should be good indeed.

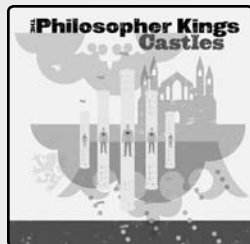


Carrie Catherine
(with Peter Katz)
7pm Thursday, Feb. 23
Lucky Bar, 517 Yates
Tickets \$8 • 382-LUCK

—Al Brooks

cd The Philosopher Kings *Castles* (Sony BMG)

Sweet, sexy and polished without being either prissy or pretentious, *Castles* is a welcome return from mid-'90s Canadian soul-pop stalwarts The Philosopher Kings. These guys are pros—since their last release (1999's *One Night Stand*), the Kings have collectively worked with the likes of Nelly Furtado, FeFe Dobson, Tina Turner, Ricky Martin, Divine Brown, Prozzak . . . in other words, they know how to make excellent pop music that sounds as good on the dance floor as it does on your iPod. With all 14 tracks recorded live off the floor (that is, with the whole band together in one room, instead of a bunch of individual overdubs), *Castles* is a tasty bit of northern soul that clearly deserves all the attention it will soon be getting.



The Philosopher Kings
(with James Bryan)
8 pm Thursday, Feb. 23
Legends, 919 Douglas
Tickets \$25 • 383-713

—John Threlfall

cd Buttless Chaps *Where Night Holds Light* (Mint)

As intriguing as the Buttless Chaps' early spooky experimental tunes were, the lads have since brilliantly honed a unique twangy pop with electronic flourishes since they uprooted from Victoria to Vancouver. The most instantly striking thing about the Chaps' new album is the addition of vocals by the multi-talented Ida Nilsen (Great Aunt Ida), which blend gorgeously with Dave Gowans' dusty baritone. In fact, I could wax paragraphs about each individual member's style, but the sum and interplay of the parts adds up to so much more. You need look no further than the album's centerpiece "Movements," where banjos bounce off swirling synth satellites, or the frantic dynamics of the title track, to see how brilliant this band can be. Each successive album has been a great step towards joining the left-of-centre Can-rock canon spearheaded by the likes of the Rheostatics, half of whom appear on this wonderful disc.



The Buttless Chaps
(with David P. Smith)
9 pm Friday, Feb. 24
Logan's, 1821 Cook
Tickets \$8 • 360-2711

—Bill Stuart

cd Connie Kaldor *Sky With Nothing To Get In The Way* (Word of Mouth)

Fans of Canadian folk vet Connie Kaldor will find a lot to like in this, her 12th release, and her welcome return to Victoria this weekend. While the album's title may be harkening back to this Juno winner's Saskatchewan roots, there's also nothing here to get in the way of Kaldor's sweet, loping folk-country voice. *Sky* is a wonderfully simple, never over-produced effort that brings both Kaldor's voice and



guitar to the fore. Much like a prairie sunrise, there's something just plain charming about Connie Kaldor—currently celebrating her astounding 27th year as a leader in the Canadian folk scene. Traditional folkies, this is your night.

—Al Brooks

play Sing and Smile Four Neat Guys go nicely with dinner

Reviewing any dinner theatre production is trickier than you might think. Unlike regular theatre, where the performance is all that really counts, with dinner theatre you have to take the whole package into account: both the dinner and the theatre, true, but also the service and the general ambience. An off night by the kitchen can hamper your evening just as much as, say, bad acting or poor sound. But fortunately for all concerned, the Oak Bay Beach Hotel's latest foray into the performance realm—*Four Neat Guys*—satisfies on all counts. Both delicious and entertaining, this is one dinner theatre experience that can be enjoyed by any audience with an appetite for fun.

Act one: the dinner. (Actually, there's a welcoming entree where the audience gets to meet their service team while mingling before a warm fire.) A tasty Greek salad is waiting at your table when you get seated in the toasty banquet hall (dress lightly!), quickly followed by the main course of pan-seared halibut topped with lemon caper butter, featuring a side of fresh vegetables and dill-infused rice. (Granted, there was no choice of entree, so if fish doesn't fit your diet, you may want to discuss this when you book your tickets.) The servings were generous and delicious and, better still, arrived piping hot—a nice surprise, considering nearly 100 people were being served the night I attended. Dessert was an equally yummy slice of fresh NY cheesecake topped with Bailey's and white chocolate sauce, large enough to fill any sweet tooth. Wine and a variety of after-dinner liqueurs were available, but as neither my companion nor I are drinkers, we passed on both. Full marks to the serving staff, however, who were swift and attentive but never obtrusive.



Stan Davis (left), Timothy Kyle, Chris Newstead and Dwayne Gordon are the *Four Neat Guys*

Act two: the show. An original production by local musical theatre mainstays Dwayne Gordon and Stan Davis, *Four Neat Guys* is a doo-wop musical revue in the *Forever Plaid* vein, but it's definitely not a sequel to that long-running hit show. Instead, we're watching the final gig by the Neat Guys (Norman, Eddy, Al, Terrance—get it?), who have spent the past decade trying to build a musical career by performing at birthday parties, rest homes and the like. But by prior agreement, they've decided to call it quits if they haven't found fame and fortune in 10 years, thus the farewell performance.

With a 70-odd minute repertoire running from '50s staples like "Sh-Boom" and "Istanbul (not Constantinople)" to such pop classics as "The Look of Love" and "We've Only Just Begun," there's certainly nothing to complain about when it comes to the songs. With musical director Heather Burns as their highly caffeinated on-stage accompanist, all the Guys offer tight harmonies and charming performances. Granted, some jokes didn't quite work with the mixed-age audience—only the younger of us picked up on the "Thriller" choreography during "Spooky"—and some selections ("Danny Boy," "I Love Lucy") could well have been left on the cutting room floor. Others, however, were simply inspired bits of comic mayhem, such as an improv-based twist on a traditional Gaelic tune.

Actually, it's moments like this that offer a hint of what Guys could be if it were more fully developed. As it stands, it's an entertaining musical revue; but it does have the bones of a potentially greater show were it to be more fully fleshed out. More attention to the characters, for example, could only lead to a better show.

All in all, however, *Four Neat Guys* leaves you feeling both satisfied and satiated. Definitely geared towards an older audience, this is a great dinner theatre experience suitable for any multi-generational crowd.

—John Threlfall

Connie Kaldor
8 pm Saturday, Feb. 25
Alix Goolden Hall,
907 Pandora
Tickets \$21 advance/
\$25 door • 382-8422

Four Neat Guys
Until March 25
Oak Bay Beach Hotel,
1175 Beach Drive
Dinner & show \$59
598-4556