

LET'S DO A LINE...

...of verse! Haydon Bridge meets the Naked Poet who's hosting Glam Slam UK, London's dress-up-and-recite event.



Photo by Mark Weeks, www.markweeksphotography.com

BILBAO-BORN ERNESTO SAREZALE is going to kill us because of that “naked” heading. “I don’t like being called the Naked Poet,” he says. “That’s not how I define myself.” But in his press release he’s described as Ernesto Sarezale aka The Naked Poet. “I put it specifically for QX, just to make it more spicy,” he maintains. Hmmm. Is he a naked poet or not? “I do loads of different things when I perform, but a lot of the time it involves some nudity,” he admits. “Either I start naked and do the whole performance naked, but more frequently I start fully dressed, then I disrobe through one of the poems.” This sounds like striptease, I suggest. At this Ernesto confesses everything. “I was a finalist in the male burlesque tournament last year at the Bethnal Green Working Men’s Club,” he reveals. And not only that. “Just last Saturday,” he continues, “I was surrounded by hundreds and hundreds of naked people in the naked bike ride through Central London.” Harumph! This man is not only indeed a naked poet, he’s a serial undresser! “I suppose I get a kick out of it,” he smiles. “I’m not going to deny it.” So is he in fact an exhibitionist? “Anything that ends in ‘ist’ I really refuse,” he bristles again. “I

don’t like labels.” So what is Ernesto Sarezale? I hope he won’t mind the label “pioneer queer performance artist.” Because he’s certainly that. But only part-time. After studying for his Ph.D in Scotland, he gained a research post at the City University, where he still works. In 2002, to satisfy his creative urge, he formed Homophone, London’s first gay poetry group. Then he began the naked poetry thing, firstly at a queer alternative event. “I had a couple of glasses of wine,” he remembers. “That helped a little bit.” Now he doesn’t think twice about it, except that he’s sometimes aware of where his audience is focussing. “You can see people who are making sure they just look you in the eye,” he confides. “The opposite is less common, a girl who spent the whole performance staring at my genitals.”

PERFORMANCE
Glam Slam UK
Royal Vauxhall Tavern at 8pm on Tuesday 1st July.

But enough with the Naked Poet already! We’re supposed to be discussing another first for Ernesto, Glam Slam, a sort of karaoke for poets, which is about to make its London

debut at the Royal Vauxhall Tavern as part of this year’s Pride celebrations. It’s the UK version of a notable annual event founded ten years ago by poet Emanuel Xavier at New York’s Nuyorican Poets Café. A poetry contest with some of the atmosphere of a vogue ball, it offered performers the chance to compete, dressed appropriately, in various categories. Semi-finalists then went up against each other for a cash prize. Glam Slam has now ended, but Emanuel has given his blessing to Ernesto to carry on as Glam Slam UK. The London show will follow the New York model and it sounds as though it’s going to be a wild evening. (Anyone can enter. Book a spot by contacting Ernesto at 07733 263823 or Ernesto@sarezale.com). You have to perform a piece (the lines don’t have to rhyme!) for three minutes or less in one of the following categories: Love (dressed in red), Loss (dressed in blue), Lust (dressed in underwear, lingerie or less), or any topic, as long as you’re wearing a fabulous wig. There’s £100 for the winner, plus guest appearances by Stav B (“A very dramatic Greek lesbian, who might break plates”) and Parkesine Paddy (“Twisted humour about relationships. I think he’s bisexual.”) And will Ernesto be taking his clothes off? Oh, let’s not start that again!

HOT

TIPS & OPENINGS

BURLESQUE
MOTHER FOUCAULT SPOKEN WORD BURLESQUE
Sunday 29th June, 7.30pm-midnight, Bistrottheque, 23-27 Wadeson Street, E2.
Artists such as **Marlene Dicktricks, Harvey Winestain, Jet moon** and many more will be entertaining in this star-studded summer event to raise money for Positive East and all profits go to individuals and communities affected by HIV in East London. To buy tickets visit: <http://www.wegotickets.com/events/312721> or call Positive East on 020 7791 9328.

THEATRE
24/SEVEN – A STREET OPERA
8th – 27th July (Not Mondays) at 7.30pm. Barons court theatre, The Curtain’s up, 28A Comeragh Road, W1. Tickets £15 (£12 conc). Box Office: 020 8932 4747.
Set in a present day London café, 24/Seven is a musical theatre piece following the story of seven characters over 24 hours. It’s a gay love story of betrayal, intrigue, violence and murder.



Photo by Richard Baitye.

PERFORMANCE
POLARI – AN EVENING OF GAY WORDS AND MUSIC
Tuesday 8th July, 7pm-11pm, Green Carnation Lounge Bar, 4-5 Greek Street, Soho, W1. Free Entry.
Will Self will be entering Green Carnation’s Literary Salon, reading from his reworking of Oscar Wilde’s ‘Dorian’. He’s one of Britain’s top novelists and has only made one other public appearance in London to promote his book. Also, **Justin Bond** (aka Kiki of Kiki & Herb fame) will be giving a special reading at 7.30pm. There will also be accompanying chill out tunes from DJ’s **Dom Aguis** and **Paul Burston**.