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**show listings:**

**Honey Harlowe**

**nytheatre.com review**

by Martin Denton · March 21 1998

## **Honey Harlowe**

an improvised theatrical event

created and performed by AmnesiaWars

directed by Rob Reese

**With guest stars as follows:**

**March 6, 7, 27: Sedan**

**March 13, 14: Oui be Negroes**

**March 20: Katie Roberts: Solo**

**March 21: Sacred Ape**

**March 28: Hiatus**

**April 3: Chainsaw Boys**

**April 4: Amnesia Wars Class Performance**

Opened March 6, 1998, closes April 4, 1998

Presented by Amnesia Wars Improvisational Theatre

at the Red Room @ KGB, 85 East 4th Street (East Village)

schedule: Fri - Sat at 11pm

running time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

tickets cost \$10 - \$15

call (917) 752-0657 for tickets and information

If, like me, you're not familiar with improvised theatre, then go immediately to see Honey Harlowe to find out what you've been missing. Performed by the six-person troupe **Amnesia Wars** in a tiny third-floor space called the Red Room in the East Village, with different guest artists every night, Honey Harlowe offers some of the sharpest, smartest, and funniest theatre in New York.

Here's how it works. The evening begins with a guest star--different at each performance (there's a complete list available in the credits box, above). The night I attended the show, the opening

troupe was **Sacred Ape**, and their piece was a riot. It starts out as a Learning Annex-type seminar about how to write teen sitcoms for television (think *Saved by the Bell*): three professional writers describe their process and share summaries of some of their favorite episodes to an unctuous interviewer. The satire here is dead on. **Sacred Ape** is gifted not just with brilliant comic ideas but with superb writing, timing, and delivery. I'm looking forward to seeing them again (which you can do, by the way, in a show called The Swarm, which plays at Solo Arts Group Saturday nights from April 11 through May 2).

On, now, to the main event: the six talented young people who comprise **Amnesia Wars** now emerge on stage. They ask the audience to provide them with three ideas, and from these they go on to craft an intricate, sophisticated one-act comedy. (Later, they create a second improvised play based on **Sacred Ape's** TV sitcom premise.) The skill of these six performers is absolutely awesome: in a series of deft, quick scenes they create characters and build and reinforce thematic ideas; they make a real play, no cheap laughs or hoary schtick anywhere in sight. This is remarkable all by itself; it's also enormously entertaining because these folks are so very funny and original. There's never any dead air, and a surprisingly large percentage of the material hits its satirical and/or comic target. The best fun is watching when a good idea catches fire: at the show I attended, for example, a scene in a church confessional attained heights of hilarity when it became clear that there were four extra priests gleefully eavesdropping on the would-be penitent.

Honey Harlowe--named, by the way, for the wife of the great comedian Lenny Bruce--is different every night. My guess, though, is that it's always sophisticated, witty fun: an ideal way to wind up a night at one of the many nearby theatres in the East Village.  
Show reviewed on March 21, 1998