

FILMS AND MUSIC
by Geoff Cowart



AHOY: Depp and his pirates

PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END (12A)

Captain Jack Sparrow is back in a seat-of-the-pants flurry of swashbuckling, pirate jokes and special effects. Don't believe this is the end, whatever the title may suggest.

ZODIAC (15)

Jake Gyllenhaal, Mark Ruffalo and Robert Downey Jr star in David Fincher's exhaustively researched thriller focusing on the unsolved Zodiac serial killings. Attention to detail is meticulous, but doesn't always make for exciting cinema.

MAGICIANS (15)

Mitchell and Webb, the stars of the delightful yet weird, voyeuristic TV series *Peep Show*, have taken a wrong turn with their debut movie. The film conjures a premise ripe with comic potential but breaks the spell by performing a vanishing act with the laughs.

BLACK SNAKE MOAN (15)

Samuel L. Jackson, Christina Ricci and Justin Timberlake star in this loopy tale of salvation. The story is delivered with the righteousness of a sermon that only makes the whole enterprise even more silly and unintentionally funny.

LOVEWRECKED (PG)

Lovewrecked is like countless other, unabashedly perky and formulaic romantic comedies. It's inoffensive and resolutely upbeat, with lots of eye candy for the target teenage girl audience.

28 WEEKS LATER (18)

A nerve-wracking, adrenaline-pumped sequel to Danny Boyle's bloodthirsty thriller *28 Days Later*. Spanish director Juan Carlos Fresnadillo expertly sustains the choking tension right up to the closing frames, surpassing the original picture.

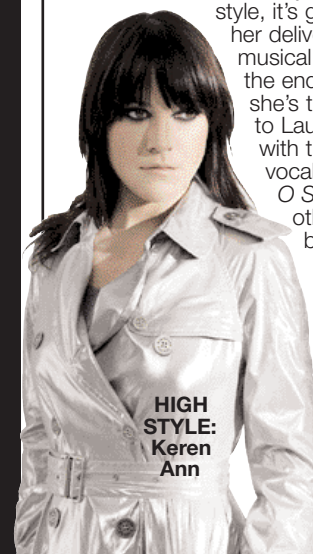
GOODBYE BAFANA (15)

This movie relives Nelson Mandela's years behind bars through the eyes of white Afrikaner James Gregory, the prison guard whose memoirs the film is based on. For all its historical interest and worthiness, it sheds almost no light on the two fascinating protagonists.

Keren Ann
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(EMI) ★★★☆☆



LAST week, I praised the superlative handclaps of Sondre Lerche. So I can't believe I'm doing it again with Miss Keren. The saucy *Lay Your Head Down* proves that, five albums later, Keren can sing and write a handsome ditty. Since she's already mastered the style, it's great to see her delivering with the musical goods. And by the end of the song, she's tipping her hat to Laurie Anderson with the repetitive vocal loops of *O Superman*. The other songs ain't bad either – and the drunken, maniacal *It Ain't No Crime* adds menace to this

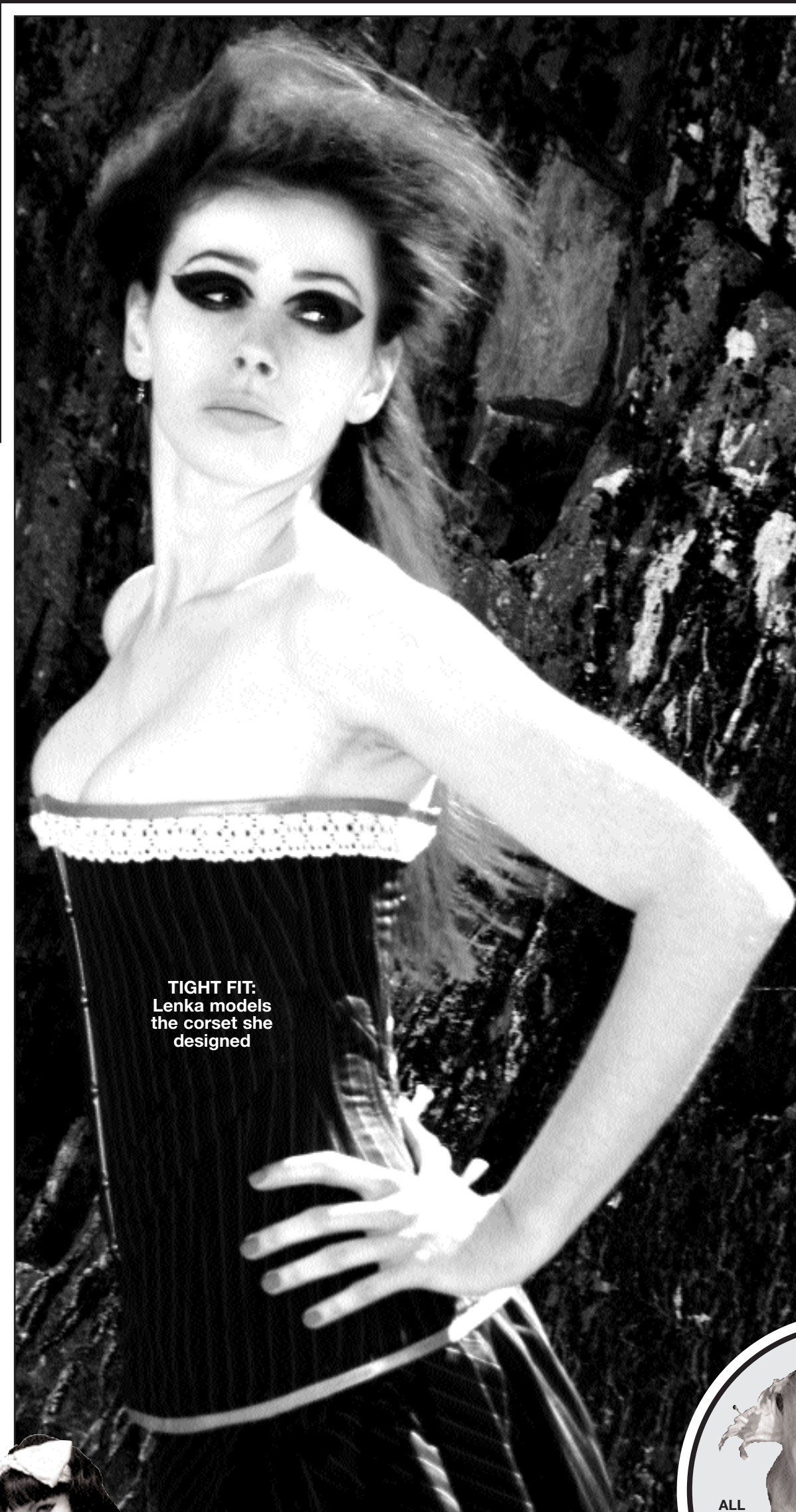


HIGH STYLE: Keren Ann

to this bittersweet, yet sickly-sweet, Israeli chanteuse.



ON TOP: Jen Russell



TIGHT FIT: Lenka models the corset she designed

A TOWERING ACHIEVEMENT

QUICKIE INTERVIEW ONE: Jen Russell, 24, who goes under the name Smokey Revolver, said: "My friend Clare and I have been performing together with stilts and fire – as well as making our own costumes – for three years. I love dressing and I love dancing so burlesque dancing was a logical step. We came to Soho for the festival – and we towered above the competition."



ALL SMILES: Trixie

ELEGANCE, GLAMOUR & BEAUTY

DESIGNER AND MODEL LENKA PADYSAKOVA HAS BEEN FOUGHT OVER BY ALEXANDER McQUEEN AND VIVIENNE WESTWOOD FOR HER DESIGNS. NOW SHE TELLS CHRISTIAN McLAUGHLIN JUST HOW SHE BECAME LONDON FASHION'S HOTTEST NEW THING – AND HOW SHE BROUGHT BURLESQUE TO SOHO

UP ON stage, 24-year-old Lenka strikes a pose. At home in Lewisham, she studies fashion design technology at the London College of Fashion and is on course to realise her dream of running her own fashion label.

Yet the allure of the burlesque scene has taken her life in a new direction. Mademoiselle Katarina, as she is known on stage, told me how she ended up at the Burlesque Festival's newcomers' contest at Neighbourhood, Acklam Road, Portobello, in May. "Burlesque is elegant, glamorous, and very, very feminine. I had never been exposed to it before coming to London, but I quickly became interested by watching other girls at the lady luck night at the Soho Revue. Their beauty was something natural I could feel inside me too.

"Since I was eight I designed and made clothes for my dolls and I was taught piano with the brilliant Stanislav Kostra for 12 years in my native Slovakia," she said.

"The elegance of music and the sophistication of the outfits are essential parts of burlesque, so I suppose it was never a world too far from my own.

"Late last year I began rehearsing to 1920s and 1930s music on my own. By January I was ready for my first performance, which was for my boyfriend Joe's birthday. I wore a 1940s skirt suit that I made and carried a briefcase.

The dance began with me reading a copy of

Woman's World magazine with the headline, Strip for your Husband.

"From there I started to take my clothes off, little by little, but not in a kitschy way. It's very sensual and modest. Joe said it was so good that I had to show the public.

"And so I did. I had a couple of lessons with Gwendoline Lamour, the



QUICK STUDY: Lenka shows off her own design

undisputed queen of British burlesque, and in May, at her night called Lamour at Volupte in Chancery Lane, I made my first performance in front of 100 people at a private dinner.

"I was nervous, but people were very complimentary, and so I decided to do it again at the newcomers' contest. What really spurred me on was that shortly after January Joe broke up with me.

"By carrying on with burlesque it was my way of saying to myself, 'No. I am still beautiful.' My friends and family don't know about it, however. I haven't told them because I don't think they would understand.

"Slovakia's attitudes are different and there isn't a history of burlesque there for them to see the difference between it and stripping. Burlesque is about feminine beauty, and I am proud of my body.

"But I haven't lost sight of my dream of having my own fashion label. I'm already in talks with lots of girls from the burlesque circuit to design their outfits. The road to London began when I was chosen from a class of 20 at fashion school in Slovakia, for a scholarship in Berlin. I worked very hard and the passion I had was not because my parents wanted me to do it, but from my heart.

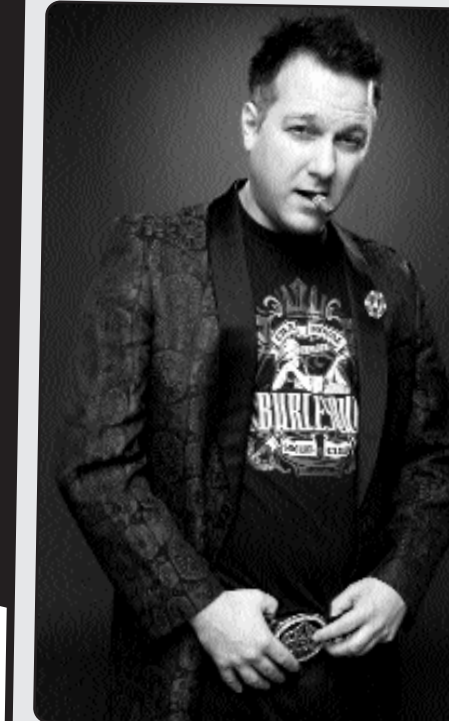
"The confidence and money the Berlin experience gave me provided the courage to make the final leap. London is fashion mecca and I had always read about it in magazines and dreamed as a teenager about moving here. I was accepted straight into the second year of the London College of Fashion and I studied corsetry at the Shepherd's Bush campus.

"That was how the apprenticeship at Vivienne Westwood's studio in Battersea began. Every student has to apply to a designer and I was accepted by Alexander McQueen the Friday before the application deadline.

"I love Vivienne's punk style. It's casual but also crazy, and I like the political and historical influences she allows to enter her designs.

"I'm learning a lot. They use me as a model as well and it's incredible to watch Vivienne alter clothing directly on my body. To think I am part of the work in progress is pretty amazing.

"I have come so far from my little town in Slovakia."
● For more details, visit: www.myspace.com/lenkap for fashion designs and www.myspace.com/mademoisellekatarina for burlesque events in London.



BUCKLE UP: Promoter Chaz Royal

VINTAGE AND RETRO CULTURE IS MAKING A COMEBACK

BURLESQUE IS back. From the Soho Revue Bar to the Working Men's Club in Bethnal Green, the resurgence of 1920s, 30s and 40s culture has never been so popular.

And now, thanks to Canadian promoter Chaz Royal, 28, London has its very own annual burlesque festival. The four day tease-a-thon completely sold out, waving its feathers at no fewer than 1,500 guests.

Royal said: "Vintage and retro culture has made a huge comeback. I used to promote the biggest ska festivals in the 1990s in North America, but by 2001 I made the shift into the burlesque scene, with its rhythm and blues, jazz and swing.

"New York has a burlesque festival and the Canadian scene is very happening, but London was always difficult to break into. The London festival is a way of integrating international acts while showcasing UK talent.

"It was the biggest success I have ever been a part of. Selling out at our first try was amazing, and the call for us to return at the finale at the Bush Hall was massive.

"That was probably the highlight of the show for me.

"Performers Roxy Velvet closed the show with *Whatever Lola Wants*, a tribute to Marilyn Monroe, in which they drenched the crowd with champagne. Next year we'd like to keep the same venues and see if we can drop the entry prices (£25-£40) so more people can experience the beautiful burlesque."

Coming up next: Burlesque Not Bombs on Sunday, July 8. Ten femme fatales use their secret weapons to blow your top.

Partial proceeds donated to international anti-war efforts. Tickets: £15 in advance, £20 on door. Dinner: 7pm-9pm. Showtime: 9pm-11pm with dancing afterwards until midnight. Contact: chazroyal@hotmail.com for bookings. At Soho Revue Bar, 11 Walkers Court, Brewer Street, Soho.

'BURLESQUE IS ABOUT FEMININE BEAUTY'

TRIXIE TALKS TURKEY

QUICKIE INTERVIEW TWO: Trixie Malicious, 27, a Canadian who lives in east London. Of her performance on the opening night at Madame Jojo's in Soho, when she pulled a bottle of vodka out of a paper turkey to fix a cocktail, Trixie (not her real name) said: "The turkey was about playing with the cliché of the bored housewife. I wanted to make her do something a bit surprising to break the boring routine. Burlesque is everything I love thrown together – comedy, vintage, dance, mockery, sex and music. The festival was great, it brought together a creative bunch of performers all hell-bent on teasing and pleasing."

informer review