

BR♥ADSIDE

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Mason's Own Vagina Warriors *Students Perform Vagina Monologues*

EMILY SHARRER
Style Editor

"Let's just start with the word: Vagina," announced Kathy Prudden, during the introduction for last weekend's *Vagina Monologues*, directed by senior theater major Nichi Lewis. Prudden was among 17 women from the George Mason University community who landed roles in Mason's production of Eve Ensler's famous play, which had three showings at Harris Theatre over the weekend.

Interspersed with hard-hitting vocals from females songstresses like Annie Lennox, Alanis Morissette and Queen Latifah, *The Vagina Monologues* provided sobering facts about genital mutilation, rape and abuse while also touching on "often fraught" topics like hair,

menstruation and orgasms.

The play, which has been performed at Mason since 2000, is done all over the world during the months of February and March to raise money for V-Day, a global non-profit organization that distributes funds to local programs that aim to stop violence against women.

Ensler started V-Day in 1998 and since then over 25 countries have participated in putting on their own productions of the play.

Proceeds from Mason's performance of *The Vagina Monologues* went to the Victims of Violence Fund as well as Women for Women International, a Washington-based organization founded by Zainab Salbi, a Mason alumna.

One of the best and most poignant parts of the weekend's performances was delivered by

Jessica Pipes, Kirsten Hamlett and Beth Wherry during this year's "Spotlight Monologue: Baptized." Each year, Ensler writes a new monologue calling attention to a current national issue. This year, "Baptized" highlighted the violence committed against the women of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where sexual violence and femicide is used as a weapon of war.

Kerri Buschbacher also delivered a compelling performance during "My Vagina Was My Village," a monologue based on a Bosnian woman's account of being gang raped.

Some of the night's best lighter monologues were delivered by Jessica Bailey, who had the entire audience screaming "cunt" during "Reclaiming Cunt," and Rachel Heyd whose near five minute



PHOTO BY COURTNEY ERLAND | PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Graduate student Deborah Lash performs "The Flood" during *The Vagina Monologues*.

"surprise triple orgasm" had people in hysterics during "The Woman Who Loved to Make Vaginas Happy."

Only three of the 17 actresses had been in a production of *The Vagina Monologues* before, and after Saturday's 2 p.m. performance, the girls had a 15-minute conversation with the audience

about their *Vagina Monologues* debut.

"This was absolutely life-changing," said Holly Nunn who performed the monologue "The Little Coochie Snorcher That Could."

"In our social norms, we don't talk about vaginas and to be able to get up on stage and say vagina as many times as we

did today is empowering," she said.

"It's more than just two days of performances," added Meg Nicholas, who performed in "The Vagina Workshop" monologue, "it's the experience you get working with a wonderful cast of women."

Chocolate Lovers Festival 2009

Read until you're full ...
Broadside's coverage of the
Chocolate Lovers Festival.
See the article below and
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A Chocolate Lover's Dream

Annual Fairfax Chocolate Festival Brings in Crowds for 17th Consecutive Year



PHOTO BY COURTNEY ERLAND | PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Warren Brown, the founder and owner of CakeLove answered questions and gave advice at City Hall for fans and aspiring bakers during the Chocolate Lovers Festival held in the City of Fairfax.

SHERELL WILLIAMS
Managing Editor

Hundreds of local area residents, Mason students, chocolate connoisseurs, candy makers, and chocolatiers enjoyed a warm two days at the annual Chocolate Lovers Festival in Fairfax, Va. this past weekend.

On Feb. 7, a pancake breakfast, hosted by the Kiwanis Club of Fairfax was held at Fire Station #3 where festivalgoers gave \$6 donations in order to grab a quick breakfast of regular or chocolate pancakes, sausage, and their choice of orange juice or milk.

Aside from the breakfast, vendors at tables surrounding the outer lying areas of the crowded floor sold candles, roses, stuffed animals, jewelry, clothing and other various items for purchase.

Food Network stars Warren Brown, Norman Davis, and Zane Beg participated in a Q&A session Saturday morning at City Hall that attracted over 50 cake enthusiasts and amateur bakers. The three chefs served as judges for this year's Chocolate Challenge, the annual two-day competition and display of professional and amateur created cakes.

Chocolate Challenge winners included local residents Amy Wheeler, who won Best in Taste in the Amateur Category with her chocolate purse cake and Kimberly Josh for Best in Show in the Amateur Category. Three of the four entries from Design Cuisine in Arlington, Va. beat out the competition in the

Professional Category while the Judges Award for Creativity went to third graders of Flint Hill School.

All three approached judging the challenge with their own set of criteria. "You have to look for mistakes [because] you buy with your eyes," said Davis.

Brown told the audience that he looked for structure, type of cake, moisture of the cake, and filling to determine which cake was the winner.

Unlike Brown and Davis, Beg is a cake artist and does not bake. He judged the challenge cakes on colors and creativity. "Anybody who bakes a cake, they have a vision in their mind. I want to see that," said Beg.

In addition to spilling Food Network Challenge spoilers for upcoming shows to be broadcast in later months, the trio answered general baking questions, as well as questions about their careers and experiences in the pastry world.

Davis and Beg are most known for their appearances on Food Network challenges such as Spooky Candy Halloween Cake, Disney Princess' Cakes, Disney Pixar Movies Cakes and Mystery Client Birthday Cake. Brown is the owner of CakeLove and Love Café in Washington.

Before opening CakeLove in 2002, Brown was a Health and Human Services lawyer, practicing law in the downtown Washington area. "I left that because I just wasn't satisfied, wasn't really into it," said Brown. "I love food. I love cooking. I wanted to make something I could share with people. Very slowly, [I] found my

way into owning a retail shop."

Brown was also the host of Food Network's Sugar Rush, where he traveled around Washington meeting and cooking with other pastry chefs. Davis blamed the high production costs that lead the show to be canceled in 2006. Brown is currently working on a new book titled *United Cakes of America: 50 Cakes for 50 States*, due out in the fall.

"Don't think you can cook, but you can't bake," Brown told the audience. "If you love baking, you can get to the point where you understand the basic principles of what's going on. You can freestyle it after that," said Brown.

Despite being listed as a co-host for the demonstration following the Q&A, Beg, who is also a real-estate agent, left the session early. Before leaving, he stressed the importance of communicating when working with a partner, using his experiences with Davis as an example. Together, Davis and Beg run *The Sweet Life* in Annandale, Va. in addition to competing in the Food Network Challenges.

Tips from the chefs included using potato starch as an ingredient to add additional sweetness to cakes and waiting a day before eating cakes in order to improve the taste.

"If you bake two cakes and you eat one that day and save one for later, the one you ate won't be as good as the one you

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*Check out Connect2Mason.com for video and
photos from this year's Chocolate Lovers Festival!*

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