



Pick of the Week: Actors Are So Competitive

by Nirmala Nataraj, *SF Weekly*, June 7, 2006

In 1976, Keith Johnstone created Theatresports, a playful performance format that pits teams of thespians against each other in what can only be termed an "act-off." Major Theatresports leagues can now be found all over the world, but BATS Improv's Battle-of-the-Bay Theatresports Tournament puts San Francisco on the map. In June and July, members of the prominent improv group hash it out in a medley of off-the-cuff games, songs, and scenes. Teams are composed from the main company and represent local regions, with wacky names like "The South Bay/Peninsula Punks" and "The Bernal Heights Politically Correct Assumption Squad." Then they wing it before live audiences with larks like the "Life Game," a viewer interaction show that spins mundane stories into kooky reenactments, and "Improvised Musicals," which produces spontaneous genres like "disco romance" and "Elvis musical." If that weren't enough, the champions spar with the L.A. Theatresports team in a concluding battle of wits and speed on Aug. 26.