



Playing backup, from left: country singer Celine Dion, Gloria Estefan and Shania Twain.

Stealing the show

Who's the biggest diva of them all? Tuesday evening in New York City's Beacon Theatre, five stars sang in a live, televised performance for the cable music channel VH-1. Included in the "Divas Live" lineup were Celine Dion, Gloria Estefan, Shania Twain, Mariah Carey and Aretha Franklin. No singer was supposed to get top billing.

But divas will be divas. VH-1 producers scheduled the show to close with Franklin's trademark "Natural Woman," and then fade out with the gospel tune "Testimony." But shortly after the concert passed its 11 p.m. curfew, Franklin suddenly commandeered the show.

From center stage, the Queen of Soul launched into a 17-minute version of the gospel song, leaving the other divas as backup singers. Two minutes into the impromptu rendition, flabbergasted VH-1 officials began rolling credits and halted the broadcast. But Franklin kept belting it out. She thanked the head of Arista Records, praised her band and finally sashayed off stage alone around 11:25 p.m.

"We had no idea when it would end," says Jeff Gaspin, the evening's executive producer. "Sometimes there is an issue of who is the bigger diva, but that wasn't the case last night."

VH-1 will rebroadcast the show, its highest-rated ever, today and tomorrow. And what were the other divas to do? Dion, diva-of-the-moment, thanks to her hit theme song from the movie "Titanic," danced the Charleston and boldly matched some of Franklin's vocals.

Country singer Twain, a somewhat nouveau diva, stayed shyly in the background on stage. Meanwhile, the more seasoned Estefan ventured a few salsa steps alongside surprise guest Carole King, who scooted next to the pianist to bang out a few measures.

That left Carey aimlessly wandering apart from the pack, though she managed to chime in the occasional choral refrain, "Jesus!"

Says Estefan, "That was Aretha's thing, and we were just trying to hang in there. After all, she's the diva."

— Wendy Bounds, *The Wall Street Journal*

MARILYN AND ANDY

Who is the preeminent American sexual icon of the century? Without much doubt it's Marilyn Monroe, immortalized after her death by Andy Warhol in an endless series of silkscreened portraits done from original photographic images.

Not missing a beat, The Andy Warhol Museum will exhibit "Orange Marilyn," done in 1964, for one day only, Wednesday. The classic portrait is en route to auction at Sotheby's New York on May 14.

Andy Warhol's "Orange Marilyn" will be on display at the Warhol Museum, North Side, prior to its auction date at Sotheby's in New York.

Tobias Meyer, international head of Sotheby's contemporary art department,

Queen of Soul shows younger singers how to get respect



Aretha Franklin: Her impromptu singing flabbergasted VH-1 officials.

who will be at the Warhol Wednesday, calls "Orange Marilyn" "the sexiest image on earth" and the orange background used in it "Warhol's most classic color." Why not? He's selling it.

The work comes from a German collection that was one of the first in Europe to include American pop art 30 years ago. Sotheby's estimates it will bring \$4 million to \$6 million. Stop by between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. You may want to bid.

— Donald Miller

GEORGIA ON HER MIND

Can you believe those people in Georgia? Jane Fonda makes one little comment about her adopted home state and they are up in arms. Here's what she said, you be the judge:

"There is a lot of rural poverty. In the northern part of Georgia, children are starving to death. People live in tarpaper shacks with no indoor plumbing... It's what makes working in Georgia very interesting because we are, in some ways, like some developing countries."

Seem like Fonda's speech to a roundtable organized by the U.N. Population Fund angered Gov. Zell Miller, who fired off a scathing letter to the actress, saying her comparison was "simply ridiculous and reflects a prejudice I am shocked to learn you hold."

"Maybe the view from your penthouse apartment is not as clear as it needs to be," Miller said, referring to the downtown Atlanta flat atop CNN Center that Fonda shares with husband Ted Turner.

For the record, Fonda quickly apologized.

"I was wrong. I should not have said what I said... My comments were inaccurate and ill-advised."

COMEDY IS HARD

There's bad taste — and then there's O.J. Simpson. The Juice pulled a practical joke on TV host Ruby Wax when she interviewed him in Los Angeles for her British talk show. Simpson pretended to "stab" Wax with a banana. People magazine reports. Wax told *The London Sun*: "O.J. said he had a 'surprise' for me, and I genuinely was surprised." The scene airs April 29 on the BBC.

MEDICAL NEWS

The 4-month-old daughter of actress Hunter Tylo, who won a lawsuit after she was fired from "Melrose Place" for becoming pregnant, has a rare form of eye cancer.

Katya, who was born Jan. 15, suffers from retinoblastoma, an eye cancer that strikes about one in 15,000, Tylo said.

The disease typically appears in children under 5 years old. Treatments include the removal of the eye and chemotherapy.

Tylo, 34, won a \$4.9 million judgment in December after she was fired from the prime-time soap opera for becoming pregnant with Izabella, her third child. A judge upheld that award April 2.

— From wire reports

WALKING ON SUNSHINE

The organizers of the fourth annual Neurofibromatosis Clinics Association 5K Walk-A-Long in Schenley Park had few worries about the weather for today's event.

It couldn't possibly be any worse than last year's. "Last year's walk was a disaster until volunteers moved the sign-in and ribbon-cutting festivities inside to escape the pouring rain," said Cornell McMullin, president of the NFCA.

John Shumway of KDKA-TV, Chuck Aber of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" and Post-Gazette town crier Emily Bell will be among the celebrities at the fund-raiser.

Neurofibromatosis is a genetic disorder of the nervous system that can cause tumors, disfigurement, blindness, deafness, learning disabilities, paralysis and cancer.

Sign-in starts at 9 a.m., followed by a ribbon-cutting at 9:45 a.m. at the oval next to the ice rink in the park. Walkers, who line up sponsors for the event, will qualify for raffles and will be entertained by clowns and costumed mascots from local organizations.

— Kevin Kirkland