Queer as Folk

Pride Month kicks off with a Ball of fun

BY JACK KARP

Two of the most vibrant and active communities in San Francisco (aside from those who voted for Ruben on American Idol) are undoubtedly its gay population and its artists. For the next month, these groups come together with all the color, electricity, and excitement of a fireworks show at a Crayola factory for the sixth annual National Queer Arts Festival, which is for many people the pride of Pride Month.

Like the diversity it celebrates, the National Queer Arts Festival includes something for everyone. There'll be art exhibitions, films, dance performances, drama, and even trapeze at each of the nine participating venues across the city. Highlights of this year’s fete include stand-up comedy by three of the country’s premier Latina queer comics — Marga Gomez, Monica Palacios, and Carmelita Tropicana — and the return of last year’s hit cabaret Fresh Meat, which serves up a performance pupu platter of homo hip hop, tranny glam rock, and what’s billed as the world’s first transgender gospel choir. Of course, there’s also a drag contest.

The festival kicks off on Saturday with the QBall, an opening-night “gay-la” featuring live appearances by past and present performing artists, plus receptions for arts collective Point Blank’s...