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Murder mystery dinner show emerges for Halloween

by Jennifer Khedaroo

Oct 21, 2015 | 414 views | 0 comments | 12 shares



The theme for this year's Halloween show will center around 'American Horror Story.'

Love a good murder mystery? Why not combine your taste for suspense with a delicious meal and participate in a spooky murder mystery dinner? You and your friends will witness a crime, and you must figure out who is the murderer through a series of performances and a four-course dinner.

Orchestrated by the Killing Kompany, the show is called 'Murder at the Halloween Ball,' and it will take place at Riccardo's By the Bridge, located at 21-01 24th Avenue in Astoria. The Killing Kompany has been performing shows at Riccardo's since 1999.

Jon Avner, lead actor, creates a brand new show based on pop culture for each performance that the company does. For 'Murder at the Halloween Ball,' he is hoping to do a parody of 'American Horror Story.'

"They're fun shows because each show is brand new and we only do it once," Avner said. "People never see the same show twice."

"There are new jokes, new plots, new actors and new musical pieces, so it's really like a once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the show," he added.

The cast consists of Avner, an actor who appeared in a substantial number of productions and also does voiceover work for video games, as well as Crystin Gilmore, who was celebrated for her performance in 'The Color Purple.' Other actors include Rori Noguee, who appeared in the off-Broadway production of Showgirls; Darin Chumbley, a Broadway dancer and John Nelson, an actor and professional rapper who has appeared in TV shows such as 'Ally McBeal' and 'Saturday Night Live.' In the past, the killing kompany has had cat members such as Connie Britton, who now stars in ABC's 'Nashville.'

During Riccardo's cocktail hour, the actors will be introduced to the guests. By the way, wearing a costume to the dinner is completely encouraged.

There is an unlimited selection of barbecue ribs, Italian sausages and peppers, fried calamari, chicken and Spanish rice, meatballs, baked ziti and more hors d'oeuvres. As the actors mingle with the guests, the idea of a plot starts to arise.

Later on, everyone sits at the table and the actors are able to begin act one. For safety reasons, the company distributes a message to all diners to alert them of any sounds they might hear, such as gunshots.

Within the first act, a murder takes place and the police finds evidence to track down back to suspects.

It's a time where audience participation kicks in. Audience members are selected to act out certain role.

Throughout the night, activity intensifies with periods of dancing while guests ponder who the murderer can be.

The dinner provided includes choices such as a fruit cocktail supreme, garden tossed salad, soup with the choice of minestrone, consomme or Greek lemon; prime ribs of Beef Au Jus, Chicken Francese, salmon filet, potato croquette, broccoli and ice cream.

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During the second act, guests learn more about incriminating evidence while more crimes still get committed. The actors also perform musical numbers for their audience which relates to the overall plot of the night. By dessert, all the crimes have occurred and the guests must guess who the killer could be.

To round out the show, the fake police returns to make the arrest of the suspect, but not without a little bit of back-and-forth.

Those who guessed the correct suspect will be rewarded with a prize, most likely a pair of tickets to the off-Broadway show of 'Drunken Shakespeare.' There will also be prizes for best costume and best actor for audience members.

If a murder mystery dinner tickles your fancy, the Killing Kompany also does an overnight show that runs throughout New Year's Eve. For more information about the dinner at Riccardo's or upcoming events, head to KillingKompany.com.

The show will take place on October 30 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$45 per person.

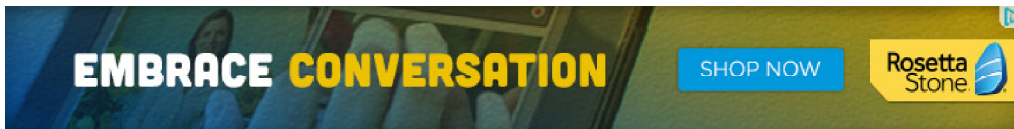
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