

October 5, 2015

Of Lobsters and Men

Don DeLillo, the Grateful Dead, and the New York Film Festival.

By Eric Alterman 

I'm also pleased to be able to report that David Johansen/Buster Poindexter did a brand new show at the Café Carlyle last week and it was pretty great; better, I must admit, than the previous one I saw three times and liked but which had grown a bit stale on the vine, to mix metaphors. This one had a slightly less obscure set list and funnier jokes. Well, they were funny for being, in many cases, terrible. Tuesday night was critics' night, and I didn't go then. Apparently it went badly. David/Buster quoted Murray Kempton (without attribution) about how critics like to shoot the wounded after the battle. The *Times* review even took note of the fact that the show's "only problem was an audience that largely refused to get into the music's antic spirit," and added, "The coolness of his reception was undeserved." You can say that again. With a tight but game band of Brian Koonin on guitar, Richard Hammond on upright bass, Ray Grappone on drums, and Brian Mitchell on piano, they took their sweet time with rarities like "Yip Rock Heresy" by Slim Gaillard, "Zombie Jamboree" by Conrad Eugene Mague Jr." and "Mojo Hanna" by Gay Hale, Clarence Paul and Barbara Paul, together with old-timey crowd-pleaser/sing-alongs like "Volare," "Piece of My Heart," and "That's Life." There's really something wrong with you if you can't enjoy this show, assuming you have the big bucks to be there in the first place. The man/men give/s new meaning to the term "consummate entertainer." Buster will be at the Carlyle through October 10, at which point he will be followed by Kurt Elling doing a Sinatra-themed show beginning October 13. (Those tickets, like those for Buster, run \$55-125.)