

True Blue Bards

I'm a great fan of Lucy Lawless, Renee O'Connor and Hudson Leick -- some very successful and beautiful modern day lady bards in our ruthless modern day concrete jungle. Xena is refreshing, and it is more complex and full of love and fun than, say, Red Sonja. The theme of the show seems to be that love, friendship and sisterhood can triumph over the greatest of evils. I find the believability and realness of the female characters on the show to be without prejudice. They are well rounded, diverse and different from each other. Gabrielle reminds me of the sister I never had. Joxer reminds me of the part of Sir Robin in the spoof Monte Python's Holy Grail and is drowning in the stereotypical role of court jester. The character could use some development. Intelligence can be comical, too.

The scriptwriters, probably the men, don't often do the subject material, abstract concepts or character history much justice, and some seem a bit like lame-brains depending on which episode they've written and who wrote it. All in all, however, it is much more interesting, complex and entertaining than its cousin, Hercules, not to mention somewhat more realistic. Hercules lacks historical credibility thanks to more lame-brain writing, and the main character in one half baked episode did violence to a woman. He should've washed that Amazon's feet.

I would say that Ms. Lawless (but not Xena) is a worthy contender for Cleopatra, even with her light skin. With her style, grace and expertise, she gives an excellent interpretation of royalty. Xena is the kind of woman that (depending on the episode) that could've and probably would've given the Amazons a bad name, if her ability to bend men to her will were realistic (which it isn't). Ms Lawless isn't. Renee O'Connor is intimidating competition for Taliesin, and would've given him a serious run for his money. She has great strength as both an actress and a comedienne, and her smile and the mischievous gleam she gets in her eyes lend credibility to the bardic character she is playing. Ms. Leick does an expert job of playing a multitalented (but confused) character obsessed with justice, vengeance and full of righteous anger. I have a difficult time seeing her character as a wholehearted villain, even though she plays the vindictive and murderous victim very well. I know all about the rage that goes with losing a parent at a very young age. I loved her comedy in the episode where Xena and Gabby ended up in the afterlife. All three are agile, intelligent and convincing as women warriors.

I especially like the emphasis on love, friendship, sisterhood and honor in the show. I'm sure this is probably due to every woman's contribution on the show. I loved the episode where it was asked what could be stronger than courage, and Xena said "love." Although I would have to say that friendship might be the only thing stronger than love, as it can spark love back to life even when love has gone between friends. I also like the conflict between Xena and Ares (god of war or the devil), her probable father (and apparently a child molester). It is very battle with warmongers and could explain why Xena kills so many people. Ms. Lawless lends strength and credibility to this role of Xena's. I liked the show with the character "Eli" and I liked the show where Gabrielle and Xena made up after Xena tried to kill Gabrielle.

In real life, the word "Amazons" is a catchall title for women warriors who band together to battle batterers, rapists and warmongers, daily. In some ways, the show is everywoman's story. From teenage boys bringing guns and drugs to school to elderly women battling elder abuse, we

all could be considered Amazons. It seems we all have to battle those who prey on women, whether we want to or not. Justice seems to be so hard even right after rape, if we live through it. We could not do it without friendship, and it is obvious to me that Ms. Lawless, Ms. O'Connor, and Ms. Leick have a friendship that is 100% genuine and worth more than gold. The love between the three main women characters on the show carries his show.

Perhaps the best example of some real life Amazon princesses I can think of would be White Buffalo Calf Woman and Spider Woman of many Native American legends, especially Lakota or Oglala-Sioux. Apparently, a man who attempted to sexually assault White Buffalo Calf Woman, ended up a pile of bones as soon as he tried to touch her inappropriately. (Many plentiful and interesting resources are available on the internet.) I would nominate Gloria Estefan, Whoopi Goldberg, Buffy Sainte Marie, Melissa Etheridge and Jewel also to be bards. I know some amazing women stars personally, but their names would mean nothing to the reader: (like Joules Graves, Polly Keary, and Bonnie Jazzmyn Gautreaux.) I would like to see these women portrayed on or invited to the show. Perhaps Xena and Gabby could be kidnapped by some crazy ship's captain who's after their money and free service and wants to wine and dine them into submission because he's frightened of them. Maybe he takes them to America, by accident. It could've happened. Or, I would like to see maybe a character named "Justice," maybe as a god on the show. Perhaps you could use Cupid or Aphrodite, or make him or her judges over Xena and Gabrielle's performance and future.

Although the show stretches the truth of men's recorded "history" -- not too badly, however -- (it never claimed to be factual, and men are not generally famous for being truthful and objective anyhow,) It impresses me with the accuracy of women's relations. I love Lucy Lawless, Renee O'Connor and Hudson Leick and the risks they take on this show by being unconventional, as well as the others. I think Xena kisses men too much, and perhaps the minimal armor and dress is going a bit overboard. Women's friendships on so many visual stories are not well established or convincing in many cases, and it's a nice treat to see two women friends fighting back together. I am inspired by this show to get rid of the cigarettes and start working out. Not bad for a few white women.

You're an inspiration to us all.

Thanks Ladies.

Peace, Love, Freedom and Happy Endings,
Theresa Lennon