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The audience liked the boy called Bert

Suzanne Carbone
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IT WAS just like the old days when ol' **Bert Newton** sauntered on stage in his tuxedo at Her Majesty's on Monday to host the inaugural **Rob Guest** Endowment Concert. The old days when hosts were funny. Moonface launched right in, saying: "We're going to paint our faces black for a minstrel show. We know what people want." Laughter. This coming from the showbiz legend who created a Logies incident in 1979 by telling **Muhammad Ali**: "I like the boy." Later on, Bert said that wife **Patti** was in the audience, then came the knockout punch: "I hope she remembers she's here." More laughter. That was a reference to Patti's unfortunate memory blackouts that render her dazed and confused. There was no confusion about the winner of the Rob Guest Endowment Award, created to honour the memory of the performer in the theatre in the sky. The judges chose the exotic **Danielle Matthews**, and supporters of the drama-laden Victorian College of the Arts are strolling with a spring in their step because she graduated from their prized institution in 2004. As Bert joked, Danielle won a trip to New York and by next year there should be enough money for a return ticket.

Man, it's tough

SOME people might already know the answer but **Christine Nixon** will reignite the gender wars today by pondering "Is it really a man's world?" at the BrainLink Women of Achievement Awards at the Park Hyatt. The former chief commish has forged ahead in jobs where testosterone overpowers oestrogen, so hers will be inspiring words. BrainLink is a support group for people with brain disorders and one of the award finalists is someone who's navigated through the testosterone-fuelled world, **Bev Brock**, the former partner of **Peter Brock**. Bev, a patron of Road Trauma Support Services, is also noted for her community work and motivational speaking. May the best and brainiest woman win.

Vision of splendour

EXCITING news at the Spring Street Asylum! Sorry to exaggerate, but cameras will be installed in the upper and lower houses to stream all the action over the internet from next year. At present, there is only online audio and matching snaps of meddlers from teams **Brumby** and **Baillieu**, but a tender has gone out for "high-definition" cameras to capture the sights and sounds. There will be four cameras on the floor, one for the speaker and one "wide angle", which could be to accommodate girths and egos.

It's fascinating

WATCH the f-word during the races. Milliner **Paris Kyne** says there is no such thing as a fascinator - it's a head-piece - and, as for the hatinator, that's an invention by marketing geniuses. Paris was at the launch of a photo exhibition of his creations at Melbourne's MARS Gallery. While hats are a sure sign of spring, so is the appearance of **Hal Salter**, the racecourse stayer who darts about in a pinstripe suit and bowler hat. Paris invited Hal as an "f" - for friend.

scarbone@theage.com.au
Phone: 9601 3192
Fax: 9601 2327

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