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Vamping vampires in drag

By MARILYN STASIO

REMEMBER when "gay" used to have two meanings? *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom*, a giddy little drag show at the Provincetown Playhouse (133 Macdougall St.), makes a brave flutter at bringing back gay laughter to the stage.

The campy show - which consists of two one-act comedies that originated at the Limbo Theater - is only sporadically successful.

But it has one wonderful asset in the person of Charles Busch, an ingratiating performer who not only wrote both plays but also stars in several of the female roles.

In *Sleeping Beauty or Coma*, a fairy-tale treatment of the "mod" fashion world of swinging London in the mid-'60s, Busch is endearingly eccentric as a young fashion designer who hustles her way to the top, only to find tragedy at the end of the rainbow.

John Glaser has designed some smashing period outfits and Elizabeth Katherine Carr has designed some smashing period wigs for this outrageous bit of nonsense, and Busch looks particularly fetching in mini-skirt and beehive hairdo, dancing the Swim amidst a chic crowd in Nehru jackets, paillettes, and love beads.

Vampire Lesbians of Sodom is a more ambitious and even sillier bit of fluff, set in Hollywood and featuring Busch and Meghan Robinson as rival vamps lusting after the same juicy virgins. Both statuesque performers look stunning shaking their ostrich plumes and bugle-beaded bosoms at one another, and Busch's droll characterization of a vindictive vampire is very funny indeed.

Most of the show's humor hangs on dressing and vamping, and one waits in vain for the literary conceits and clever phrase-mongering that makes Charles Ludlam and his Ridiculous Theatrical Company so amusing. Or even some original music and more flamboyant staging to push the sicklier jokes onto their feet.

As a camp fashion show, though, the show is fun - and Busch is divine.
