



The most amazing sale of the day was of one of the few metal chakrams used by Lucy Lawless during the filming of Xena, which sold for a staggering \$40,000.

Above: It's hard to believe Alex Tydings and the Goddess of Love are one and the same person.

Below: The familiar face of Karl Urban – cherub and emperor...



Towards the end of her time on stage, Stansfield addressed the much-debated issue of whether or not there would be a *Xena* movie. "There have been rumours," she stated, "but I don't know... actually I do know," she teased cryptically, "but I can't tell you... But I think it's a great idea!"

Next on the programme was a video salute to Aphrodite, put to the music of Aqua's 'Barbie Girl', followed closely by the appearance of the person behind the valley-girl goddess herself. Dressed in plain trousers and a top, with her hair in pig-tails and looking very unlike the Goddess of Love, Alexandra Tydings came on stage to a standing ovation. "I'm so excited," she exclaimed once the room had quietened down. "This is really great!"

Amongst other things, Tydings talked about her recent guest appearance in the new series *Sheena: Queen of the Jungle*, commenting that she actually "got to wear clothes" for the role! Turning to her time in the *Xenaverse*, Tydings pointed out that although Aphrodite was often presented as an airhead, she was definitely no fool. "My first *Hercules* episode had me coming out of a clam shell and saying, 'Tubular!', and that was great, but Aphrodite is manipulative; she's crafty, she's sexy. She was almost killed – but like they say, you can't kill love, baby!"

The actor took time to pose for photographs and answered every question as fully as she could. At the end, a couple of fans approached the stage with gifts for her, which she received with what looked like genuinely pleasant surprise. "Ooh, presents!" she exclaimed in a voice which more resembled her *Xena* alter ego.

Tydings' parting words were straight from the

heart: "Thank you all so much – you guys rock!" she said. Not surprisingly, the crowd gave her a standing ovation as she gracefully left the stage.

Next up on stage and the last guest to appear that afternoon was Ted Raimi, who was introduced by a musical tribute to Joxer, put to the music of 'I Wanna Be A Cowboy'. As usual, Raimi was hilarious, providing a very entertaining hour of anecdotes, comical musings and a sneak peek into what he's up to now that Joxer has hung up his hat.

Hundreds of fans returned later that evening for the cabaret, and they were not to be disappointed. The first part was billed as 'Claire & Alexandra's XXX Review', and it soon transpired that their act lived up to its name. The actresses came on stage dressed in bowler hats, black tuxedo jackets and not much else. They read a number of pieces of *Xena* fanfiction written by some of the more well-known names in the *Xena* fan circles. Their act was risqué and very entertaining, and was met with yet another standing ovation from the appreciative audience.

The second half of the evening's programme featured the musical talents of Robert Trebor, Tim Omundson, Karl Urban and Ted Raimi, backed by the Creation Big Band and the vocal group Solstice. Highlights included an Elvis-like Omundson involving the audience in 'Minnie The Moocher', and Ted Raimi's 'Papa Loves Mambo' accompanied by a video montage of his flamboyant character of Jace from *Lyre, Lyre, Hearts On Fire*. At the end of the song the rest of the guests came back on stage for a sing-along to round off a wonderful evening of entertainment.

Sunday began early with a charity breakfast with the guests, an event which was, not surprisingly, booked out months in advance. The convention proper kicked off again at 1.30pm, and the usual music videos were followed by the day's first guests, Ebonie (M'lila) Smith and Tsianina (Varia) Joelson, who amused the audience with tales of their appearances on *Xena*.

Another charity auction then followed, and during this time autograph seekers queued to get pictures signed by Ted Raimi, Adrienne Wilkinson, Alexandra Tydings, Claire Stansfield and Hudson Leick, who were only too happy to oblige their fans. It also happened to be Hudson's birthday, and she jubilantly offered chocolate cake to the eager fans waiting in line.

Following the charity auction, New Zealand actress Darien (Cyene) Takle entertained the audience with anecdotes of her life and her delight in playing *Xena's* mum. Takle was followed by *Xena* Editor Rob Field, who turned up with a highly amusing tape of bloopers from *Xena's* sixth season.

The final video montage was an extra-long overview of the entire series of *Xena: Warrior Princess*, eliciting wild cheers from the room, which was now full to the brim with fans hardly able to contain their excitement at the impending highlights of the weekend.