

# Tim Miller Invites Us to Peek into His Glory Box at Middlebury College Nov 11



BY WILLIAM J. MANN

Imagine for a moment that you lived in a country where your boyfriend or girlfriend, life partner (whatever you want to call them) could be deported at any moment, there would be a knock at the door and your lover would be pulled from your bed and taken away. Imagine having to separate because of the laws of that country won't allow you to stay together. Imagine that you and your lover would both have to quit your jobs, sell the house and leave that nation to make a life together in a more civilized country. What country is this? Russia? Iran? Nope, sorry, you don't make it to the final round of Jeopardy! That country is the United States of America and that is the situation that all bi-national lesbian and gay couples face in America. Unlike most western countries (Canada, Australia, Holland, England, France, Sweden and many others) that have begun to honor gay relationships with immigration rights, in the US, where lesbian and gay partnerships are given none of the same special privileges that all heterosexual marriages are afforded, when an American citizen falls in love with someone from another country they will quickly realize what a homophobic American pickle

they've gotten themselves into. Solo performer Tim Miller dives into this charged personal is way political material in his new show GLORY BOX which will be performed at Middlebury College November 11, 2001. In a work that is disarmingly funny, pissed off, sexy and challenging Miller explores in GLORY BOX his six year relationship with his Australian boyfriend Alistair McCartney. GLORY BOX charts their struggles to make a life together in the United States, a country that does have any kind of immigration rights for committed long-term gay relationships. No stranger to controversy (Miller was one of the notorious NEA 4, the four performances artists who had their grants taken away in 1990 for the content of their work) Miller's performances have been at the center of the culture wars, the fights against AIDS and the struggle for lesbian and gay culture for all of the 90's. But all that pales by comparison to what Millers says will be "the fight of my life" as he tries to claim his equal rights as an American citizen in the most intimate of places, his committed love relationship. I caught up with Miller in cyberspace while he was in Iowa for the first performances of GLORY BOX.

## SO WHAT'S A GLORY BOX? IT SOUNDS NASTY!

Well, it's not what you think it is! A glory box is what people in Australia call a hope chest. GLORY BOX is a funny, sexy and charged exploration of my journeys through the challenge of love, gay marriage, and the struggle for immigration rights for gay people and their partners. I looked at my life and pulled out some of the funny and sexy narratives of how my sense of relationships was shaped (i.e. fucked up) by the culture I grew up in. The piece dives into all kinds of juicy stuff from a wild story about asking another boy to marry me in 3rd grade (he beat me up and jammed a Twinkie down my throat) to the harrowing travails of being in a bi-national relationship with my Australian partner Alistair (the US government beats me up and jams its homophobic laws denying gay partners immigration rights). I think I preferred the Twinkie! I hope that GLORY BOX leads the audience on an intense and humorous journey into the complexity of the queer human heart that knows no boundary.

## WHY GLORY BOX NOW?

Well, the clock is ticking

on Alistair's student visa and we don't know what to do next. I have been so freaked out and challenged in the last couple of years by our struggle to keep Alistair in the US, that I decided to fight back and make a kick ass piece that I really hope will let the audience know how completely without civil rights lesbian and gay relationships are. I feel like people really don't understand how completely gay people's relationships are in a second class position to those of straight people. It is the way I've felt my rights be most challenged as a US citizen, the fact that I may be forced to leave my own country to be with the man I love. A bill has been introduced in US Congress (Permanent Partners Immigration Reform Bill H.R 690) that would give couples like Alistair and I immigration rights. It's being sponsored by dozens of democrat congresspeople, but could never pass in the current congress. So far not a single republican has sponsored the bill, but a boy can dream!

HOW ARE YOU FEELING ABOUT THE VERMONT SUPREME COURT DECISION AND THE CIVIL UNION LEGISLATION? DOES THIS CHANGE THINGS FOR YOU AND ALISTAIR?

As I come to do GLORY BOX in Vermont, I feel like I am coming to the ONE free state in the US. The positive decision from the Vermont Supreme Court on Lesbian and gay relationships and the resulting Civil Union legislation was very good news, though not the grand slam I had hoped for. It is HUGE that the Vermont Supreme Court has decided that lesbian and gay couples should have the same rights that heterosexual married couples have under state law in Vermont. It is the best law of any state for gay relationships, but still carrying only most of the hundreds of state special rights afforded marriage and NONE of the 1049 federal rights including, of course, immigration. The Vermont legislation won't help Alistair and I or any of the thousands of bi-national couples one bit, sad to say.

TELL ME ABOUT THE PIECE. HOW DO YOU GET AT THIS VERY HOT MATERIAL ABOUT BI-NATIONAL COUPLE'S SITUATION, WHICH IS PROBABLY NEWS FOR LOTS OF PEOPLE? PLUS, HOW DO YOU MAKE IT ENTERTAINING?

I'm told it's my most enjoyable show I've done!!! GLORY BOX is both the