

## [Exit Cherie & Yolanda]

Hey Everybody, Yolanda here.

I have two life goals: to be a professional entertainer, and to meet a man to partner up with. I have had a very difficult time realizing these two goals in my life. At the time of moving to Vermont, I had lived in New York City for over 10 years trying to realize my dreams. I was a lot younger then and more unfocused, but ambitious. Although I did many things in "show biz", I never was able to create an act that had the power of Yolanda and the Plastic Family. As my act grew, and Vermont supported my growth, I began to feel the urge to go back to New York City. I felt as if I had unfinished business with New York City and that now I had an act that was marketable. Eventually I began to play in the city fairly regularly, and I just began to feel that it was time to give it another shot [after all, I'm not getting any younger!] I've been here since June, and I'm getting noticed and am getting gigs that I want. That makes me happy.

My other goal also drove me back to the city. In Vermont, I found it impossible to find someone to date. Again, I'm a lot older than I was which always makes that prospect difficult, but I also felt that my "fame" stood in the way. I was always a "big ol' drag queen", no matter who I would meet. There is a lot more to me than that. I have a big heart, I'm a romantic guy, not bad lookin, a dedicated boyfriend and I really need someone to share my life with. I felt that moving to New York City would at least give me the opportunity to be anonymous when I want to be. Drag is a double-edged sword in my life. I love it, but it also presents many problems. I felt that in New York City there would be enough people that I could find another freaky man to pair up with. So far I have been dating and (gasp!) having sex again.

That's basically all there is to it. New York City is a difficult place to live, even more so now after September 11, and I have questioned my decision many times since moving back. Last week I finally broke through and really believe that I am supposed to be here.

Thank you my beautiful friends. I do love Vermont and the GLBT community there. You have been so good to me. Please wish me well as I do my best to make difficult changes that will bring me closer to my life goals.

With all my love,

*Yolanda*

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If anyone had told me when I moved to Vermont 12 years ago this past summer that I would end up a drag queen doing cabaret shows and co-hosting a popular public access television program that has now been on the air for six years – I would have said they were crazy. But that is what happened and I'm very happy and grateful that it did.

The "Queen City" of Burlington, and indeed the Green Mountain State itself, has proved to be a very nurturing environment for me to develop my now-famous alter ego – Miss Cherie Tartt. The support that I have received from friends and the community has been overwhelming.

From my first appearances in benefits for Vermont CARES and my own cabaret shows, to hooking up with Yolanda and the creation of *The Cherie and Yolanda Show*, the journey has been truly memorable.

My cabaret shows, most of which benefited local organizations such as Vermont CARES, the Chittenden County Emergency Food Shelf, COTS (Committee On Temporary Shelter), and Out in the Mountains, began on Labor Day in September 1994 with my first show "Cherie Goes into Labor ... Day." That was followed in succession by: "Cherie's Jubilee," "Cherie Gets Stuffed ... Again!" "A Merry Cherie Christmas," and "Res-Erection" (my Easter Show). The shows continued with "Cherie Tartare – She Came, She Saw, She Ate it Raw!" "Cherie Tartt, Queen of Outer Space ... Well, maybe just Uranus," "The Bi Who Shagged Me" "Y2 Gay, Why Not?" and "La Dolce Cherie ... Only Her Name is Tartt."

The venues ranged from 135 Pearl, Cafe NoNo, and Red Square, to hosting events at Metronome and Higher Ground, to appearances in Plattsburgh, New York, Salem, Massachusetts and Portland, Maine.

Instrumental throughout all of this was the support of my accompanist, Sal Inghima, who from the very beginning encouraged me to sing out – sometimes even on key, and sometimes even the lyrics as the composers actually wrote them – provided of course, that I could remember them! After he moved on I have also been fortunate enough to have been able to work with two other very accomplished keyboardists, Jason Thibeau and Craig Hilliard, both of whom also work with two talented friends of mine, Amber and Marguerite, The Sisters LeMay.

My hooking up with Yolanda proved to be an additional blessing. We were both performing at an evening of monologues and performance art at the now-defunct Cafe NoNo when we were approached about hosting a new public access program that some people were putting together. Although we had met a few times before at various events, when we were thrown together by fate we were still pretty much strangers. We soon became fast friends, and I count her as one of those few individuals that you can truly open your heart and soul to, and who can understand exactly where you are coming from.

Looking back on the TV show over the past six years, I am constantly struck by how wide the audience has been. From students to senior citizens, Church ladies to radical faeries, doctors and lawyers to housewives and everyone in-between, they all have spoken about how much they enjoyed watching the show and how "real" both Yolanda and I were.

Our guests have likewise covered the gamut – retired dairy farmer and movie star Fred Tuttle, former lieutenant governor Barbara Snelling, actor Rusty DeWees, and musicians James Kochalka and Colin Clary to name just a few. Bands that have performed on the show include: Chin Ho, the Bazookas, and The Magic is Gone, among many others.

I leave Burlington and Vermont with many fond memories and I will truly miss all of the wonderful people I have met while here. But onward I go, off to Houston, Texas to live with my youngest brother, his wife, and my little niece Nora, now 2-1/2 years old. My plan is to continue Cherie Tartt's career as a glamorous cabaret and television star in the Lone Star State, hopefully with appearances in the future with Yolanda in New York City and back here in the "Queen City" where Cherie Tartt was born.

I will certainly never forget all of the wonderful people I've met during my time here, and I hope that the fabulous Miss Cherie Tartt will live on in your hearts and memories for a long time to come.

*Cherie Tartt*

