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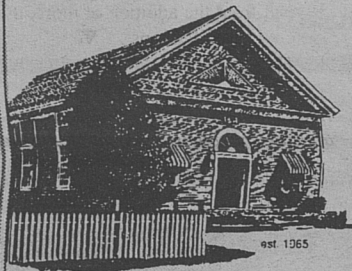
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## Making Music on Their Own Terms

Catie Curtis' Burlington Concert Reviewed,  
Ani DiFranco & The Fabulous Disasters Both Release New Albums

BY LLUVIA MULVANEY-STANAK

### Catie Curtis

Thursday March 6th  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
Burlington, VT  
www.catiecurtis.com

Perhaps the best thing about going to a folk show is the audience. If you folk it, the lesbians will come – when the show has a purpose, it is like icing on the cake.

I had the pleasure of checking out the Catie Curtis Benefit for the Peace and Justice Center on March 6th at the Unitarian Universalist Church. Arriving fashionably late I only caught the last few tabs of the opener Deb Tahlen, but it her music and charm were more than enough to warm me from chilly night air. Curtis took the stage with a few classic Catie songs, "Innocence," "St. Lucy" and "Magnolia Street." She peppered the typical between-song banter with jokes and politically charged statements, much to the pleasure of the crowd.

Curtis strummed her guitar with the confidence of years on the road and she treated us to a few new tracks off her new live album, *Acoustic Valentine* that she put out on her own Sam the Pug Records (named after her sweet little dog). With a few sweet sounding duets between Catie and Deb, and a few gay anthem sing-alongs, the night was fantastic and well received.

After the show I managed to catch up with Catie Curtis and after I got over my initial "Oh my you're gorgeous!" I pulled it together to ask her a few burning questions. Despite being quite tired from the long drive from Boston, she humored me, flashed that smile, and replied.

"I would say that some of my early influences would have to be Joan Armatrading, Lucinda Williams, John Gorka, Greg Brown, Ferrin and so many more," she said.

"Most of my songs come from love and relationships, some are from social issues and over all I write my songs with the hope that something beautiful will be produced," Curtis explained when asked about her process. "Writing songs takes me such a long time. I want to get it right. It is really rare when I can quickly write a song, it has happened, but the easy ones are special."

About being on the road, she said, "I try to keep a balance. In fact, I try to spend the majority of my time at home. It is hard to be away from home especially as my partner and I are adopting internationally and there are just so many legal issues."

Asked if she had any advice for youth (like the ones I work with at Outright) about being young and queer today, she said, "You are lucky. This culture encourages you to be the same and when you can take the pressure and not get sucked into the collective and you have to value your uniqueness."



Cassie Curtis

### Ani DiFranco

Evolve  
Righteous Babe Records  
www.righteousbabe.com

Less than a year since her last album Ani DiFranco has again taken to the studio to produce her 15th full-length album, *Evolve*. If you have not heard of Ms. DiFranco's punk folk music then you are either lost in the mainstream glitz of MTV or you are just lacking in basic lesbian icon knowledge.

For the last 13 years Ani DiFranco has done music on her own terms, starting her own record label Righteous Babe Records, collaborating with labor music legend Utah Phillips, and touring with the folk-rock icon Bob Dylan. To say that DiFranco is a wonder is putting it lightly.

*Evolve* is a yet another turning point in her musical journey. After spending much of her life as a solo folk singer she has spent the last few years being a band leader. Her music has reflected this change with an infusion of jazz licks and a horn section, her last few albums have become both musically versatile and politically charged. Compared to the early days of singing about all that "love and shit" this new album reflects Ani as the experienced musician, producer and bandleader that she has become.

*Evolve's* title track really captures the album's main themes, according to the wonder woman herself, suggesting that she is evolving into another part of her musical life. Now she has begun to transition from her band back into her solo touring. DiFranco says that touring with a band and leading a band is exhausting and distracting. By returning to being a lone folksinger she is able to just play her music. In a recent interview she said, "Though I have lost the company of some dear friends, I feel in a way that I have myself back, and my work has become much more gratifying to me as a result."

Like all Ani albums, it is a front-to-back delight. Expect continued politically motivated songs as well as some personal tracks that showcase this DiFranco evolution back into a solo folk-rocker. Enjoy this one, support independent music, and catch Ani at one of her northeast summer tour dates just announced at www.righteousbabe.com.

### The Fabulous Disasters

Panty Raid  
Pink & Black Records  
www.fabulous-disaster.com

It's like a slap on the ass – and liking it. The Fabulous Disasters are hard punk that can drive you all night long. Four gals: Laura, Lynda, Mr. Nancy and Sally – three that play on our side of the field and one that likes to watch. San Francisco has once again produced a fabulous all-Grrrl punk band.

*Panty Raid* is a follow up to their debut full-length release *Put Out Or Get Out*. You can find this kicking record on Pink and Black Records, a special label that signs only all-female or female-fronted acts.

This album is slightly more polished than the first, definitely has more rockin' harmonies between the ladies. Song lyrics touch upon revenge, getting' some, love gone wrong, getting run over by Volvos, and the good old heartbreak. I enjoy the title track for obvious reasons. The rest, are a roller-coaster: fun, fast and leaves you sweating by the end.

They sound like a more in-your-face "Donnas" with a little sprinkle of harder rockers like Green Day, NOFX and Sum 41 (minus the testosterone). But, "T" has nothing on estrogen combined with loud guitars, mosh pits and oh yeah, songs about how much life can "suck" for the better and the worse.

These fab four came together after a crazy drunken night in January of 1998. They came into their own inside of the female dominated San Francisco underground music scene for two years. This band's history is one of tattoos, bondage, motorcycles, pills, and seedy bars. The drummer, Sally Gess, took the band's name from a line in the movie *Sid and Nancy*. The line was – "Why Sydney, you're a fabulous disaster" – and the rest is fabulous history.

Perhaps now would be a good time to quote Lynda (on guitar): "Believe me, we've been at it for awhile. Let us say we're not wet behind the ears anymore. Well, maybe other places."

If you like punk, you will love the Fabulous Disasters. If you hate punk, you will love the Fabulous Disasters. Check out their website for some "inspirational" pictures of these fine looking ladies: <http://www.fabulous-disaster.com/>

Lluvia Mulvaney-Stanak's first name means "rain." When she's not working at Outright Vermont, she enjoys music in Burlington.