

Movie review

Before **STONEWALL**

Gay men and lesbians frequently look at the period of history before the development of the lesbian/gay rights movement, before our appearance in the mass media, before our emergence as an identifiable subculture, as an empty space. Our view of lesbian and gay life before the current era, before the Stonewall riots, reflects the belief that there was no such thing as a lesbian and gay community, but only individuals who lived furtive, frustrating and joyless lives.

"Before Stonewall: The Making of a Lesbian and Gay Community" is a film which destroys those assumptions. Through a series of powerful interviews with lesbians and gay men who were out before most of us were even born, the movie provides a valuable (and enjoyable) history lesson.

The makers of the film have assembled a terrific amount of research, including a great deal of archival material, to go along with the interviews. Drawn from a wide variety of experiences, "Before Stonewall" documents that well before the American public was aware of the fact, our foremothers and forefathers were building a culture to call their own. From the gay presence in the Harlem Renaissance to homosexuality in the armed forces, "Before Stonewall" gives us a legacy to call our own.

Whether it is the silent movie scene of a cowboy flirting with Laurel and Hardy or the uproarious interview with a former WAC whose all-lesbian battalion squared off with General Eisenhower in World War II, "Before Stonewall" is full of surprises and joys.

The film is particularly noteworthy for the fact that it reflects all of our experience, not just the better known story of white men. Lesbian history is particularly well-represented and people of color form an equally important part of the film's focus.

Few lesbian and gay documentaries have been as well thought-out and as well produced as "Before Stonewall." Made with humor, compassion, gentleness, love and commitment, it is an important and delightful reminder of where we have come from.

"Before Stonewall" will be shown as part of the Vermont Lesbian and Gay Pride Celebration. Shows are at 7:15 and 9:00 pm, Saturday, June 14, in Angel Hall, UVM, Burlington. There is a \$3 suggested donation, and proceeds will help finance the Pride Celebration.

"A CHEERFUL MESSAGE...A MODEST AND INTELLIGENT FILM."

-New York Times

"ABSORBING, SHOCKING, HUMOROUS AND THOROUGHLY COMPASSIONATE."

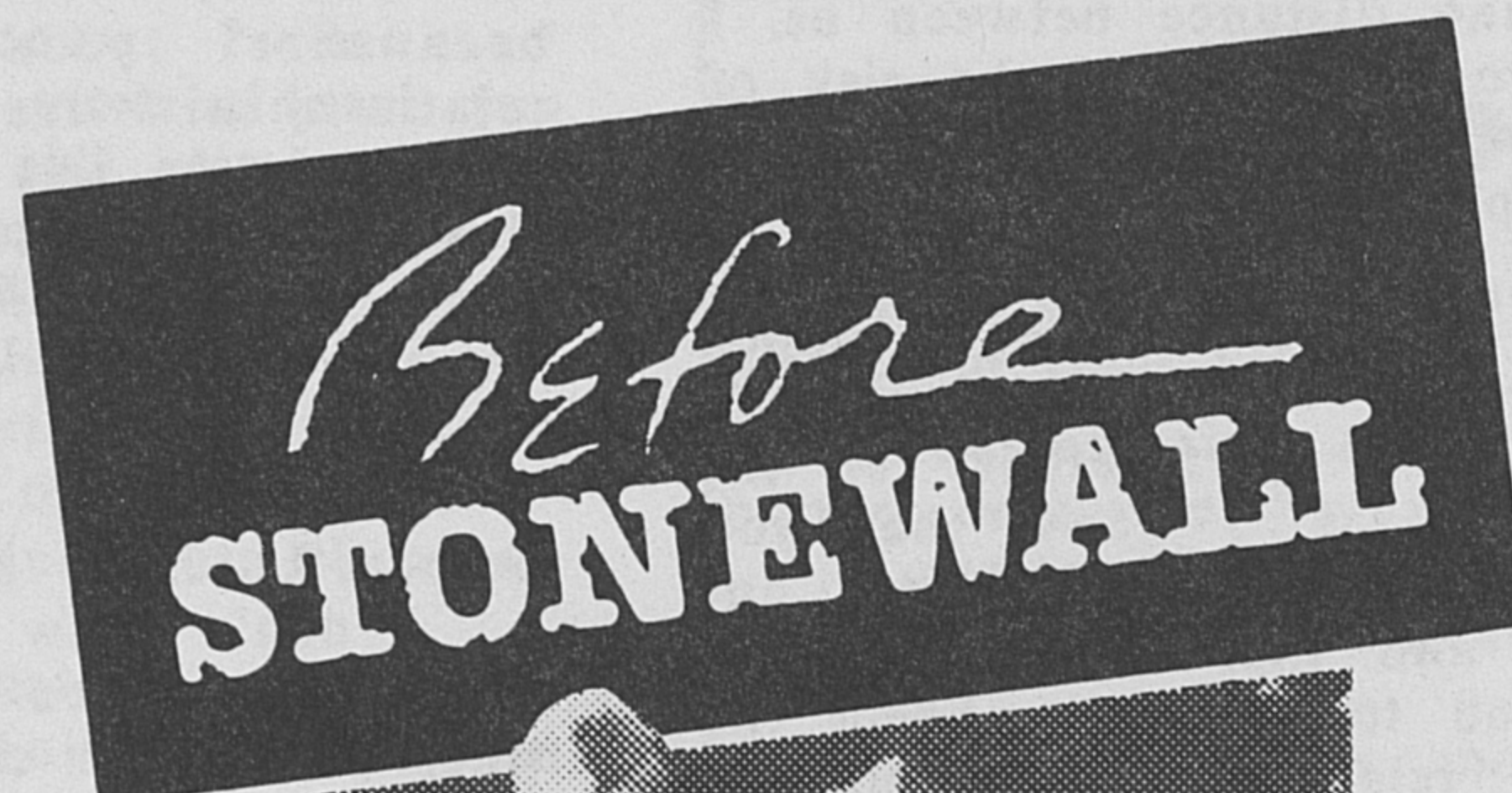
-Allan Ulrich, San Francisco Examiner

"YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF TO SEE IT"

-Judith Crist

"THIS YEAR'S MUST SEE FILM."

-New York Native



BEST AMERICAN INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM
(Non-Fiction)
LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL FILM EXPOSITION (FILMEX)

SPECIAL GRAND JURY AWARD
HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



BEFORE STONEWALL

The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community

Executive Producer JOHN SCAGLIOTTI
Director/Co-Producer GRETA SCHILLER • Co-Director/Co-Producer ROBERT ROSENBERG
Archival Research Director ANDREA WEISS • Editor BILL DAUGHTON
Narrated by RITA MAE BROWN

"COMPELS ADMIRATION FOR THE DIGNITY AND COURAGE OF THE FIGURES WHO MADE GAY LIFE WHAT IT IS TODAY."

-Jay Carr, Boston Globe