

Arts Review

The Changer and the Changed (continued from previous page)

as an incredibly female album, more than a lesbian album. The relationships described in the songs are seldom explicitly between women (almost always the case with Cris Williamson's music), and where it is clear that the singer is singing to a woman, the songs are not necessarily love songs. For example, "Sister" talks about friendship between women, and "Tender Lady" about the power of music to comfort. Even "Sweet Woman" has never struck me entirely as a lesbian love song. At some level, the woman who is "rising so fine" seems to me to be the singer herself, and when we listen to it, she is all of us.

Thus, the album is able to express the sensibility of all women, much of which is sensuous and erotic. *The Changer* takes as its themes nature, spirituality, and sensuality and links them together through the experience of women. It celebrates women's love and passion directly in songs like "Dreamchild" ("You've got me burning with the sweet love heat, I'm just a dreamchild of desire") and "Shooting Star" ("Thunder is shaking the roof of my car; I would go through a desert for you"), and indirectly in songs like "Waterfall" ("Filling up and spilling over like an endless waterfall").

The songs on *The Changer and the Changed* are old friends which have always been able to comfort and reassure me. The album's opening words are "Sometimes it takes a rainy day just to let you know everything's gonna be all right." Its final

words are "Lean on me, I am your sister; believe on me, I am your friend." In between there is the wonderful "Song of the Soul," which tells us "Love of my life, I am crying, I am not dying, I am dancing. Dancing along in the madness, there is no sadness, only a song of the soul." I have listened to the song hundreds of times, and it has helped me make sense of my life.

I look at the album cover - a black and white photo of a young Cris, standing alone in the desert, wearing denim overalls and no shirt, smiling at the camera, her hair long

and dark brown, like it was the first time I saw her in concert. She is beautiful. And I think of her the last time I saw her in concert this past August - her hair is shorter and it has turned gray; she no longer tours solo; and I've never seen her in overalls. But she still tells great stories; she is still blessed with that magnificent voice; she is still beautiful; and she still sings songs from *The Changer and the Changed*. I am very grateful that fifteen years ago she gave us that wonderful gift, and that she is still around today to share it with us.

A Studio of One's Own

A new studio for women artists on Welcome Hill in West Chesterfield, New Hampshire, is now complete. It joins the first studio, built by women in 1978.

The studios, which are available to women artists of whatever genre for one week and up to three-month stays, are situated on a mountaintop of 110 heavily wooded acres in southwestern New Hampshire, just across the Connecticut River from Brattleboro. There are excellent hiking trails on the property, a nearby lake for swimming, cross-country skiing trails, frequent lesbian-centered get-togethers with owner Ann Stokes and poet-in-residence Lynn Martin, and as much privacy as one desires for doing creative work.

The studios are fully furnished, with wood-heating stoves for winter. Food is not provided, but each studio has a kitchen with

a gas stove. Rent is \$50.00 per week or \$150.00 per month. For those artists who have higher incomes, a donation to ARS Inc., the foundation that supports the project, would be most welcome.

Many creative women have resided at Welcome Hill in its twelve-year existence. Beginning artists are as welcome as those who are established in their work. A feminist perspective is a must.

It was owner Ann Stokes's vision to offer women artists congenial space to do their art - "studios of their own." Women from as far away as New Mexico and from as nearby as Putney have shared the peace, the quiet, and the beauty of Welcome Hill.

To inquire about a stay at Welcome Hill, write to ARS Inc., Box 324, Welcome Hill, West Chesterfield NH 03466, or telephone 603-256-6362 or 603-256-8886.

OUTRIGHT ▼ VERMONT TRAINING

Volunteers interested in staffing an informational/support line for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth in Vermont can still sign up for training.

- ▼ Training is scheduled for January, with the info-line starting up at the end of the month.
- ▼ Individuals interested in participating in the training should contact OUTRIGHT Vermont at 865-9677.

Walter Zeichner M. A.
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