

Out Right Flirting with The Flirtations

Karin Eade

"Glorious voices and grand social consciousness." - *New York Press*

"Mischievous, witty, and often thrilling." - *The Advocate*

"At last, a queer men's pop a cappella group that confronts homophobia, misogyny, AIDSphobia, sexism, and queer-bashing in a bold, brash, musical manner." - *OUTWEEK*

The nationally acclaimed a cappella group, The Flirtations, is making its long awaited debut in Vermont. Performing songs from their latest release *Out On The Road*, Vermont will be able to get a taste of the "world's most famous openly gay, politically active, multi-cultural a cappella singing group!". The "Fabulous Flirtations" have been thrilling audiences across the continent with their unique blend of politics, musical artistry and humor since their first street corner appearances in Greenwich Village in the spring of 1988. Little could they have known that four years later they would actually be making a living doing what they love most: Being gay and singing about it!

Catch them live at the Burlington Unitarian Church, December 12th, 8 p.m. in this premiere performance benefiting Outright Vermont. The Flirtations often take existing songs and reclaim them into the life of queerdome. *Bop 'til You Drop*, *Mister Sandman* and *Boy from New York City* are just a few of such songs, but what they do with *So Much in Love* would make any lesbian proud. "...looking for shooting stars, women knowing who they are, so in love, so much in love, so in love, that's Lesbian Love." This song has been reworked by Aurelio Font in a tribute of his great aunt and her lesbian lover of fifty years.

Another wonderfully remixed politically motivated song is "Biko". This song, about the South African human rights activist Steven Biko who was beaten to death while under arrest in 1977, is a mix of songs from both Peter Gabriel and Bernice Johnson Reagon. The line, "The outside world is black and white with only one color dead" re-sounds sadly throughout this powerful message. However, The Flirt's leave us on a positive note with, "You can blow out a candle, but you can't blow out a fire." Homophobia, racism, and sexism are unfortunately not our only enemies, "Living In Wartime", written by Flirt's member, Michael Callen explains only too well how

the war on AIDS and the battle of political indifference hurts us all. One of the messages of this song empathizes our need to join together to help one another because "...we face a common enemy, bigotry and greed, but if we fight together we can find the strength we need."

The political undercurrent of the Flirtations is no doubt a big part of their music. However, their music is refreshingly upbeat, funny and very often engages the audience with it's contagious high energy. Vermont is certainly in need of some very funny, very out and very talented performers. I for one will be lining up to support Outright Vermont in this benefit and will be first hand to flirt. Said one Outright board member, "My favorite song, in a bittersweet sense, is the ballad, *The Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun*, written by Julie Brown. Though hysterically funny and sung tongue-in-cheek, it reminds me of what high school was like for me as a young gay male. It was the lowest point in my life. I felt vulnerable to the contempt of my fellow students and I did not have any gay positive support. *The Homecoming Queen's Got a Gun* reminds me of those bad times but it also emphasizes in my mind the need to support organizations like Outright Vermont in their good work." ▼

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Susan L. Aranoff Lisa A. Upson
28 MAIN STREET, MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05602
802.223.1418

BMIH graphic design & printing

32 N. Champlain St. Burlington VT. 05401
802/864 • 7198 • FAX 802/658 • 1556



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