

## Vermont's Devil With a Blue Dress: Janice Perry aka Gal



(OTIM) file photo

Janice Perry aka Gal

Another very late, but important, *OITM* Review by Moira  
*OITM* Staff

**BURLINGTON** — **The performer** — Janice Perry aka Gal; **the place** — Burlington City Hall; **the date** — September 16, 1995; **the mood** — upbeat and festive, power in motion; **the theme** — provocative and intellectual, a hilarious exploration into the inner wanderings of a very witty lady.

The non-initiated viewer may easily be fooled into thinking that this is a one-woman show, and indeed, *Devil With a Blue Dress* is billed as such. After a short time into Perry's act, however, her wide cast of characters struts across the stage with the voices and expressions for which she is so noted. We meet her analyst, her lawyer, her significant other, her friends, even an IRS auditor. And we meet them — not just a quick semblance, but a true and believable engagement.

For those of you who braved the rain at last year's Gay Pride celebrations in Burlington's Battery Park, you probably got a teasing taste of Janice Perry. For those who actually saw her show with all the costumes, wigs, lights and action, however, you had a real gourmet experience. While the crowd, which resembled a long awaited family reunion, filtered into Burlington City Hall, my partner and I took prime balcony seats and prepared ourselves to laugh until our sides ached. We had seen this Gal before and knew that the intensity from which she gestates sends her audience on a roller coaster ride of nonstop commotion-emotion-devotion in motion! And, as we prepared ourselves, watching the hugs and salutations below, we felt the energy mushrooming up through the hall.

As a lesbian viewer I wondered if Perry would actually out herself during the performance, so I listened attentively for parts of the show when her orientation would be clear. In speaking with her by phone after the show, she said that she likes to involve all of her audience, treating the lesbianism as normal, slipping in little hints as she goes through the show. Organically, she is consciously uncovering herself on stage. (And I don't mean just theoretically. Could you believe those onstage costume changes!?) She is in the business of bringing laughter and insight into every corner of human existence, even sexuality. I soon gave up on my little distraction of her outing and just remembered what a brilliant performer she is, regardless of what she does in a dirndl.

Over the years, there have been shifts and growths in Janice Perry as an artist, and her writing clearly reflects those changes. In her latest show, for example, she exposes menopause with all the real life symptoms. She holds the audience with her, one minute laughing, one minute crying, one minute thinking and then all roaring as she uncovers the most preposterous side effect of all — the very, very swollen clitoris! Even though she seems to always have a dildo on hand, her jokes are not the easy ones that simply poke fun. They are born from life's pains, from her gut's emotions, from her loyal sense of true performance theater.

Why do we see her so seldom? Although she does not have an agent booking her in the U.S., Perry told me that she would love to perform in her own time zone. (I kept thinking that some adoring fan would love to make this happen ... ) For now she travels quite vigorously throughout Europe. In fact, this past fall she left her home in the Green Mountain State to tour Switzerland and Germany.

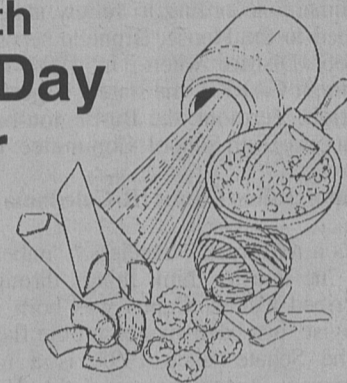
Janice Perry is one of Vermont's best kept secrets whose time has indeed come. I'm sure we'll all see more of this lady with a blue dress on ... no matter what costume she's wearing. ▼

# 135 Pearl

135 Pearl Street  
Burlington, Vermont

8 6 3 - 2 3 4 3

Wednesday night,  
February 14th  
**Valentine's Day  
Pasta Dinner**



Saturday, February 17th  
**Red Rubber Ball**

Color  
me  
**RED**

\$5:00 cover

**POST VALENTINE'S DAY BASH**

# Patty Larkin

Saturday, February 17th  
8p.m. Unitarian Church  
*A Special Valentine's Day Treat!*



**Benefit Concert for the Peace & Justice Center**

Tickets available at the **Peace & Justice Store, Pure Pop,**  
**Flynn Box Office \$15-18 Sliding Scale**  
For more information call **802-863-8326**