

When Holly is Near:

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(Photo courtesy of Burlington City Arts)

Holly Near

this -- the connection to community. The "Heart Music" begins before the concert. There's a wonderful communion that begins in the lobby, friends that haven't seen each other, an energy. The frenetic energy of the audience washes off during the concert, and something begins to happen in the community.

OITM: A safe space.

Holly: Right wing bigots do not show up for this; it's a form of self-censorship. But there's a downside to that. People think I'm political. But it can also be for people who disagree; they can be intelligently challenged and still don't have to agree. But it's not a safe space in that I challenge people. I get letters from people who say they were dragged to a concert by friends and it brought up issues of gay child, or gay parent, or Vietnam. It brings up stuff, so it's not safe that way. I have no intent or desire to wound anyone. My work is to challenge and educate, heal and inspire, entertain. And keep a high quality as an artist. People who disagree won't feel attacked. It's a good entry level concert. But I don't withhold anything!

The Man of the House

Stephen McCauley
Simon & Schuster

Reviewed by Anthony S. Galbraith

In a time when dysfunctional families are the norm, when higher education leads you nowhere but into great debt and when there's twelve step meeting for every type of problem imaginable, Stephen McCauley's third novel, *The Man of the House*, fits right in.

The story is set in Cambridge, Massachusetts where Clyde Carmichael lives and works. When his old friend Louise arrives with Ben, her twelve-year old son, Clyde not only takes on responsibility for their dog but also serves as intermediary for his housemate Marcus, who's just been informed that he's Ben's father. While trying to encourage Marcus to break the news to Ben, Clyde must also advise his incurably insecure sister, Agnes, on how to handle their world-class curmudgeon of a father who may or may not be suffering from a terminal illness and Agnes's, teenaged punk daughter.

McCauley has written a fine, witty contemporary novel that is both humorous and realistic. The characters are tragic and true-to life. We all know

OITM: We're both old enough to have seen the politics swing back and forth from liberal to conservative. For instance in the 70's, women could get an abortion without trouble; now armed guards have to be at the doors for safety. And then the horror of the AIDS epidemic.

Holly: I wish that when I was young, I'd had a better sense of history. If I had (only) known that I was signing up for the journey. There is no nirvana. The world can't be changed permanently ... (But) there is no rest around these issues. We have to defend women's right to choose. We've seen plagues before. It's horrific, but we always learn something. We can't live in despair. Our children are in trouble, and we have to help! They live in poverty, and violence, and abuse.

OITM: Do you feel that the 12 years of Republican presidents is partially to blame?

Holly: The people that voted for them were more interested in tax breaks. I want to live in a country where the bottom line is people don't go hungry. We had laws against child labor, and child labor is back again.

OITM: The early women's guilds were responsible for child labor laws.

Holly: Right! But people see this and don't want to do anything, even if they think it's terrible. When you deal with the issues of children, you have to deal with the issues of class, race, sex, and violence. All our decisions have to be made on how it will affect the children. Native Americans use the next seven generations as a yardstick for making decisions.

OITM: What else would you like us to know?

Holly: It's important to know that independent music has very little media access. And that we need the word of mouth. So go out to the concert, have a hot date, but bring 3 or 4 people. When people make an effort, it builds community. Bring a teenager who says "Holly who?" or an older person who was on the front lines years ago and can't get out anymore. Pick them up and bring them. Keep them part of the community.

Holly Near will be appearing at Memorial Auditorium in Burlington, Thursday, March 7th, at 7pm. Tickets, ranging from \$15-\$22, are available by calling (802) 863-5966. If the concert passes you by, her tapes and compact discs are available through her Redwood Records label. For more information, write to Holly Near, Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. ▼

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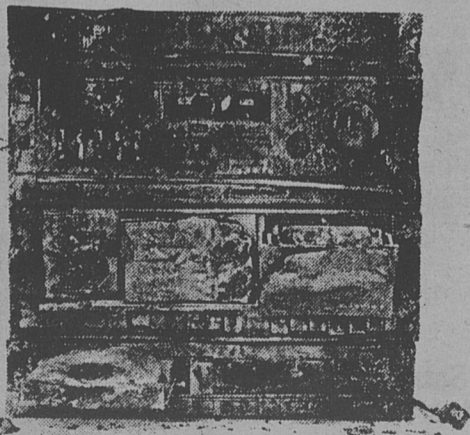


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