

ONE COMPOSER'S STORY - PART I

Musician Reflects on Music, Life, and Society

BY JOHN APPLETON

I think it is obvious that one's sexuality is interwoven into the fabric of life and can be seen on occasion as both the cause and effect of behavior in other aspects of one's life and work. During my life I have seen immense change in the attitudes toward people's sexual lives and I anticipate that even greater understanding will occur in the years to come.

That said, I reject the conclusions of trendy musicologists who would lead one to believe that music expresses sexuality except insofar as music is capable of expressing very general emotional states. Because sex has been a very important part of my life, I believe that to fail to acknowledge and explain this part of my existence would make the autobiography I am writing incomplete. Finally, because my sexuality caused me more pain and anguish than pleasure, perhaps my writing about it can help others who have faced similar difficulty.

I knew at an early age that I was bisexual, that I was different in this way from others, and I felt shamed by my feelings. Of all the incidents, the confirming one was my conversation with my mother when I was ten years old, when I asked her why there simply wasn't one sex? Her answer was that I didn't understand the beauty of the physical expression of love between men and women.

My mother was responsible for making my subsequent sexual relations with women difficult - she conveyed the idea that men wanted sex and women did not. At the same time she was seductive toward me and my brother. But, while she raised some barriers to my easy communication with women about my sexual desires and intentions, nothing in the way I was raised accounts for my bisexuality. I am not a victim.

Rather, I believe my bisexual-

ity was genetically determined and although many physiologists and psychiatrists will say otherwise, I can feel the flux in chemical or hormonal balance which shifts my sexual interest between men and women. During my

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life I have discussed my sexual life with nearly a dozen psychiatrists or psychotherapists and none of them have given me the understanding of my condition that I sought.

Thus, it took me until my mid-fifties to come to terms with my sexuality and this seems to me to be a very sad fact. It would have been much easier if my family, my friends and society has not been afraid of sexuality and especially homosexuality. I believe there are such societies but it is not one into which I was born.

I am not informed enough to explain the causes of societal attitudes toward homosexuality, nor does it matter. If I had not had to hide my homosexual feelings would I have married? Yes, I loved the women I married. Would I have entered into a monogamous homosexual relationship? Perhaps. This is what I seek at the present time. And if this had happened would my life be different? Yes, it would have been much more restricted.

Although I could have found the pleasure I take in children without having my own, it would have been exceedingly difficult. Yet I never married a woman solely because I wanted

children. I think I married largely because I wanted someone to care for and to take care of me (although sadly I always failed to ask for this part). I have never met a man who wanted to do that - more likely I never looked - but I have met many women who did and have.

The Freudian theory that artists translate their sexual energy into their creations has some truth. However, the in-

tense activity of composing and performing music often intensified my sexual desire. In fact, listening to beautiful music - surrendering to it - I find very close to the feelings I have when making love. I have met many gay, male musicians who share this feeling but not too many straight men, or women for that matter.

The musicologist Susan McClary became angry with me once when I told her that men needed music more than women. I don't think this is because women can bear children. I was a single parent and am able to communicate with children more easily than most women I have met. The differences between the way men and women experience music will be better understood before too long.

Jon Appleton is a composer living in White River Junction, Vermont. He has been on the faculty at Dartmouth College since 1967.

18 THURSDAY
Burlington - BLT Health Network will be meeting at the Peace and Justice Center at 7:00 PM. Come visit us, join us, participate in the development of health information and help for the health of BLT's in the state of Vermont. For further info: phone: Lanny 899-4588, or Joy 848-7037.

19 FRIDAY
Burlington - Pride Kick-Off Concert w/ David Hall & Katherine Quinn, 8pm, St. Paul's Cathedral, Cherry and Battery Streets, \$7

20 SATURDAY
Burlington, VT - Vermont Pride Day
vtpride98@hotmail.com

- 10am, Interfaith Worship Service at First Unitarian Universalist Society, Church St. FMI, Lisa Rubin (802) 862-0251, lisarubin@aol.com
- 10:30am, 2nd Annual DYKE MARCH, meet in front of City Hall
- 11:30am, The Rally @ Waterfront Park
- 1pm, The Parade. Meet @ Waterfront Park
- 3pm, The Festival with entertainment and food at The Waterfront
- 6-10pm, Pride Ball @ City Hall, chem-free. Contois Auditorium, City Hall, Church St. Danceparty w/djs: \$3-\$5. tix at Peace

and Justice Center, or 1-800-GLB-CHAT, or at the door

- 7-9pm, VGSA Boat Cruise, Randy (802) 863-3669 FMI
- 8-11pm, The Dance on the Waterfront w/ cover band Jusagroove, \$5
- 10pm, A Faery Home Companion : a benefit for *Out In The Mountains*, Club Toast. Endora, Yolanda and the Plastic Family, and Cherie Tart featured in "Star Trek The Musical- Part III", \$5

Lebanon, NH - Amelia's gathering to clean their adopted highway. FMI Mandy at 603-632-7146 or MaryLou at 603-632-7480

Putney - Putney Free For All. Sponsored by the Putney Food Coop. Free food and drink. Children activities and community groups information tables.

Manchester, NH - New Hampshire Pride
NHPRIDE@aol.com@aol.com

- Parade Information: Groups will assemble at Victory Park in Manchester Parade will start at 11:00 AM sharp June 20, 1998.

Pride Ball @ CITY HALL

Dance the night away on Vermont's GLBT Pride Day
Sat. June 20 6-10 PM
@ Contois Auditorium, City Hall, Church St. Burlington

A chem-free dance with house DJs
Alan Perry and Rob Douglas!
MC'd by the enchanting Mystic Maiden
Performers: **Cherie Tartt, Yolanda & others**


Tickets are \$3-5 sliding scale
available at Peace & Justice Center, Burlington;
or by calling 1-800-GLB-CHAT
(Also available at the door)

ALL ARE WELCOME! MANY DOOR PRIZES!

Sponsors: Queer Youth Provider Network, Burlington City Arts, Champlain Drug & Alcohol Services, VT PFLAG chapters, VT Bi-NET, Peace & Justice Center and VT High School GSAs.

Mix business with pleasure.

Join us at the
Rainbow Business Association
Pride mixer at
Fitch Hill Inn, Hyde Park, VT
June 10th • 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
\$10.00/person
Door prize and lots of
hors d'oeuvres!



Directions: Exit 10 off I-89, follow Route 100 north for 20 miles. Left onto Route 15. Follow for 1.8 miles. Turn right onto Fitch Hill Road. The inn is 1.3 mile on right.

The mission of the Rainbow Business Association, a g/l/b/t organization, is to create a supportive network among professionals and business owners. For more information call (802) 658-2023.

VERMONT GETS BUSY FOR PRIDE '98

21 SUNDAY
Burlington - GLITTER film presentation:

• Parade Route: Start Victory Park, Proceed west on Concord St. to Elm St. Left onto Elm St. South down Elm St. to Veteran's Park (Merrimack & Elm St.) The NH Gay Mens Chorus will perform at the conclusion of the parade at Veterans Park.

• The Pride Festival will be held at the McIntyre Ski area in Manchester. Gates open at 12:00 noon. Admission will be \$12.00 per person at the gate and will also be available for \$10.00 in advance from NH Pride committee members. Buy your tickets early and save!! There will be entertainment throughout the day, vendor booths, food and beverages, music by DJ (to be announced) and much much more! Performances: Guest Appearance by Kandy Kane, Karen Ripley (San Francisco comedienne), "Don't Harass Betty" (Band), Miss Gay New England Tish Towers And Friends, NH Gay Mens Chorus. Performance times will be announced soon.

22 MONDAY
Burlington - GLITTER film presentation: *Antonia's Line*. Rhombus Gallery, located at the intersection of College & Church Streets in downtown Burlington, Vermont. Enter on College St and the gallery is on the 2nd floor. All events begin at 7:30 PM. For more information, call Steven Kopstein on 802-434-5653 or email: Glittervt@aol.com. Or contact the Rhombus Gallery at 186 College St., 865-3144.

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**CALENDAR
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