

# A Dyke's Quinn-tessential First Date



photo by Jon Lukens



photo by Jon Lukens

ary of 1993. Why Burlington? "It was as close as I wanted to be to Providence, and as far as I could afford to go." She's held a variety of jobs since she got here (chicken farmer, sauté cook, dump truck driver, etc.). She says that singing has been a relatively new development—"I bought a guitar the day before I came to Burlington. I had never played one in my life...I didn't know anybody here, and I came up in January, so it was cold. I just played and played."

Five years later, she's on the verge of releasing her first CD, "Leaving Decatur", due out in July. Jeff Miller, who brought her to the Rhombus Gallery as part of the Burlington Coffeehouse series, says Quinn is "on the cutting edge of acoustic music." Miller has known Quinn since she showed up at his open mike night three years ago. "Her songs are like a conversation," he says. "That's what first attracted me to her music. It's like you're sitting down with her, and she's telling you a story." Quinn's got a lot of stories. She's a prolific writer, having copyrighted nearly 100 songs since she started playing. She's quick to point out, however, that she has a hard time remembering them all. Sometimes she forgets her own

words on stage. Even so, the audience is almost always forgiving. Why? Because when she gets her songs right, she's a captivating performer. Her songs are charged with the intensity of someone who has something vital to say.

Perhaps this is because Quinn sees her music as an outlet for her desire to teach— she often writes about conflict and struggle. Her songs deal with conflict in relationships, the tension between activism and complacency, and the disparity between rich and poor. A lot of her songs reflect her own experience in the workplace, and living in Burlington's North End. In "Kitchen Table", for example, she says, "Maybe you should try walking on the other side of the street. You'd be astounded at the people you might meet. Maybe you should try walking on the other side of town. You know, my neighborhood, the one you avoid when the sun goes down."

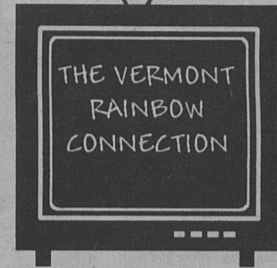
And although she readily admits that she's sporting an attitude, on stage Katherine Quinn is soft-spoken and charming. Her newly shaved head, tattoos, and genuine smile are almost as popular as her lyrics with the collegiate womyn crowd. Sometimes more so in other situations.

She used to play at a bar in Burlington every week, until one day she decided that the steady gig was not exactly what she wanted to be doing. "One night I was playing, and I realized nobody was listening. So I started changing the lyrics of my songs. 'Free me, set me free, set me free' became 'salami, salami, salami,' and in 'Rather Be', I started saying 'I'd rather be homo where somebody was listening to me.' they didn't even notice. So I stopped. Then some guy came up to me and offered me fifty bucks to keep playing. I thought, 'you just want a girl on-stage playing guitar, and that's totally not what I'm here for.' So I didn't do it. I left."

I recently saw her perform for new student orientation at UVM. During one set, I watched a young woman who sat across the room with a group of guys. She was listening, nodding her head, and laughing at the appropriate moments, especially at the line in "Bar Pick Up Song," when Katherine says, "home is where I'm going alone." Most of the people there were hearing her play for the first time. The crowd was mixed, and the guys seemed to enjoy the show, but it was mostly the women who were getting it, and getting into it.

The first time I heard Katherine Quinn play, I realized what it must have been like to be an Ani DiFranco fan before Spin Magazine called her "rock's most unlikely superstar." It's exciting to see Quinn at this stage in her career, when she still takes requests, and hangs out with the audience after the show. I highly recommend the experience, especially while her shows are still cheaper than a movie date.

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**Manchester** - Carl Orff's Choral masterpiece "Carmina Burana". Robert De Cormier conducts the VSO Chorus and members of the orchestra. 7:30 at Hunter Park in Manchester VT. Call 1-800-876-9293 for more information.

**Northfield** - Women of the Woods Patio Poker Party, 3 pm, bring a snack and something to drink. FMI 485-8588

**2** SUNDAY

**Burlington** - Christine Lavin, one of the four Bitchin' Babes, plays at Metronome. 7pm. Tickets \$15. Call 865-4563 for info.

**5** WEDNESDAY

**Montpelier** - Women of the Woods Din-

ner and a Movie, meet at Oscar and Zeke's at 5 pm for dinner or at 6 pm outside the restaurant for just the movie. FMI 229-0109

**9** SUNDAY

**Burlington** - UU CIRCLE: Full Moon and Lammas ritual, potluck, and meeting. All who support the Covenant of UU Pagans' mission are welcome. Wear garb if you like, and bring something for feast, a musical instrument, and a cushion to sit on. Site TBA, 6 pm. Donations. Info, 658-9689.

**19** WEDNESDAY

**Stowe** - Women of the Woods Dinnre/biking at Whiskers Restaurant, meet at 6 pm, use the nearby bikepath either before or after dinner. Call 485-8588 by 8/15 if you plan to attend.

**23** SUNDAY

**Putney** - Lesbian Book Group: 7 PM at Heartstone Books. We read books in all genres, by women authors, usually with some lesbian content. Please join us! For more information, Tatiana (802) 387-2781, or tatianas@sover.net.

**28** FRIDAY

**Orange** - Women of the Woods pizza and planning at Sue's. Bring your drink of choice. FMI 225-0109

**31** MONDAY

**Burlington** - BLT (bisexual, lesbian, transgender women's) 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.

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**12** SATURDAY

**Williamstown** - Women of the Woods End-of-Summer Bonfire. Bring the usual snacks and something to drink. Hot dogs, buns and fixings provided. Bring a lawn chair. FMI 229-0109

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