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May 2002

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Boys on Film

Queer boys tackle love, life, and each other.

by Candace Moore

The adventures of horndog gay boys make for addictive soaps. Now on DVD, this highly watchable Showtime series (based closely on the groundbreaking British show) challenges the unspoken rule that out TV characters must be as chaste as neutered church mice.

Queer As Folk

Ron Cowen, Daniel Lipman, Tony Jonas
Showtime, 2000

Au contraire, the juicy, carnal American *Queer As Folk* makes few concessions for the phobic as it depicts a group of Pittsburghian homos thriving on (and battling) the body-

obsessed, one-night-stand-driven values of their Liberty Avenue club scene. Two peripheral lesbian moms seem annoyingly over-domesticated, but as the season progresses the characters get literally and figuratively fleshed out. Grade: **A-**



Let's hear it for the boys:
QAF's Sparks, Harold,
Paige, and Lowell.

Queer As Folk, Series 2

(Video 4, 2000)
In its final season the original British mini-series rekindles its smart, scandalous caricature of three charming, quippy poofs who haunt Manchester's Canal Street gay bars. The concluding episodes usher debonair butt-stud Stuart (Aidan Gillen), his faithful, smitten best friend Vince (Craig Kelly II), and his fifteen-year-old boy-toy Nathan (Charlie Hunnam) through a new era of self-realization. In the end, the boys romp off disco-style into a funky, magical realist sunset. Grade: **B+**

Nico & Dani

(New Yorker Films, 2000)
Over a florid Spanish summer, luxuriating in a palatial vacation house, two seventeen-year-old boys teach each other the subtle discernment between mutual masturbation and a full-blown (no pun intended) gay relationship. Sandy-haired novelist Dani (Fernando Ramallo) is enticed and frustrated by amigo Nico (Jordi Vilches), an odd-looking Don Juan who idles away the summer swimming, toying with motorbikes, and courting local girls in a befuddled race to lose his virginity. Director Cesc Gay fastidiously evokes the mess of teens with burgeoning gonads. Grade: **B**

Come Undone (Presque Rien)

(Picture This! Entertainment, 2001)
Set in a beach community near Nantes, France, director Sébastien Lifshitz's *Come Undone* is a depressing, somewhat lovely depiction of gay first love. Glum eighteen-year-old Mathieu (Jérémy Elkaim) has a tendency for picking up strays: dead birds, filthy cats, and hunk Cédric (Stéphane Rideau), a sweet drop-out who used to turn tricks but now works at the local waffle stand. Humping their way down the scenic coast, they tumble into a sweaty *dénouement*. Kudos to Lifshitz for depicting Mathieu's emotional strain as stemming more from his chemical depression than from his sexuality. Grade: **B+**

Candace Moore, co-editor of the small press *Runcible Spoon*, lives in L.A.

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SHOWTIME

inside girlfriends

Mommy Complex

When we published our first issue of *Girlfriends* eight years ago, the magazine featured a regular column devoted to lesbian motherhood. One night I asked Patrick Califia (then, Pat Califia) over to my house for a critique of our first four issues. Patrick got to our motherhood page and said, "This is okay, but you know, I'm just not interested. When I came out, the only good thing about being gay was that I didn't have to be a mother."

The irony is that Patrick, although he's still our advice columnist, is no longer a woman or childless, but that's a whole other story. Patrick's words that evening have stayed in my mind. I mulled over them especially as I reread Lillian Faderman's *To Believe in Women*, a book about the historical impact of early feminists, most of them unmarried or in "Boston Marriages" with other women. Faderman's point is that these women's bonds with

female lovers and friends allowed them to write books, demonstrate for birth control, found medical colleges, administrate their own wealth, and remain physically fit. I couldn't help but notice that their childlessness seemed just as causative.

I think we occupy a very interesting point in lesbian history. Some of us are still developing the open spaces afforded us by the biological consequence of our nonreproductive sexualities. Some of us are making joyful use of modern technologies and facing the demands (with the added factor of homophobia) of motherhood. My wife, Alice, and I, for example, thought seriously about having children; deciding not to and recommitting to our other "children" (*Girlfriends* in my case, a stellar Internet career in Alice's) was one of the hardest, most painful—and most modern—decisions we've made.

In honor of Mother's Day, *Girlfriends'* May issue typically features a handful of stories about lesbian motherhood. Marny Hall's "Dr. Strange Love" deals

with the changing theories about the role of Mom in lesbian psychology. Even our story on Rosie O'Donnell's new book turns out to be about motherhood. (*Find Me*, Carson Hunter reveals, is not about O'Donnell's sexuality, but the loss of her mother.) Only our beloved cover subjects, the Indigo Girls, as one-time mommy wannabe Emily Saliers tells it to our writer Joyce Luck, are still slaves to the rhythm and the road rather than the baby bottle.

Whether or not you have children, you will enjoy this issue. Till next month,

Heather Findlay, Editor in Chief



Me and Winnie, the object of my longest-term, primary caretaker relationship.

Girlfriends

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