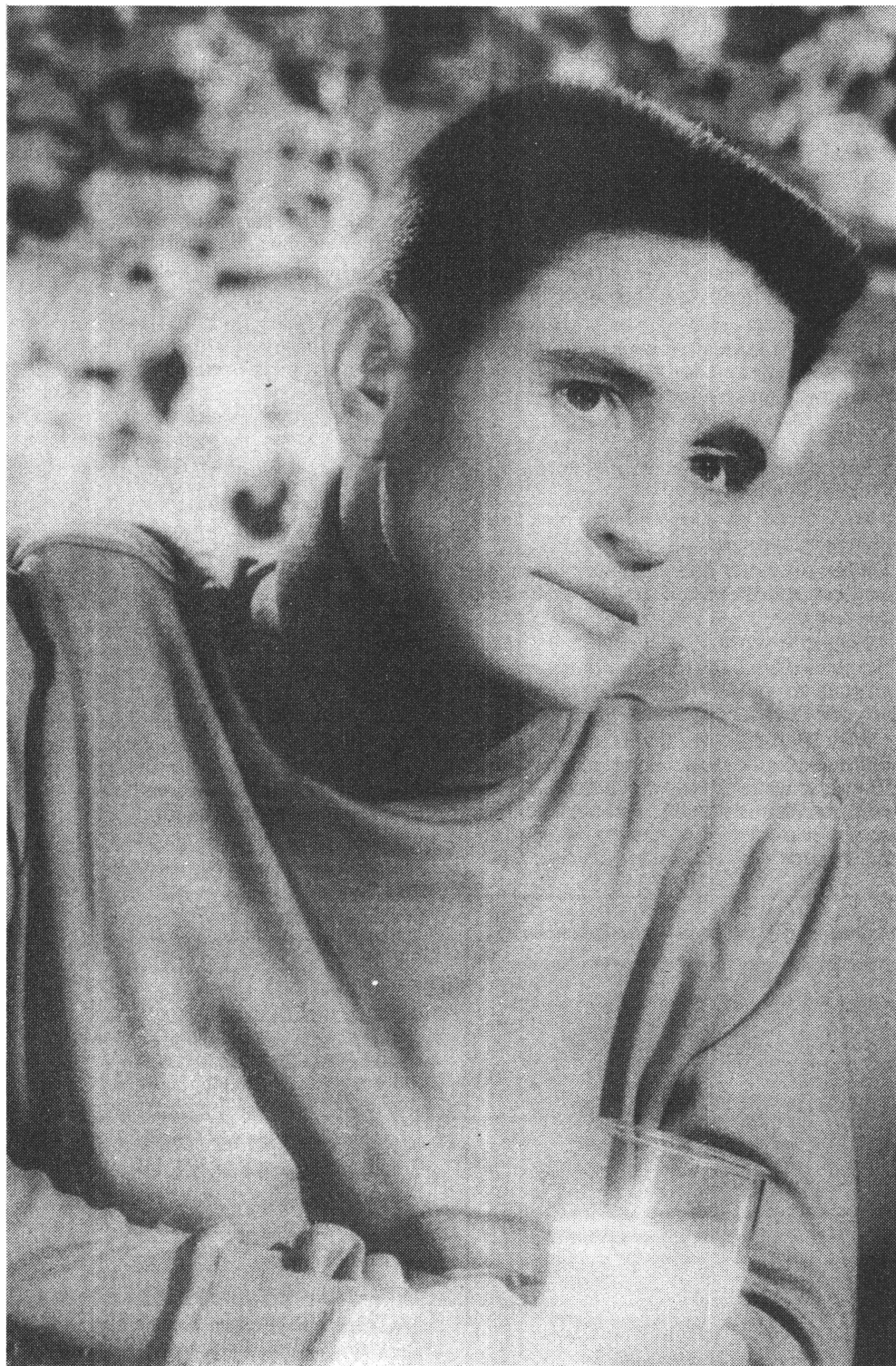


Of Flattops, Fake Fags, And Real Benefits



Phranc: "A big lesbian camp on . . . boy-crazy stuff"

"Hey, I am a hunk," insisted Phranc after I told her that only hunks get to be on the cover of *The ADVOCATE*. "You've got to get me the cover. Hell—I look like Frankie Avalon!"

It was my favorite brush-cut lesbian on the phone, sounding tough and giddy with the news I'd been waiting to hear for two years: Island Records would be releasing her second LP on June 1.

"It's called *I Enjoy Being a Girl*," she chuckled, "and the title cut comes from that Broadway musical *Flower Drum Song*. I hated being a girl growing up, and this is my revenge. It's a big lesbian camp on all that frilly, airhead, boy-crazy stuff that the lyrics celebrate and that I've escaped."

"Do you use the L word on this disc?" I asked.

"As a matter of fact, the line runs, 'Cause I'm a Jewish lesbian'—big as life—right on the lyric sheet."

No gay male singer today—not even any lesbian on a "womyn's" music label—is as forthright and uninhibited. Olivia Records' latest release, *Country Blessed* by Cris Williamson and Teresa Trull, offers songs to a female pioneer, a mother, even a mare—but never to a lesbian lover. Phranc's work is far more frank and way funnier.

"Wait till you see the press kit," she laughed. "It is *totally* femme. It comes in a pink '50s hatbox with a powder puff and emery board inside. And I'm *buffed*, man. You *gotta* get me that cover."

"After I get my powder puff," I growled. I was halfway to the toilet when the phone rang again.

"Homo alert," brayed my critic buddy Barry, sounding like Eve Arden on helium. "You know **The Dickies**, that pop-punk-send-up band from L.A.? Well, they've got their first new record in a decade out on A&M, *Second Coming*, and I just found this song called 'Goin' Homo.' Really silly, but it has this terrific couplet, 'I'm goin' homo. What can I do?/I wanna talk about it on *Donahue*.'"

"Very cute, Barry. Did you see where former fag **David Bowie**, turned 42, announced he's marrying a 22-year-old dish, who was a dancer on his last tour, and hired a bunch of skinheads to stage-dive in front of him for his new video? Talk about goin' hetero. I'm spelling gay pride P-H-R-A-N-C. Wait'll you get your pink hatbox, dude."

Barry giggled, then hissed, "Oh! Speaking of vinyl 'gayosity,' have you heard about **The Frogs**? They're these two Fleming brothers from Wisconsin who bill themselves as 'the first gay-supremacist folk

duo.' The cover of the LP is a photo of one of them when he was 5 years old, beaming in his Sunday shorts, with a pink triangle pin on his little dress shirt. Check it out. You won't believe it."

Barry was right. The record, *It's Only Right and Natural* (Homestead), is flat-out weird, an acoustic set of ribald reveries sung in the whimsical deadpan of early David Bowie sides.

Dennis Fleming has explained that the songs were mostly made up by the brothers on the spot. "It was just our private joke. . . . We were trying to make each other laugh. It was never something that was meant for the public to hear."

Most never will, but those who discover these blasé odes to the joys of swilling semen and bending over in the locker-room shower are liable to find themselves intrigued, disgusted, baffled, or bemused.

I played the LP straight through for two homo rocker friends. One of them, Jeffrey, said, "I've never heard gay music like that. It doesn't sound vulgar, just uninhibited—tall tales and whimsy, like gay campfire songs."

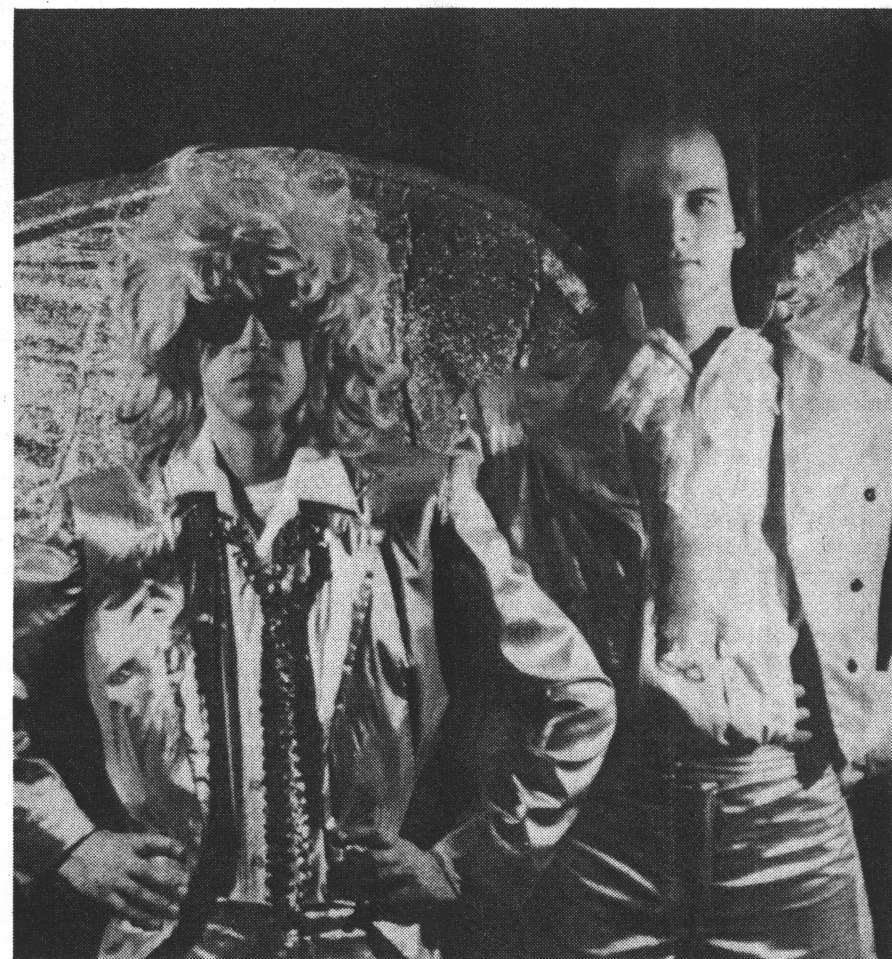
His boyfriend, Bobo, said, "I like the idea that these are actually people who *hate* everyone but gay men. I think it's remarkable, and I know some sick fucks who'd like it too."

I thought I'd find the record a lot more remarkable if I believed that **The Frogs** were actually gay. When my two street-smart buds took the disc at face value and liked it, I thought maybe I was wrong; maybe it's more remarkable that they're straight.

If a couple of heteros hacking around could come up with what Jeffrey described as "this new, real honest gay mentality," why can't homos? Are they incapable, uninterested, or afraid? With hordes of dykes and homos in pop struggling to be mistaken for breeders, we've left it to straight men to impersonate brazen queers. They may be the only ones who feel they can afford to. Homo alert, indeed.

AIDS BENEFITS AND GAY PARADES

As we went to press, it appeared that gay rock-promotions ace **Tim McQuaid** was going to realize his dream of mobilizing the Bay area's music community with the "In Concert Against AIDS" shows (produced by Bill Graham Presents). Despite numerous mishaps and frustrations (attempts to mount major country, rap, and hard-rock shows collapsed), several events seemed locked-in solidly, including a stadium show headlined by the **Grateful Dead**, **John Fogerty**, and **Tracy Chapman**;



The Frogs: The first 'gay-supremacist folk duo'

a comedy lineup with **Bob Goldthwaite** on top; a cabaret showcase emceed by **Ben Vereen**; a Hispanic extravaganza with **Pete Escovedo** and **Linda Ronstadt**; a gay dance featuring **Book of Love**; club sets by **Huey Lewis**; and a gospel show at Oakland's Paramount Theatre. On top of this, McQuaid has scheduled a six-hour telethon on June 17 to cap the effort.

"It's been harrowing," McQuaid says, grinning gamely, "but remember that no one has mounted anything *near* this ambitious in the United States to fight AIDS before, and hopefully we've broken down barriers for future events here and elsewhere."

In New York, **Dionne Warwick** has lined up the stars for an event benefiting pediatric AIDS care (see story, page 48). The one event in her "24 Hours for Life" effort targeted at gay men had been slated for the old Studio 54, with **Donna Summer**—of all people—headlining. Boycotts of Summer's new LP (still protesting her "Adam and Steve" and "AIDS is your sin" cracks six years ago) have thus far failed to materialize. This gig had promised to renew the ruptured friendship between the disco

diva and her gay fans. Maybe next time.

In the United Kingdom, **Jimmy Somerville** and Erasure's **Andy Bell** both took time out of recording sessions to mount the ACT UP all-star revue May 24 at the Fridge—a tribute to **Sylvester** and a benefit to fight AIDS. Back in San Francisco, **Marty Blecman**, head of Syl's gay label, Megatone, was working to record a benefit 12-inch of the anthem "ACT UP!" penned by **Jo Carol**, with proceeds to support radical AIDS activists. Megatone may also release a Sylvester medley by the newly reconstituted version of Somerville's original group, **Bronski Beat**.

Somerville and **The Banderas** are committed to playing London's gay pride parade. New York hopes to have **Gwen Guthrie** and the **Village People**, while San Francisco has snagged Austin's killer quartet (they added drums!) **Two Nice Girls** and **The Del Rubio Triplets**.

Phranc moaned, "I'd love to have played London, New York, San Francisco—even Long Beach—all of them asked, but I committed myself last year to do the Mariposa Folk Festival up in Canada." Shucks.