

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Atlantis

by Jay Brown

"Atlantis?" she says, laughing. "Why, I've been working on it all my life. I've only been writing it for a year and a half, though. And I am writing the music, too."

Melinda Pittman has written the story of *Atlantis* as the saga of twin daughters. The twins are Songrile, an oracle and Eschan, a mute. "The twins search for a way to live, a way of being a part of the world. They have a magical language, a twin secret communication."

The play, Melinda says, is a metaphor for the conflict between authority and freedom. "The Atlantis legend is inherent in our culture. Everyone is acquainted with the legend. So, in a subconscious sense, the Atlantis legend is an ideal setting for a realistic story of love and power."

The costumes for Pittman's treatment are designs by Arthur deBow. The play is set about 10,000 years ago, but Pittman says it is



Nyla McCarthy and Barbara Bosakowski as the mute and visionary twins in *Atlantis*.

photo by Rick Adams

about no time in particular. It is many periods.

*Atlantis* opens on February 10 at the newly refurbished Echo Theatre at SE Hawthorne and 37th. *Atlantis* will be a double premiere, the first production of the play and the first production in the new theatre space. The Echo Theatre was originally, way back when, a silent movie theatre. It closed in 1926.

Robin Lane, the artistic director of Do Jump! Dance Theatre, now permanently at home at the Echo Theatre, is the choreographer of *Atlantis*. Lane is well known for her work with Storefront Theatre.

The cast of *Atlantis* includes Nyla McCarthy and Barbara Bosakowski as the twins, Colleen Conroy as the Bulldancer, Jim Caputo as Mydarc, the prince of Atlantis. Victoria Parker, the New Rose Theatre's Hedda Gabler last fall, is playing Basileah, the queen of Atlantis; Clifford Smith, a popular Portland musician, is playing Daethros, the king of Atlantis. The parents of the twins are played by Dalana Lynand Stan Foote. The Voices of Atlantis: Sally Irwin, Brian Haliski, Deborah Beere and Shannon Chaffin, with Kate Ketcham, musical arranger and flautist.

*Atlantis* premieres February 10 and plays for five weekends only, Friday-Sunday at 8 pm, through March 11. The Echo Theatre, 1515 SE 37th and Hawthorne, 231-1212.

## Silkwood portrays reality

by Jane Howard

It's not exactly the burning question that everyone is asking: "Hey, have you seen *Silkwood*?"

Not exactly, because it's not like we once asked, almost demanded (under our breaths), "Have you seen it? *Personal Best*?" or "Have you seen *The Killing of Sister George*?" We were dying to see ourselves in the movies.

This time it is different. This time we aren't

theatre-bound, driven by the old cult fervor, delighted that there is a movie about us (however vapid or inaccurate), marching off in party spirit to see ourselves humiliated on the silver screen. We're not doing that for *Silkwood*, even though a main character is a lesbian.

That is because *Silkwood* is a different kind of movie, miles from those "real-life lesbian" flicks that have come and (fortunately) gone, far from those statements that seemed to somehow vilify and glamorize us, all in the same breathless breath. This movie is light years from those curious peeks at our lives which always seemed to come across as more of an insulting invasion than a validation, no matter how gently it was done.

And there is one very good reason that *Silkwood* is different in the way it comments

on our lifestyle.

Where those old cult films made a spectacle of us, cut us from the mainstream as if we had no right to be there, and made us so bizarre that we hardly recognized ourselves, *Silkwood* plops us down right in the middle of blue-collar-USA, right where we belong. Right where we really are (along with all the other places that we really are, which is everywhere). No lesbian hype. Just the real stuff: paychecks, kids, plutonium, station wagons, small cafes, friends, troubles, goofy lovers... reality.

But let's set all that aside for the moment, because there are plenty of reasons to see *Silkwood*.

First there is Meryl Streep (which is enough for me). She made Karen Silkwood real, like any one of us, someone you might know... for a while.

Then there is the important point of the movie itself. This movie is about the fear that all enlightened women harbor in our hearts: fear of knowing too much about the Good Old Boys' Network, fear of being the victim (again) of their paranoia, fear of getting in the way of their money. We need to know those things. But we don't want to. Not really. So we must. *Silkwood* shows us again how easily it can happen, lest we fail to remember, even for one careless, deadly moment.

But there is that other reason for people in general and lesbians in particular to see *Silkwood*, and that reason is Cher. She plays a lesbian, Karen Silkwood's friend Dolly. Dolly's girlfriend is a little odd (whose isn't?), but Dolly is solid. And it doesn't matter whether or not she stayed true to the story of Dolly, or even if there was a Dolly in Karen Silkwood's real life. What matters is that Cher played it right: without the drooling psychopathology of *Sister George* or the giggling idiocy and insipid, insulting banalities of *Personal Best*, or even the depressive isolation of *Lianna* (the best "real life" peek yet, but still...).

So why did Cher's *Silkwood* role work when the other films fell so flat?

Well, as ironical as it is, Cher's role works because *Silkwood* isn't about lesbians. *Silk-*

*wood* is about people and real life. Whole life. The panoramic view, cross-section, heartland America. So in its real-lifeness, in *Silkwood*'s terrifying believability, there is this lesbian who is so unobtrusive and matter-of-fact that it would be easy to overlook the statement she makes.

But we mustn't overlook her statement. By simply fitting in so easily, one character in a vignette of believable real life, Cher says something critical about us. She says how real, how normal, how everyday, we are.

And we mustn't overlook that. Cher in *Silkwood* is special. Not bizarre, but special. She did not reflect a character that was isolated-insipid-depressive-psychopathic. She reflected a sub-culture that I could feel good about.

We've been screaming bloody murder for decades about the way that cinema exploits women, exploits our sexuality, and when given the chance, exploits lesbians. Based on *Silkwood*, we might be lulled into believing, hoping that the film industry is finally beginning to work out their stuff about lesbians. Maybe *Silkwood* is evidence of that.

I hope so, but I think not. I think that *Silkwood* is special and unique. I doubt that we've escaped yet, that we've been exploited and vilified for the last time.

But Cher does provide evidence of one thing. She shows us what we must keep demanding and expecting of those cinematic visions as they are splashed on the screen. If moviemakers are going to talk about us and pretend to know something about us, then we must demand that they tell the truth, that they do it like Cher did it in *Silkwood*. They must say that we are human, that we have sensitivities, loyalties, intelligence, that we are no more bizarre than the rest of this bizarre world, and less bizarre than a whole lot of it. That we are just one role in the slice of human life. Because we are.

I went to see *Silkwood* because I admired the courage of one woman against The System.

I came away respecting the movie for that, and more.

**Hobbs**



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