



Spicy Tomatoes

by Renee LaChance

female — femme, frail, dame, skirt, broad, SISTER, TOMATO

Roget's Thesaurus

The name was an inspiration of Roget, and in some it inspires images of a tomato in nun's drag, yet, in reality, Sister Tomato is a group of four women who light up a stage with '30s and '40s lowdown boogie woogie, blues, and swing.

Playing the Portland area for the last two years, the Tomatos were absent from the stage for six months searching for a replacement for Judy, their piano player who left because of different priorities.

Barbara (B.J.) Castleman saw their ad but was apprehensive about joining the band because she didn't feel that she could play in a "tomatoy way." Coming from a ragtime and boogie woogie background, B.J. played solo at Wilde Oscar's and led sing-a-longs at senior centers sharpening her Bessie Smith style that has complimented lead vocalist Paula Elliott well.

Since each of these women are experienced musicians they have been able to

mesh together their talents and energies to spark new capabilities in each of them.

Paula began singing folk music in the sixties and was later influenced by Dixieland, ragtime, and blues. An accomplished composer, the Tomatoes perform many of her original tunes which have a unique style that can take an audience through a deep range of emotions. Cat Perry, the drummer, began playing drums at the insistence of her mother who felt Cat would become a social outcast if she were allowed to continue drumming on her thighs. The silent one who plays electric bass is Donna. The spiciness of B.J.'s personality has helped bring out some of the humor in Donna, most apparent when B.J. serenades Donna with "Feet's Too Big."

With an ever-expanding repertoire, Sister Tomato plays a balance of older tunes, and originals. Though they could stand alone on the innovativeness of Paula's originals, it is refreshing to hear heart-wrenching blues like "Buddy, Can You Spare a Dime," and "Heart, Heart, Heart," along with mean and nasty boogie woogie like "Hey, Misbehavin'," and "Lola."

As the founding mothers of last year's Gay Prom, they are allowing **Just Out** and **A Woman's Place Bookstore** to produce this year's prom during Lesbian and Gay Pride Week. If you haven't caught Sister Tomato's new act you can attend their upcoming dance at Reed College Commons April 7th, or see them at the YWCA International Women's Day celebration, Saturday, March 10 as part of the entertainment there.

One would think that a person would treat kindly their namesake, but nothing is sacred to these women, least of all tomatoes. They urge everyone to "Be there or be ketchup!"

7th Annual Portland Film Festival

The Northwest Film Study Center's 7th Portland International Film Festival will take place March 9-25. The selections this year include 30 feature films from 19 countries, all making their Portland premieres. Films will be shown in the Berg-Swann Auditorium of the Portland Art Museum, 1219 SW Park Avenue.

Opening the Festival will be an American film, *Heart Like a Wheel*, which stars Bonnie Bedelia in the true-life story of Shirley Muldowney and her rise from housewife to one of the great champions of the male-dominated sport of drag racing. Directed by Jonathan Kaplan, the film also stars Beau Bridges, Leo Rossi and Hoyt Axton. It will be shown at 8:00 pm on Friday, March 9 as a

Festival benefit. The \$7.00 admission permits attendance at a reception following the film.

While all of the films will be receiving their Portland premieres, several films will be having their American premieres, as well. Included in this special group are: *The Spring River Flows East* (China), a 1947 classic set during and just after World War II; *The Go Masters* (Japan/China), a co-production epic symbolic of the two cultures which have been at odds for centuries; *Bronte* (Ireland), a film version of Julie Harris' one-woman show on the life of novelist Charlotte Bronte; and *Dust of Empire* (France/Vietnam), a stunning visual essay on the many empires of Vietnam.

A highlight of the festival is Robert Altman's production of David Rabe's *Streamers*, the Broadway hit dealing with three men thrown together in a Southern army barracks while awaiting assignment to Vietnam. Integral to the plot is the confrontation between a gay man and other men in the barracks. *Streamers* will be shown Wednesday, March 14, at 8 pm.

PGMC's Love Song

The Portland Gay Men's Chorus will present two concerts in March, the first at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts in Eugene on Sunday, March 11, at 2 pm. The same concert will be presented the following Saturday, March 17, at 8 p.m., at the Benson High School Auditorium, 546 NE 12th Avenue, Portland. Tickets (\$6) are available at the door or in advance from Sensorium, Forward Gear, Roxy Heart's, Somebody's Place, Dugan's, C.C. Slaughters, or any Hult Center outlet in Eugene.

These concerts, *Lovesong, a Springtime Serenade*, are the Chorus' 19th major production and will feature a rainbow of Ameri-

can lovesongs. Selections ranging from Cole Porter's *Let's Do it* to Buffy Sainte-Marie's *Until It's Time for You to Go*, and nostalgic showtunes from the Big Band era of the '40s to a ballad by Benjamin Britten will demonstrate the growing musical skill of the Chorus.

Special guests include B. Gail Hillyer, dancers and instrumental accompanists who will assist the Chorus in this musical tour through the world of amour.

The Portland Gay Men's Chorus will celebrate its fourth anniversary later this year and is now composed of 94 volunteers who carry on a unique and important part of America's musical heritage. Men's choruses waned as a musical form for several decades until the rise of many groups composed primarily of gay men during the 1970s. Most major metropolitan areas in the United States now support such musical groups. And the Portland Gay Men's Chorus is one of the finest in the nation.

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