

HUMOR

The sound of silence

Why aren't gay icons gay?

Last month I announced a boycott on sex with closeted celebrities—The Great Boinking Boycott. I sent out press releases to nearly 100 media outlets, I handed out fliers, I made phone calls.

Yet practically everyone I spoke to said the same thing: "Hell, if Tom Cruise wanted to sleep with me, I would." Even the lesbians.

This month people from around the world are making pilgrimages to pay tribute to the Madonna—not God's mother, the other one. And a lot of those men will be the kind who check for gum on their shoes by looking over their shoulders. Try it, and you'll get what I mean.

Nothing against Madonna, but am I the only gay guy who thinks it's time we had a gay icon who was, well, gay?

Sure, we've finally got gay celebrities—Elton John, Nathan Lane, Rupert Everett, to name a few—but none of these guys inspires the kind of fanatical worship that puts gay men on a first-name basis with their divas. I'm a Barbra/Liza/Judy man myself, so I understand the impulse. The greatest gay male icons are women who give voice to our secret selves, but in much more fabulous evening wear.

It's always been that way, it seems. Before Bette Midler there was Bette Davis, not to mention Marlene or Tallulah. And before any of them, of course, was Cher, who is actually 129 years old but has had work done. Why, I'm sure as far back as ancient Egypt, Cleopatra probably had crowds of men in eyeliner begging for her hieroglyph on their papyrus.

I've known gay men with *I Love Lucy* fetishes and Mary Tyler Moore obsessions; I even know a guy who has an entire room dedicated as a shrine to Wilma Flintstone.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARC
 by Marc Acito



As for me, I'm sure I wouldn't have dropped out of college and moved to New York City if I hadn't grown up watching *That Girl*. I was certain my life would be complete if only I could get totally overdressed and go fly a kite in Central Park.

I'm sorry, but *That Girl* must have been created by gay men. No one but a gay man would think to dress Marlo Thomas in that floral print number with the matching parasol.

But when I found out young gay men now have chosen Titney Rears and Crispy Ugly-era as their divas, I thought, "This has gotta stop!" So I came up with The Great Boinking Boycott as a way of forcing closeted celebrities out.

But even queer people have said to me, "Well, maybe

those celebrities aren't ready to come out yet." Puh-leeze. That's like saying someone isn't ready to be Chinese or have blue eyes.

Or else they say, "Maybe they don't want their families to know." Don't these people realize that embarrassing your family is one of the great joys of being queer?

What's so bad about the public thinking a man is gay, anyway? It just means people think you're too good-looking and well groomed to be straight.

That's why I've never understood those people who say, "They happen to be gay," as if it were some accident, like they happened to be at the corner of Fourth and Main when the trolley car ran them over.

I refuse to believe my being gay was an accident. I'm sure God doesn't choose just anyone to be queer but subjects the souls waiting to go to earth to some very rigorous scrutiny:

"OK, you there, with the exquisite sense of style," God says. "Yes, you, playing the harp. You get to be a gay man."

"And, uh, you there, with the bad haircut and the sensible shoes," God says. "You're gonna be a straight man."

"But I'm a woman," the soul with the bad haircut says.

"Oops," God says. "My mistake. You'll be a lesbian."

In fairness to lesbians (I can just imagine the angry mail now), our queer sisters are way ahead of us gay boys in terms of devotion to an icon of the same gender and orientation. First there was Martina, then k.d., then Melissa and now the entire WNBA. It's just not fair.

But because no man is willing to be the first truly gay icon, I see no other choice than to appoint myself. That's right. From now on, just add "Marco" (first name only, please) to that list of women's names.

Feel free to pin all of your unfulfilled thoughts and desires on me. I'm here for you. I care.

Now if I just could find something you people could lip-sync to, I'd be set.


And that, my friends, is The Gospel According to Marc. ☐

MARC ACITO is accepting résumés for go-go boys and backup singers. E-mail him at marcacito@home.com.



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