

**speak out**

**just asking** Up-and-coming gay icon Britney Spears: the next Madonna or the next Tiffany?

I don't know quite what it is about Britney Spears—I just can't take her seriously. Madonna was cool and still is.

Tiffany was a flash in the pan—and posing for *Playboy* isn't going to bring her back. Maybe Britney is just a "tart in the pan."

EVA HOFFMAN  
Milwaukie

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Maybe at the ripe old age of 34, I finally am starting to sound too much like my parents, but I don't understand what is so interesting about Ms. Spears.

Sure, on the surface Britney and Madonna have a few things in common. Both have made unfortunate forays into film, both have used their sexuality as a marketing device, and both are associated with virginity: Madonna for calling the loss of hers "a career move" and Spears for maintaining hers as if it is kind of mark of virtue.

But there is where I see the similarities ending. Has Spears said or done anything sociologically interesting?

Has Britney challenged mainstream ideas about sexuality, religion and hypocrisy? Has she tackled issues of class, racism, sexism and homophobia?

Has Spears sent any kind of important message through her work? No.

In fact, Spears is little more than a hypocrite. She is ever so proud of her virginity yet sells her sexuality with all the subtlety of a prostitute.

Madonna challenged the mainstream by holding up a mirror to society and showing us a woman can be articulate, literate, intelligent, sexually aggressive and nonvirginal and still demand to be treated with dignity and respect. Although I have no problem with Spears promoting sexual restraint (which I think is actually a good thing in this day and age of rampant sexually transmitted diseases), she should follow that message through with her persona and music.

Madonna is an artist who has something to say about the issues in our world. Britney is merely a reflection of society and how much work there still is yet to do.

(And poor Justin Timberlake! He is one of the biggest teen heartthrobs ever, and the poor boy isn't getting laid!)

MARK WALKER  
Wilsonville

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When Madonna first came out she was older and a much harder woman because of her past than Britney and her Mouseketeer years. Their backgrounds are completely different.

Although Madonna used sex to sell herself, she also proved to be an intelligent businesswoman. Meanwhile, Britney just tends to be selling sex.

Also, Madonna's style always has been able to change with the times. Meanwhile, Britney just has been putting out bubblegum pop.

Hopefully when she is older we can make another comparison and say yes if she is lucky. But Britney has been around much longer than Tiffany was, so she has something going for her.

JASON ENGLAND  
Portland

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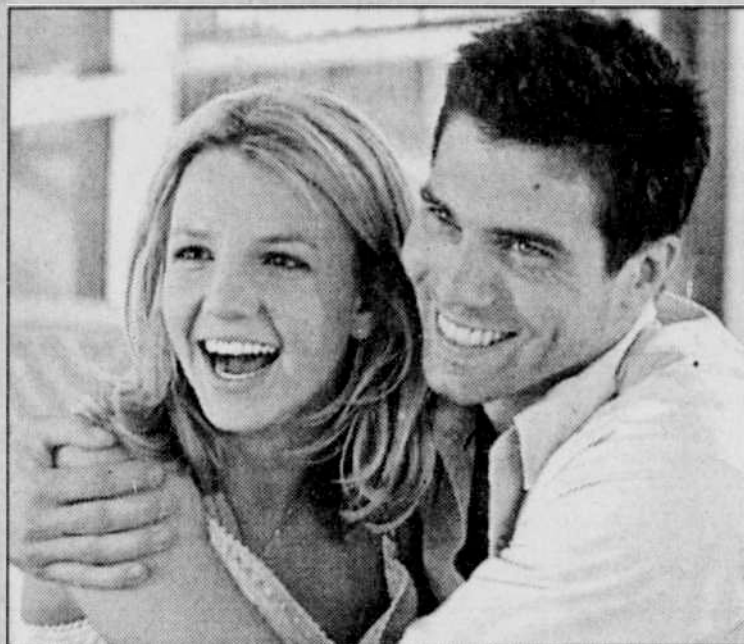
Britney Smears is going to be the next Tiffany. She is nowhere near as popular as Madonna was by now.

Her "trends" all are taken from other people. She hasn't offered anything new for young people—except for a horrible voice, crappy melodies and stupid commercials. She needs to crawl back into her hole in Florida with the other teen-age song hags.

AJ GILBERTSON  
Beaverton

...

Tiffany. She might be an industry earning power at the moment, but her music lacks originality and stamina.



Madonna has a quarter-century of musical firsts under her many belts. Britney still will fall short of her maverick inventiveness in 10 years, should she remain popular.

Is Britney capable of producing a "Like a Virgin" in the next year or two? Or "Like a Prayer" in the next 10? Not likely.

Madonna's savvy sense of controversy and artistic daring will far outlive Britney. She will be making original music at 50. If Britney still is singing at 30, we all will have become even more bored with her canned act.

Everyone might not like Madonna, but she commands respect for license to self-invention. Everyone likes Britney, but what we hear now is what we'll hear in the future.

DEB SACHS  
Portland

**next issue** Is Just Out on the right track in trying to be "all things to all people" statewide, or would Portland advertisers and readers be better served by maintaining focus on the Rose City? Respond at [www.justout.com](http://www.justout.com). (Don't forget to include your name, city and daytime telephone number.)

eliminate half an hour of network advertisements? It looks suspicious to me, but I hope the scheduling decision was because of incompetence and not homophobia.

THOMAS KRAEMER  
Corvallis

**Judgmental judge**

TO THE EDITOR:

President Bush recently presented nominations to fill judicial vacancies. These nominees, far from the moderates he promised in his campaign, have extreme right-wing viewpoints as evidenced by their judgments on record.

In particular, Mississippi Judge Charles Pickering Sr. exhibited his far-right leanings in regard to miscegenation, abortion and even voting rights for African Americans. Not only has his record been deplorable, but he also has attempted to hide the truth about his judgments from the public by refusing to make them available to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

A glimpse of Pickering's convictions:

- As a state senator and as a leader in the Republican Party he advocated for a constitutional amendment to ban abortion at the state or federal level.

- He assisted in the rewording of the Mississippi miscegenation law (preventing interracial relationships) to get around challenges regarding its constitutionality.

- As recently as 1993, he opposed the idea of "one person, one vote" and repeatedly rejected measures to expand electoral opportunities for African Americans after passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Check out his record for yourself. Then call our senators immediately if his nomination is passed to the floor.

Ask them to filibuster this nominee and vote against him. He clearly has demonstrated he is neither a moderate nor capable of clear, unbiased judicial decision making.

MELANIE EDWARDS  
Oregon National Organization for Women  
Action Vice President

**Sam support**

TO THE EDITOR:

I Am Sam deserved more than one little piece of popcorn ["What's Poppin'?" Feb. 1]. This is a meaningful and touching movie.

While I was in college, I volunteered to teach mentally disabled students to use calculators to

buy food. Being a demanding teacher, I got impatient and started to raise my voice to a student.

He was happy instead of being upset. I guess he had learned something, but I felt guilty for raising my voice rather than proud of my achievement.

I heard comments like, "How could Sam (Sean Penn) raise a baby but not an 8-year-old kid?" However, we should not forget he got help from his neighbor. Also, a baby does not talk back to anybody.

At first, I did feel the lawyer (Michelle Pfeiffer) was flirting with Sam, but on second thought maybe it wasn't meant that way. She had a busy husband who refused to help her take care of her son. She was touched because Sam was willing to give time and love to his daughter.

And emotions got involved when the lawyer was trying to help him. I could not speak for Sam because I do not know how much a mentally disabled person would know about flirting.

This movie was about how he fought for his rights in taking care of his daughter. Also, it showed how some social workers badly handled their cases.

The thing I did not like about the movie was that I was not told how he got the homeless girl pregnant.

LAYNAH TAN  
Portland

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