

WWM I

For York: A Homecoming; For Dobkin: Appreciation

Special To Q-Notes

When Beth York takes the stage at the first Winter WomynMusic festival in Charlotte, it'll be the closest to a homecoming that she's ever had.

The Spartanburg native who now lives in Atlanta has never performed in the Piedmont Carolinas.

"Playing in Charlotte will be the next best thing to doing a hometown concert," she said in late January. "I hope to see a lot of women from Spartanburg."

York is one of almost a dozen performers who will participate in the Feb. 27-28 three-session festival at UNC-Charlotte's McKnight Hall in perhaps the first major indoor women's music festival in the country — and the first women's music festival in the Carolinas.

Top names include Alix Dobkin, Debbie Fier and the pop/reggae team Casselberry-DuPree.



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Dobkin, who lives in upstate New York, has a particular fondness for performing in the South.

"I feel so very appreciated before southern audiences," she said. "The people who come to the concerts don't have an opportunity to listen to a lot of women's music — not nearly as much as on the West Coast and in the Northeast."

"In Charlotte, they'll be able to hear Lucie Blue (Tremblay) from Canada, Robin Ferguson, and Linda Moakes from California. These people normally don't get a chance to perform in the South."

Dobkin is no stranger to the South. The

guitarist/singer was in Durham Jan. 9 for a performance and has played the Carolinas a half dozen times. She is one of the venerated performers in women's music. Her 1973 album with Kay Gardner, "Lavender Jane Loves Women," helped define the then-new field of women's music.

The festival is expected to be packed with people from at least two interest areas, according to promoter Billie Rose.

"A lot of women who bask in the atmosphere of such festivals as the Michigan Women's Music Festival and the Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festival will be coming to Charlotte just because there's no other festival at this time of year," Rose said.

"And we'll get a lot of people who have never attended a major women's festival, but want to find out how good the music is. It's going to be a very pleasant surprise for them."

New Yorkers Casselberry-DuPree have performed with major stars such as Whoopi Goldberg, Taj Mahal, Holly

Near and Harry Belafonte. Fier studied piano under the woman who was Duke Ellington's teacher and performing partner. York vaulted from music therapy into composing her own New Age-style music and has written two albums, one of which was nominated for best New Age recording in 198.

Casselberry-DuPree, Tremblay and Fier will open the festival on Friday, Feb. 27; Moakes, York and Dobkin perform Saturday, Feb. 28. Both nights' concerts begin at 8 p.m.

Regional artists will perform in an afternoon showcase beginning at 2 p.m. Feb. 28. A featured part of the showcase will be a traveling slide show, famed in feminist circles, by JEB which traces the history of radical feminism.

Other showcase performers include romantic pop singer Samis Rose of Charlotte, musical humorist Ginny Real of Winston-Salem, and a capella singer Robin Ferguson, a Savannah, Ga., native now living in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Advance tickets (available through Feb. 10): \$35 all events or \$17 per night and \$6 showcase. Stamped, self-addressed envelope with check or money order (payable to D.W. King) to WWM, P.O. Box 221495, Charlotte, N.C. 28222. Feb. 11 and after: phone 704/545-0801 to reserve tickets — \$39 all events or \$19 per night and \$7 showcase.

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 At Charades**

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Reviewing '86: Mighty Fine Year In Charlotte

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first-time gay bowling league in addition to other sponsorships.

Consider that for the first time Charlotte's powerfully influential female impersonation segment officially joined forces with the organizations. Boom Boom Latour and Geri O'Neal sat on the QCQ board of directors and Boom Boom urged support for ONI at every opportunity.

The Tradesmen showed that leathermen may know better than any other segment of the community how to just have fun with their hilarious club nights

at Brass Rail and their showing of the colors at other bars. It was a welcome year of coming out of the closet for Charlotte's leathermen who previously had been small in number and reticent to stand out.

The community, with drag queens and leatherwearers in full support, turned out magnificently for activist events. More than 100 people braved television cameras to attend a "vigil" in a public park to protest Dr. Paul Cameron's visit to Charlotte. For the first time, a voter registration campaign found scores of new voters rather than hand-fuls. And ONI's Town Meetings drew scores, more than 10 times the number who had ever attended a Lambda Political Caucus meeting.

In entertainment, a familiar bar reopened under the name Charades and was welcomed lovingly.

There were setbacks, too. Persons 19 and 20 were banned from bars for most of the fall as bars wrestled with North Carolina's latest alcoholic beverage laws. The new rules affected nongay persons as well.

Other negatives were minor. QCQ, while admirably trying to establish new frontiers, struggled with its bank account, handing out only a few hundred dollars to the organizations it hoped to support. And QCQ learned that Charlotte gay men and lesbians aren't as enthusiastic about monthly skate parties as cities with larger populations may be.

In public relations, the only gain — though a powerful one — was the "Gay/Lesbian Forum." On the other hand, there were few negatives. The arrest of Bob Walton for sexual assault on a male high school student dominated local news in November and December, but no witch hunts were called for. Earlier in the year, the public learned that Charlotte police screened gay men and lesbians from employ-ment.

Charlotte's community can hardly expect as much internal growth in 1987. But as public acceptance of "Gay/Lesbian Forum" grows, perhaps the year will show more pluses with the city's nongay population.

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