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FALSETTOS

Music and lyrics by

William Finn

Book by

William Finn &
James Lapine

Friday, Saturday & Sunday, June 6 - 22
ACT Theatre Weekend Package
at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel

Package includes one night at the Asheville Renaissance Hotel in downtown Asheville (right next door to the theatre), 2 breakfasts and 2 tickets to the Asheville Community Theatre production of *Falsettos* - all for only \$182 plus taxes. Rate is only available first two weekends. Call the hotel at 1-800-468-3571 and give code ECEP for special package pricing.

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No mincing words

Latest CD releases by openly gay performers include angry messages

With all apologies to NWA (Niggaz With Attitude), BWP (Bitches With Problems) and other groups of similar nomenclature — let's discuss a musical phenomenon I like to call HWI: Homos With Issues.

HWI isn't a group, but a rubric under which might appear any number of gay griots with folkie influences, acoustic guitars and a laundry list of social ills. Unfortunately, for all their progressive politicking and grassroots coalition building, the music is oftentimes as tedious as it is leftist.

The fact that our featured albums, *War All The Time* and *Welcome To Pagan Place*, fall under the HWI umbrella yet remain imminently listenable is cause for a toast of vino (made from grapes picked by unionized workers only, of course).

• *War All The Time*
Testosterone Kills
(Fortified)

Testosterone Kills is NYC-based musical and romantic duo Tim Daly and Pablo Ratliff. *New York Magazine* described them as "what Simon and Garfunkel might have been if they had fucked each other and grew up on Nirvana and Techno."

On *War All The Time*, Testosterone Kills' 10-track debut, the pair augment thrashing acoustic guitars with drum loops and analog basslines to broaden the soundscapes supporting their way-gay lyrics. And their

aggro bands — who seem to rage just for the hell of it — Testosterone Kills succeeds because their anger isn't simply a weapon with which to pummel listeners, but a means to an enlightening end. The fact that they have the craftsmanship to embed such vitriol in ringing melodies only confirms their talent.

Bottom line: a welcome addition to the HWI pantheon.

• *Welcome To Pagan Place*
Laura Love
(Koch)

After listening to singer/songwriter Laura Love's recently released eighth album, *Welcome To Pagan Place*, George Dubya would probably start spouting Rodney Dangerfield's trademark line, "I don't get no respect." And for a change, he would be right.

The album's centerpiece, and lead single, is "I Want You Gone," a go-to-hell to the Chief

diss that even manages to mock the President's oratory skills ("I don't want a moron gettin' this war on — and nuclear is not a word"). As arch as this



might seem in print, the track is a surprisingly buoyant slice of acoustic pop. Love's lilting, dreamy vocal restrains the defiant lyrics and as a result, the song never degenerates into the hysterical rant it could've been.

The rest of the album is less controversial, but equally accomplished with its unique melding of Appalachian guitars and urban rhythms. Additional tracks find the 43-year-old commenting on her new status as a foster parent (she and her partner of seven years are caring for a newborn) and even reconstructing a pair of AOR classics: "Fly Like An Eagle/Come Together."

Love says that *Welcome To Pagan Place* is special because it combines her three favorite things: funk, bluegrass and despising the Bush administration. I say you can always tell when someone enjoys their work.

Bottom line: the HWI executive council should be contacting Love any moment now about that seat on the board.

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sprightly harmonizing soars at its most in-your-face — as on "Arizona," a blistering coming-out tale that begins, "Fuck you. It's not much of an argument, but fuck you. Though it's not real intelligent, I think that I am entitled to vent, so fuck you."

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