

### Durham Native Teresa Trull Returns

Several years ago, when I was a UNC freshman, I desperately searched out the infamous Chapel Hill lesbian community. It was not as easy to find as I had originally expected. Somehow, in a Franklin Street record store, I stumbled upon a section called "Women's Music." I knew nothing of the genre or the artists. I looked over the records and chose one by Teresa Trull.

Her picture on the cover looked friendly and unthreatening. I loved the title, "The Ways A Woman Can Be." And it was finally what I'd been looking for.

Since those days of awakening, it's been my pleasure to introduce many of my friends to this remarkable musician. And now it is my pleasure to introduce her to you.

Tuesday night, November 11th at 8 o'clock will bring the return of Durham native Theresa Trull. She will be accompanied by fellow recording artist Bonnie Hayes of the Wild Combo, a favorite of progressive radio listeners nationwide.

I talked with both of these performers recently, via telephone, on behalf of The Front Page. I hope you will enjoy the conversation.

— Rebecca



Teresa Trull, a pioneer in the Women's Music recording business, will appear in concert with Bonnie Hayes on Tuesday, November 11. This concert is a promotional tour for Teresa's new album release, "Step Away" (Redwood Records), and will be her only southeast appearance.

A native of Durham, Trull grew up steeped in the local music scene. She started her musical career, typically, by singing gospel in churches. Moving on to blues and R&B, she worked a few years as a lead singer in a rock-and-roll band, then moved to the east coast nightclub circuit. Since her first release, "The Ways A Woman Can Be" (Olivia Records), Trull has performed nationally and internationally to a growing audience.

She'll be available to autograph albums after the concert. Ladyslipper, the Durham-based music distribution company, will be present with a range of women's music, both albums and tapes, the night of the performance.

Tickets are \$10 and \$8 in advance; \$11 and \$9 at the door. The concert begins at 8:00 p.m. in Reynolds Auditorium, in the Bryan Center at Duke University in Durham. Doors open at 7:30 p.m.

To order tickets by mail, make check or money order payable to "Durham YWCA" and mail it to Y at 809 Proctor Street, Durham 27701. Include stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Proceeds from the concert will benefit the Durham YWCA Rape Crisis Center and War Resister's League/Southeast. For more information, call Chris at (919) 688-4396 or Mandy at 682-6374.

TFP: Teresa Trull, what were your big musical influences?

TT: Well, there was this incredible singer on the Duke Grounds Crew. His name was Hazel Burke, and he used to play harmonica and sing like nobody I ever heard. We used to have these big picnics way out on the Eno River. All the Grounds Crew guys — a couple of hippies and me — would take guitars and harmonicas and jam all day long. It was so much fun! I was one of the drivers. It's pretty hard to hide a two-ton dumptruck, but we did it!

TFP: Were you supposed to be working then?

TT: Oh... well, I won't tell you about the times we were supposed to be working... but... we used to hide and have parties at Duke Forest — and sing and play and drink beer — when we were supposed to be working. I worked there in the day and played music at night. It gave me a lot of freedom. I went to Duke for three glorious weeks — and then left to join a rock'n'roll band.

TFP: Three glorious weeks?

TT: Yeah, I got a chemistry scholarship.

TFP: And then you gave it all up for the fast life and glamor of the —

TT: Of the Grounds Crew and rock'n'roll!

TFP: So, were you born and raised a Durham-ite?

TT: Yes, Durham and Hillsborough.

TFP: That Eno River-kind-of-gal... I understand from my acquaintances at a record store in Chapel Hill that your dad goes in there all the time...

TT: Yeah, well he always asks for the manager. And when the manager comes out he goes, "Hi, I'm Teresa Trull's father. I want to see that she gets her own bin."

TFP: He should just ask them to give you your own store — your own chain of Teresa Trull Record Stores.

TT: I love Durham. Oh God, all the incredible gospel and blues that came from around in the area. And, what was the name of that group? There was some incredible four-part gospel group — like the Golden Nights, I think. There were incredible musicians that came from Durham — like Shirley Ceaser and Brownie McGee and Sonny Terry. There was just a wealth of gospel in Durham — there really was.

TFP: Then you left North Carolina for greener pastures?

TT: For Manhattan. You know, it's really funny, because growing up in North Carolina... I have always really been pretty much of a country girl. My grandparents had a chicken farm in Hillsborough and I lived with them a lot and my

parents lived in town. When I was living on my own, I lived way out in Hillsborough, in the country, without any utilities or anything — and I swore to myself the two places I would never, ever move, or even go to, would be Los Angeles and New York, and...

TFP: Voila!

TT: Voila — the first two places I went outside of town... because I had opportunities. I left mostly because I couldn't make a living doing music there. It was really hard... I tried. You know, there are only so many times you can play U.N.C. It's just too small a metropolis — particularly if you don't have a record. So I went to New York to try, and ended up never playing in Manhattan but playing all in upstate New York. It was in New York where I got my offer to come out to California and make a record.

But, it's funny because it was a radio station in Durham... I guess at the time it must've been the Duke station — the student station — that sent a live taped radio show of my music to the record company... which encouraged the record company to get in touch and ask me to do a record.

TFP: O.K., let's go back to the first album. When you're performing "Gray Day" for instance...

TT: It's just I really don't perform any of those songs anymore. Because for me they're... let's see — let's do this mathematically... for me some of those songs are as much as — omigod I'm getting old... let's see, six plus... Some of them are 16 years old!

And you know, I'm sure you feel this way if you

write a lot, something that... O.K., how old are you now?

TFP: 26.

TT: (laughs) We could go real far back on you! Something you wrote when you were 10, you know, you wouldn't exactly necessarily want to publish it.

It's sort of things I wrote when I was 16, 17 now at 32 seem a little bit removed from maybe what I want to be doing.

TFP: It seems like, too, on some of the liner notes you have on your first album, like on the song "Give Me Just A Little Bit More" for instance, you sounded almost a little embarrassed.

TT: What do you mean?

TFP: Well, when your liner notes are saying something like, "Well, I wrote this when I was younger and..."

TT: Right, I know. I'm really glad about that album. Who knows what would be happening if I hadn't done it?

TFP: Yeah, well I'm sorry. That is a fantastic album!

TT: See, I loved that album. But you have to understand, it's more personal to me. I've gotten so much response for that album and so much good stuff and I feel really, really good about it. But that's really, really different. Actually the only song I ever sing from that album anymore is "Gray Day."

TFP: Which has always been my favorite.

TT: It's my favorite too. Because it's the only song that, I guess musically, I can still feel. Plus I just have a real soft spot in my head for it — and in my heart.

TFP: Now I've heard rumours that its really about North Carolina. Is it really?

TT: Oh, I definitely wrote that in North Carolina! And also, the thing of it is — I grew up singing those songs. I was still not an adult. And those kinds of memories are still really strong.

We used to sit around — a bunch of women and sing that song all the time, sitting out on the porch right down near Duke campus.

TFP: Well, now that you're almost a grandmother on the women's music scene...

TT: Thanks.

TFP: So it seems... OK, so there's the first album with all these fun songs — pretty political, as they say. Why did you go for that instead of cashing in on whatever the current trend was?

TT: Well, see, I think that the whole truth of music — and not to even concentrate on the first album — but I think the part of my blessing and problem is that to me, I can write music from here to forever. Music that has a commercial value and that anybody could write. I could just write without having to really think about it. I mean, it's a pretty easy thing for me to do — and good songs, songs with a certain amount of integrity — good songs. But the problem for me is it's a really emotional experience — and it tends to really reflect what I'm going through.

I think everybody, when they come to a certain political awareness — any kind of movement, comes to it with a certain amount of anger and just like total wild energy. It's just like you're a brat. I mean, I was a teenager and a brat and mad and I thought I knew everything. I started to express myself — just what was going on with me then. I'd like to think of myself as having matured — and pretty much, to tell you the truth, in terms of my accomplishments in music. Which I'm sure a lot of people disagree with.

You know, I listen back to albums by my favorite artists, and I'm sure if they could, they would burn them all. And yet I think of them only with love and complete sentimentality. But I think every artist is pretty similar — in that you feel most in touch with what you've recently done. So, this new album is kind of a culmination of a lot of things. It's finally gotten honed down.

TFP: You're one of the big four, I guess. There's Meg, Holly, Cris and you — the big four. Looking back over all those many, many years, what kind of contributions would you say you and your cohorts have made?

TT: Oh, I definitely see an incredible improvement in the validity that we have created in music. See, for me, I see a couple of things.

I've gotten letters from people that just have made me feel so good. It's funny, just the other day I got a letter. I don't know if you're familiar with this song — but I wrote a song on Linda's album called "Basin Street." It was about prostitutes — actually teenage prostitutes... about walking the streets, how sad and lonely it was... really an encouragement to get off the streets. And I actually got a letter from a male prostitute who said "Thank you for that song. It really helped me." I went around for days in a halo feeling like — my god, somebody really heard what I said.

But I tell you, I know that in the music industry, it's created an amazing amount of validity for women. As much as people were really reactionary to it at first, the women's music industry has created a niche — an opportunity for artists like myself and Linda Tillery. I'd say Linda Tillery and I have been a little bit different from Meg and Margie, all the others... but a lot of those people came to music with their politics and that was their expressed desire: "I want to express this message in the music." And Linda and I came like, "Well, we're musicians," and all of a sudden people validated us as women and said, "Hey, you're women you sing about women... you sing about things that are

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