

smashing the gender divide

Electro-pop artist Nicky Click is femme-tastic and proud of it. **By Jonanna Widner**

It was around 9 p.m. in a brightly lit pizza joint in tony burg of Santa Fe, N.M. Not exactly the type of spot where you'd expect to find a postmodern, PC-wielding, punk-dance princess. But then, Nicky Click is nothing if not unpredictable. So, amidst the calls of "Order up!" Click took the stage alone, her high heels clacking across the makeshift performance space. Scantly clad in a tight dress, she crooned her singsong melodies insistently, almost pouting. She never broke stride, even when fiddling around with her only source for backup music: a glitchy laptop churning out freaky, funky homemade beats.

That was Click then, a couple of years back, on tour promoting her debut album, *You're Already a Member*, in pizza places and at backyard parties. *Member* is a deliciously unbaked mix of rudimentary beats and tunes that eschews traditional song structure for catchy, melodic lines. It is a simple album, rough around the edges, but by no means simplistic.

"Yeah, that first album is a kind of documentation, in that I was putting something out there I was still learning to do," Click explains. "A lot of it was very empowering for me. I was like, why the fuck can't I put this out there? I don't need to be a master at these programs."

Of course, if you keep doing something, you end up getting good at it. Sure enough, three years later, Click has released her second disc, *I'm on My Cell Phone*. Certainly, her sophomore effort features some of the same off-kilter dance-centric beats and hypnotic vocal stylings that *Member* has. But it's

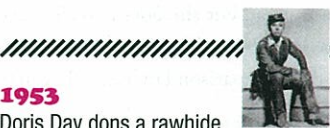
clear that Click has honed her programming and beat-making skills. *Member's* loosey-goosey, on-the-fly charm is replaced by tighter, more expert grooves. It's a loss of DIY innocence, but also a musical coming of age.

It's surprising that Click has chosen bits and bytes as her medium, rather than more traditional forms. Yet she's chosen nouveau disco as her style, she says, "because a lot of [queer artists] have a lot to say, and the best way to get that across is in a fun way."

The beats may have shifted, but Click's themes of sex, heart-break and social issues are still all there, wrapped in frilly (but not frivolous) swaths of femme queer politics. "I have always identified as femme," Click says. "Even before I knew the word existed, I have always felt extremely feminine, to the point I felt like a drag queen...you don't see a whole lot of femme women performing."

The stars of queer music, from Grammy winners to underground icons, are mainly medium-to-stone butches. It's odd, but it's a manifestation of straight sexism that bleeds into the queer realm: feminine ladies, even if they are queer, are still not taken seriously.

But with a quick swivel of her ankle, Click smashes that borrowed institution under her stilettoed heel. "I use this specific representation for my own purposes, to the point where I perform my gender," she says. "My dance moves, my presentations, my lyrics speak to all of that, to an empowered, over-the-top representation of what femininity actually is." ■



1953

Doris Day dons a rawhide suit and man's tie in *Calamity Jane*, a musical film that features the song "Once I Had a Secret Love," to which 68 percent of closeted Eisenhower-era lesbians reply, "Yeah, well, no shit."

1963

Dusty Springfield launches her solo career and exudes the essence of blue-eyed soul with her intense, erotic voice. She comes out as bisexual in 1970, about a year after releasing her masterpiece, *Dusty in Memphis*. Swoon.



1969

The Chicago Women's Liberation Rock Band and its New Haven, Conn., counterpart are born. Later they release *Mountain Moving Day*, a collection of "non-assaultive joyful rock music." You just know the rehearsal space reeked of patchouli.

1970ish-1980ish

Cris Williamson, Margie Adam, Alix Dobkin, Janis Ian, etc.: Acoustic guitars, heartfelt lyrics, jean jackets. Any questions?



Best of the Rest: Coming Soon @Curvemag.com

Melange Lavonne: She's a hip-hop hottie, a triple threat (actor, musician, lesbian!), and her new CD, *The Movement*, is on constant rotation in our office.

Christina Havrilla: The first single off this Philly singer's new album, *Velocity*, celebrated 14 weeks on Sirius Satellite Radio's Hot 20 chart. We know why: It's raw and simple and wonderful and one of our team's new lezbot loves.

Lori Michaels: Her live shows are the stuff of lesbian legend, and the title of her CD, *Living My Life Out Loud*, says it all. "I was singing from a personal experience," says Michaels, "a relationship gone bad. I'm sure we've all trusted someone in our life that turned out to be totally untrustworthy. This song speaks out about that while trying to offer the empowerment to truly move on, trust yourself and just be who you are." Say it again, sister!



Ashleigh Flynn: She's cute and smokey and pure lesbian *Americana*. Her new CD, *American Dream*, is even better than the last. Find out her take on down-home fun.

Laurie Deane: If you've never seen this female Rod Stewart flip her mane across a Palm Springs stage, you haven't lived. Her new CD, *Live*, offers up a few great covers, including "You Can Leave Your Hat On."



Meg Hutchinson: Her label debut *Come Up Full* is sweet, sorrowful and devastating, and stays with you for days. Find out more about this Boston babe.

Check out many more of our exclusive interviews this fall with **Julie Fucking Potter, Virago, Mary Gautier, Malia McGuinness and Sara Bettens.**