Hippie to sex-vixen

ROCKER Grace Potter

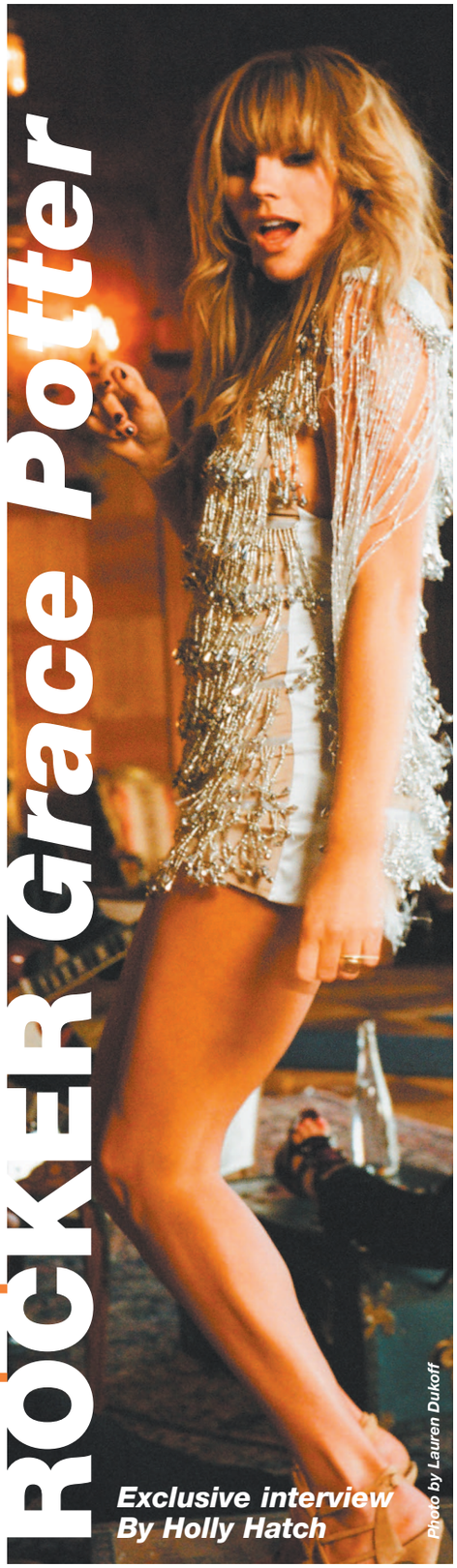


Photo by Lauren Dukoff

Exclusive interview
By Holly Hatch

The hottest new band to gain national and worldwide recognition, Vermont-based Grace Potter and the Nocturnals, is making waves, with sold-out concerts and one of the largest fan bases in the country. The bands' driving force of rocking blues and soulful vocals transcends musical genres. Grace Potter and the Nocturnals are receiving stardom at an alarming rate.

Potter, the 28-year-old blonde bombshell makes it clear that there isn't anything she won't do on stage. From dancing and twirling, reminiscent of a young Stevie Nicks, to shocking a cappella numbers, Potter and the band bare their talents, and skin, to the audience and fans that leave the show hungry for more. With the release of their fifth and most recently released self-titled album, Grace Potter is taking her band to the top of the music charts as they have become a nationwide phenomenon.

Potter took time away from her demanding tour to speak with *Out Front Colorado*. From her hopes for the LGBT community and politics to her physical transformation from hippie to vivacious powerhouse, Potter gives us a peek into her life as she reveals the secrets about her unabashed sexuality.

You appeal to men, women, gay, straight and everywhere in between. The audience threw boxers and bras onstage at your performance at the Ogden Theatre. When did you start getting the audience "involved" like this?
Oh, they love the undies. It's funny because I don't demand it at all. I think that the panties on stage really got started when I received *unsolicited* panties onstage. Maybe two winters ago, I noticed that it started to happen around the song, "Paris (Ooh La La)." And that's the hanky-panky part of it, it started becoming central to the song. I began to think, this is a completely naughty song. So, I went with it.

I was talking to some of the female fans at the show, and many revealed that they would be "gay" for you.
(Laughs). Ah! I got a bunch of tweets like that. Ya know, I feel the same way about a lot of great females. When you see someone you feel like you can relate to that transcends genre AND gender, you stop thinking about it in terms of gay and straight. I like that there's sort of this transcendent thing happening with fans, and that there's so much love going around, I certainly appreciate it.

Talk to me a little bit about this sexy transformation of Grace Potter. From hippie to blonde bombshell.
Really, it just sorta gradually happened. It's just a part of growing up. I started out as such a hippie, and still am – deep down in my heart I'm a total hippie – there's no changing that. It really did happen gradually. I think that every band as they go, transforms visually. And as the shows get bigger and the audiences get bigger, you really want to give them a full show. So that's what we're doing.

You move in and out of singing a cappella, to Gillian Welch covers, to sexy "Paris (Ooh La La)," to "Medicine" where you're head-banging and beating on the drums. How are you able to stay so diverse and transcend genres?
I think it's important for fans to see depth in a musician, and dynamics. Grace Potter and the Nocturnals has never been just one thing. And, I really love seeing the shift in the audience. From a raging rocker to an acoustic song. Those moments are really important for the audience. To have those quiet moments where people can listen, be comfortable and intimate. And then all the way up to the most blazing rager of a rock song we have, I think its important to take people on a journey.

Rumor has it that you are married.
I am NOT married.

Would you consider yourself bisexual?
Oh yeah. Oh fuck yeah! I have sex with Cat (Popper, female bassist) every day. You see me, (laughs). You see how much I touch her ass. I might as well have grabbed it out of her dress, with my teeth. I think sexuality is a big thing with the Nocturnals. We're all very sexual creatures, and we're very open about that. Um, so it is a little ambiguous, but we just have a ball. And definitely, sexuality plays into our music, in a big way.

How do you feel about the LGBT community's struggle with gay rights and the movements being made with regards to New York?
I'm very excited about what's happening right now. I was so proud for New York, and I'm looking forward to seeing more of that. Everything that can be done should be done. You know what I mean? It's a hard platform to create, on a musical level, for me, because I don't like politics in music. I really dislike when I see the music suffer because somebody is using the song as a soapbox. And that's something I've always been outspoken about. And that's why if I do write a political song, the message is buried … yet, at the same time there's a responsibility. I think every human has a responsibility to look at the situation and what's going on. We're fucking people, we're human beings. We should have equal rights. I do feel strongly about it.

Do you have any words of encouragement or message as a part of the It Gets Better Project?
Absolutely. There's so much we can do as adults that have been through hard times. Ya know, I was bullied as a kid and definitely had my awkward years, and I think that there's a responsibility for people who've been through it, like me, to explain to the younger generation, who might feel stuck in these moments, that it really does get better. That you define and create your life. Everybody is faced with resistance in their lives. It's our responsibility to take control of our own fates.

What's special about Colorado audiences?
They are very much like a hometown audience. Colorado has always felt that way for me. Because we've played so much in Colorado I think there's definitely a connection. There's a sense of community in Colorado. And I think also Coloradans are great listeners and appreciators. They're loud when you want them to be loud and respectful when you want them to be quiet and respectful. And they really listen. I really love that sense of stillness, and that sense of total adrenaline. I think that people move to Colorado for the adrenaline rush. ●

The rest of the band: Catherine Popper (electric bass), Scott Tournet (lead guitar), Matt Burr (drums) and Benny Yurco (rhythm guitar). To see a list of upcoming tour dates, visit www.gracepotter.com.

