

SHAWNA VIRAGO

BIO

***“sexy, sassy and genuine,
no matter what sexual orientation you happen to be”***
– *The Daily Californian*

“elegant, edgy and elegiac”
– *San Francisco Bay Guardian*

***“Shawna Virago NAILS the bare bloody bones of
tranny girl rage, fears, and dreams”***
– *Kate Bornstein*

Shawna Virago is celebrated as a transgender pioneer in music, filmmaking and activism. Miss Virago is a singer/songwriter whose music twists together roots rock and folk-punk, creating anthems for a new generation. A transsexual feminist icon for the Twenty First Century, Virago is a wordsmith in the troubadour tradition whose songs are slice-of-life windows into queer and transgender life. Her piercing observations about survival in a predatory world, sticking up for the underdog, queer love and gender outlaws are backed by the bittersweetness of her steady acoustic guitar. Virago has a raging sweetness and raw humor that seduces the listener into joining the trans/gender revolution. Her performances are celebrated for their compelling mix of original songs, storytelling and standup.

A longtime favorite in San Francisco’s underground transgender music scene, Virago is widely celebrated as a gifted lyricist and edgy provocateur. Her songs range from folk-punk to acoustic glam twang, with a dash of naughty queer Americana – with exceptional lyrics that range from sexy to sarcastic, polemic to political, haunting to heartfelt. Virago’s lyrics dig deep at police brutality, the economic marginalization of transgender people and life lived on the sweet continuum of being trans.

Virago is brimming with contradictions and complexities: once a punk rock boy, now a sexy blonde, she channels a DIY aesthetic as a guitar-slinging Candy Darling. The *San Francisco Bay Times* said, “if Keith Richards was a tranny that got together with Merle Haggard, Shawna Virago would be their love child.”

Virago has toured extensively to theaters, clubs, Festivals, Pride stages, colleges and universities. Recent appearances have included the National Queer Arts Festival, Tranny Fest, HomoAGoGo, Fresh Meat Festival, the Tranny Road Show, Sex Workers Art Show, Los Angeles Pride, San Francisco Pride, the Femme Conference and more.

It's no surprise that the stark poetry of Virago's songs is drenched in the imagery of street level activism; Virago has been an LGBT anti-violence activist for over 15 years. At a time when increasing numbers of transgender people think disappearing into the gender binary equates success, Virago is too busy and defiant to "go stealth." She is a founding member of TransAction, the police accountability group and is the Domestic Violence Program Director at Community United Against Violence. Virago was the first transgender woman ever chosen to be a San Francisco Pride Grand Marshal and served on the City's pioneering Transgender Human Rights Task Force.

Miss Virago is the Artistic Director of Tranny Fest, the nation's first transgender film festival, and her own films have screened through the U.S., Canada and Europe. Virago is also a published writer and her newest work will be published in the forthcoming trans/gender variant anthology, *Gendered Hearts*. Virago is featured in the new documentary *Diagnosing Difference*, directed by Annalise Ophelian, which critically dissects GID (gender identity disorder). Miss Virago also composed original music for choreographer Sean Dorsey's acclaimed dance theater work *Uncovered: The Diary Project*, about pioneering transman Lou Sullivan. Virago is featured in *Femmes of Power: Exploding Queer Feminites*, by Del LaGrace Volcano and Ulrika Dahl.

Contact houseofvirago@hotmail.com for booking information and promotional materials.

LGBT COMMUNITY ACTIVISM (partial list):

Artistic Director, Tranny Fest Transgender Film Festival
Board Member, Fresh Meat Productions
Former Advisory Board Member, Transgender Gender Variant Inmate Project
Domestic Violence Survivor Program Director, Community United Against Violence
Former Member Board of Directors, Transgender Law Center
Former Member Board of Directors, San Francisco Women Against Rape
Former Member, Transgender Human Rights Task Force
San Francisco Pride Parade 2002 Grand Marshal
Member, National Center for Lesbian Rights' Transgender Law Project Advisory Committee
Founding Member TransAction, a group of transpeople dedicated to organizing and exposing state violence against transgender and genderqueer people

TRAININGS AND WORKSHOPS (partial list):

Facilitated Transgender Sensitivity Trainings, Queer Anti-Violence Trainings and Anti-Oppression Trainings with these organizations:

Hastings Law School, San Francisco Women Against Rape, Frameline LGBT film festival, Women Incorporated domestic violence agency, La Cases de Las Madres women's shelter, Environmental Protection Agency, Advanced Officers Trainings for San Francisco Police Department, San Francisco State University, City College of San Francisco, University of San Francisco, University of California San Francisco, Tom Waddell Clinic, Riley Center women's shelter, Tenderloin Self-Help Center and Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center, MultiCultural

Family Violence Prevention Conferences, Maternal & Child Health Care Conference, Lavender Youth Recreation and Information Center Young Woman's Health Conference, Bay Area Hate Crimes Investigators Community Forum, Humboldt County Law Enforcement, Harvey Milk Academy, Out Loud & Proud, San Francisco Gay/Straight Student Alliance, San Francisco Unified School District, San Mateo Unified School District, Critical Resistance, Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Women's Health Conference, Gender Odyssey Conference, LGBT Communities Against Iraq War, Asian Women's Shelter, the Femme Conference and the San Francisco Domestic Violence Consortium.