

ladyfest



Issue one

Welcome to the first zine for Ladyfest London 2008.



Drunk Granny @
Ladyfest Leeds

Ladyfest is a transnational feminist art and music extravaganza and Ladyfest London 2008 is an exciting new chapter in this lady's own adventure story. We are comprised of many different voices and many different feminisms and seek to create a fun, radical space for a celebration of women's art, music, conversation and everything in between.

It is still early days yet so come to a meeting or get in contact if you wish to help organise, perform or run a workshop at Ladyfest London 2008.

Upcoming events

Over the course of the next year, Ladyfest London will also be organising a number of fundraising events.

Forthcoming planning meetings

Wednesday 16th May, 7pm, LARC (62 Fieldgate St, Whitechapel, E1 1ES).

Acoustic gig - 16th June, music from Invocal, Miranda Quammie, Jo Bailey and Marie Tueje, Blush Bar, 8 Cazenove St, Stoke Newington, N16 6BD, 7.30pm, £3.

info@ladyfestlondon.co.uk

Email us at info@ladyfestlondon.co.uk

Else, check out our myspace page:
www.myspace.com/ladyfestlondon

And our website at:
www.ladyfestlondon.co.uk

Upcoming Ladyfests	
2007	http://www.myspace.com/ladyfestleicester07
Bucharest, Romania October 2007	http://www.myspace.com/ladyfest_romania
Copenhagen, Denmark June 8-10, 2007 http://www.ladyfest.dk/	Gothenburg, Sweden late fall 2007 http://www.myspace.com/ladyfestgothenburg
Ladyfest Vancouver 22-24th June, 2007 www.myspace.com/ladyfestvancouver	Ladyfest Toronto 2007 www.myspace.com/ladyfestto
Berlin, Germany August 2-5, 2007 http://www.ladyfest.net/	Ladyfest South Africa 2007 www.myspace.com/ladyfestsa
Leipzig, Germany August 24-25, 2007 http://ladyfest.leipziggerinnen.de/	Ladyfest Chicago 18-21th October, 2007 www.myspace.com/ladyfestchicago
Bristol, UK August 29-September 2 http://www.myspace.com/ladyfestbristol	2008
Torino, Italy September http://ladyfesttorino.noblogs.org/	Cork, Ireland 2008 http://www.myspace.com/ladyfestcork
Leicester, UK October 2007	Ladyfest Hawaii 2008 www.myspace.com/ladyfeshawaii2007

Ladyfest London Launch Night April 2nd '07

The Congregation, The Bobby McGees, Tom Hatred & Naomi Hates Humans

(Kerry Harknett)



Courtesy of Nathalie Blue's Saucy Lil Tart promotions, an interesting mix of acoustic, indie, anti-folk, lo-fi acts set Ladyfest London in motion. An impressive turnout for our first event was most pleasing, lots of people signed up to our mailing list- though one guy did write "No Feminism" in the comment box (we'll work on him).

Someone described Naomi Hates Humans as a "Female Tom Waits"- not often you hear a female act compared to a male one, but I can't see it myself. She does have quite a 'rawk' voice though, neatly juxtaposing the soft acoustic strumming. She admits most of her songs are "about drinking", but the conviction with which she delivers her songs nulls any self-deprecation. "Would anyone like to hear a cover of one of the 90's premier girl bands?" she asks. For some reason we anticipate the Spice Girls, but it turns out to be a version of En Vogue's Don't Let Go (Love), sung with more feeling than the original. It's encouraging to see an all-male act playing a Ladyfest event, even though Tom Hatred did wash over me a bit, pleasant enough if a bit heard-it-all-before indie.

A broad Glaswegian accent tells us all to shut up while a double bass is tuned; Jimmy of The Bobby McGees stage mannerisms can divide opinions, or just leave people plain scared.

Eleanor is the third Bobby McGee, who Jimmy points out at regular intervals is wearing a new bra- I'm more taken with her tights & socks combination, in every shade of 80's luminous (except orange). In polar opposition to Jimmy, she's sweet & softly spoken- it's like a duet between a grown-up Bubbles Powerpuff Girl & Groundskeeper Willy. But together they sing bittersweet, tragi-comic songs of we've-all-been-there situations.

It's a shame I have to leave part way through The Congregation's set- they may 'just' use a single kick-drum & guitar as instrumentation, but how. With the vocals of erstwhile Television Personality Victoria Yeulet, the closest way I can get to describing their sound is like early, stripped-down Gossip, raw & kinda blues-y- I can see them going down well at any Ladyfest.

The next benefit gig is on May 9th, which will have been & gone by the time you read this, but I hope you made it. ↵

Why I Love Ladyfest, my route into feminism, among other things..

(Kerry Harknett)

The last Ladyfest London in '02 changed my life in many ways. At the time, the festival & preceding benefits were a virtual utopia for the music-loving me, but I was still easing myself into the world of feminism, after entering through the portal of Riot Grrl. I was bought up in a stereotypically patriarchal household- Dad was the "man", the breadwinner, the head of the family, mum was the happily obedient, subservient kitchen-&bedroom doormat, I would (suffer many attempts to) be moulded in his shadow, mum only served to encourage this. Even at the young age of 6, I found myself repulsed by these notions, and tried the best my young self could to resist this (admittedly, through crying & tantrums.) I was secretly repulsed by the backward, sexist, racist, homophobic beliefs of the people I went to school with. I felt, and as far as I was concerned, was, alone. Eventually through buying many zines I discovered riot grrl, and the music- the obvious bands to start with, Sleater-Kinney, Bikini Kill!, Bratmobile etc. Bands which not only sounded great, but lyrically were in touch with my sentiments, to say I was elated was an understatement.

So, Ladyfest London '02 was on the way, excitement was building, when I received an email from Ilona, one of the organisers asking

me if I'd like to be on the panel of the Men In Feminism panel. My fingers somehow typed 'Yes, I'd love to' despite my mind going 'EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!'. I was painfully shy, and barely able to speak in any kind of public situation, how was I going to speak on an area I'd only just discovered myself in? So, probably glowing a vivid shade of green, I took my place on the panel. To break the ice, I spoke about my upbringing, then we had a show of hands. Almost the whole room raised their hands in favour of men calling themselves Feminists. This came as quite a relief to me, I wasn't going to endure the cross-examining I'd feared! I felt a lot more confident for it, and made me realise I could, nay should, be doing a lot more than curling up into a little ball in amongst bigots. Which, I think sums up the ethos behind Ladyfest workshops; people go in inexperienced, with little confidence, and come out ready to bring their new found skills into the world, in the space of a few short hours.

Music is pretty much my life (I'm really interesting..), so needless to say the countless number of bands I've seen have been inspirational, but the camaraderie of Ladyfest is unbelievable. Complete strangers can become firm friends over the course of a weekend, be it through skill-sharing, idea-sharing, experience-sharing, or just general socialising. I've had a few correspondences with people (boys mostly) who wanted to go to Ladyfest, but were worried they may feel 'excluded'; while there may be some female-only space at Ladyfest, I'd love to tell these people they should have no worries at all. If they even have a vague understanding of what Ladyfest is doing, then I'm sure they'll be very welcome! ↵

Ladyfest Leeds (Alice)

Last weekend I went to Ladyfest Leeds, mainly coz being involved with Ladyfest London, I really ought to have been to one before. Oops. But, hey, y'know what? it's as much of a brand and as a franchise as McDonalds in many ways... *ducks from bricks being thrown from crusty anarchists* sorry.

First day we got there, the workshops were mainly for under 18s, which is kinda a shame coz the zine writing one looked



mega. So what I saw was at Joseph's Well... Sailor Tongue were ace, really chaotic and erratic something like a less rehearsed and punkier bloc party, with a lady shouting. make sense? thats how I remember them. Jean Genet I hated at first, irritating the fuck out of me with their knowing rhymes and that every song sounds the same. i got the joke, i get the joke, but i don't have to laugh, right? but then, they were fun caberat i guess. Duloks, also, not technically a band, are they? Still, the Bad Vegetarian was a good'un. Hello Cuca were like a more garage rock Spanish Sleater Kinney, which could be the best band ever if you were in that mood.

I felt quite drunk and we headed to the Lady-squat. Found the big buckets of cold squat slop, which despite being cold was much needed, and better than paying over the odds for a takeaway. got into some random conversation with a woman about trusting yr doctor. *whatev*

Saturday began with a talk about the Suffragette movement in Leeds. Was kinda like being back at uni, but better coz I knew I wouldn't have to write an essay about it. Then i went straight into 'Recognising Contemporary feminism' which as far as I could make out, was focused on documenting what is going on now in feminism and the history of feminism being understood by younger generations. Now we're in third wave apparently. Super. I actually came out of that feeling thoroughly disillusioned. Everything seems so unfocused, and I have no idea if i do share the same politics as everyone else in the room. Fundamentally our aims must be the same but... pfff.. but on to some comedy and I saw Penny Broadhurst do her stand-up show 'A Little More Sonic Live' which was great. Charming, funny, great stuff. If I'm in Edinburgh this year and she's

on, I'll be going. Over to Joseph's Well to see Wet Dog. taking a break from bands, I played 'the dating game' which involved sitting opposite some girl and picking random cards with instructions on. So, for instance it would say: "talk about one of the following three cars and mention horsepower, engine... something else I've forgotten coz I'm a girl. So, ultimately, me and this girl were role playing a date with me as the fella and her as the lady, as instructed by our gender stereotype instructions. It felt quite bizarre and I sure wouldn't date me if I spoke like that (cars, computers, football). Back to the music and I saw the fucking rocken Vile Vile Creatures from Manchester who are ace as poo and you should check em out. They're also really cool chickas, who I think are on the lookout for a new drummer so if you're in the north west and can hit stuff with sticks, you know what to do! Shrag win kudos for having minor indie celeb fans in the Cribs who showed up to see them. I went on a hunt for cigarettes at this point which meant I missed Gina Birch and Ana Da Silva individually but got back in time to see Raincoats. of course, the first thing Gina says to the crowd, "Can you lay off the



fags, guys? Otherwise, we're off to Wales right now". Ooops. I'm a dirty addict. The Raincoats were great tho, really fun and charming and punk as fuck. Following this was dancing and drinking and walking back to Emma's house, which I was very proud of myself for managing, all from remembering the way from town/the university/where my brother used to live when he was at uni there 98-2001! I'm good, eh? It's the old innate sense of direction, oh yus. (I have missed out a rather lengthy and stressful walk into town on Saturday morning which is best left forgotten. I *knew* we were going wrong)

Finally was Sunday which included 'How to put on a Ladyfest' from the Leeds contingent and I reckon us Londoners have our work cut out for us! We need to recruit big time. Terese then said I should come with her to the Race and

Activism group. She was wrong. I hated it. I'm not an activist. The last workshop I attended was the hotly anticipated 'Feminism, Censorship and Pornography' workshop which, altho people from anti-porn groups had been invited they had turned the offer down, was a bit one-sided. All it made me realise tho was.. oh yeah, I don't actually watch any porn.

It was both an informative and entertaining weekend. Sometimes inspiring, sometimes discouraging (thinking: we cannot do this). As I said, you can do what you want with a Ladyfest and it depends what we decide to do with it. Also, i could have had an entirely different experience if i had gone to more of the arty performance stuff.

Got on train, tired and head abuzz with ideas.

Ladyfest Leeds Top Ten

by kate

1. Finding the workshop venue with next to no trouble and getting a glossy super programme for my efforts.
2. Gina Birch making songs about dogs and monsters sound like the most.profound.thing. ever.
3. The way Ana da Silva dances.
4. Bob (?) from Shrag falling off the stage on the very first song.
5. Daily Ladyfest news, care of The Ladypress.
6. Great workshops, too many to make. Keeping the Faith - project for women in prisons and Be Prepared - Matthew Bellwood's performance stand out.
7. Learn from our mistakes: 'How to put on a Ladyfest' Discussion. knowledge-sharing rocks.
8. Catching up with friends from around the world.
9. Sharing conspiratory looks with other Ladyfesters as you walk past, even total strangers in the middle of town.
10. Plotting, planning and brainstorming that inevitably results from events like Ladyfest. Feeling inspired.

The First Ever Ladyfest

An occasionally diverting conversation with Elliot about the first ever Ladyfest, held in Olympia (Wa) in 2000. As well as being a committed Ladyfester, Elliot is a radical queer artist and the director of an upcoming documentary, Travel Queeries.

E: The first ever Ladyfest happened in 2000, in Olympia Washington. And I was 16, I grew up in Olympia (so I was there) [laughs]. They had fliers up around town "hey, get involved in organising this". I had just got involved in the Transfused Rock Opera, which was written by Nomy Lamm and the Need and that was a huge thing in my life, totally changed my life. It was really, really amazing. I think I was just wanting to get involved in things that weren't in school as much. I think that year I was President of the International Club too or something. It was crazy?

K: At school?

E: Yeah, I was stalking the exchange students at a young age. It was really good. I was literally stalking them.

So, anyway, I went to one of their meetings and there was already a lot of people involved. I kind of joined a little bit later.

K: About how many people were involved?

There were a lot of meetings per group and then there was the general meetings. The general meetings would be, I don't know, I'd say 20 people or something. It felt pretty big. Maybe it was more like 15 or something. I just remember it was Alison from Bratmobile. Or Partyline. Whatever.

K: It was only Bratmobile back then wasn't it?

E: Yeah. It was just so funny. It was her sitting up on this stool drinking some weird alcohol and talking a lot (laughs). Carrie from Sleater-kinney was really involved and Sarah Dougher. I feel like they were the founding people a little bit. They were heading up the meeting and then there would be reports from different committees. I decided to join the workshop committee. I just went to the meetings. I hadn't really done a lot of organising before so I didn't really know what to do. Basically, I put together a workshop for my Aunt to talk about the Prison Project. And I think I was in a workshop about gay stuff and schools which was actually one of my most memorable things at Ladyfest because I was up on a panel talking about being queer in school. This is right when I was coming out and I

was having a lot of problems with my parents and in the panel was also my teacher who was a dyke.

Ladyfest was happening while this other stuff was happening in my life. I was 16, it was kind of crazy. That workshop was really memorable. I remember there was this girl from Ireland who was there. It was just so amazing to have a conversation with somebody about what was going on in their schools, in a different country with a different government. Do you know what I mean? Instead of having the same conversation but with "I live in a rural area". "Oh, I live in an urban area". Instead of *that* conversation or "I used to live in the South". "I used to live in a different part of the country". So, that was really really cool and in Olympia I feel like we were all organising this thing and then suddenly there were fucking hundreds of people everywhere. I was like "what are all you people doing my town? Get outta here". (laughs). It was just a really bizarre experience to be involved in organised something and not really know what was going to happen and then just tonnes and tonnes of people coming.

K: Was that the same time that that community was getting a *lot* of media attention as well?

E: During the first Ladyfest was when Olympia was in Time magazine which I didn't even know and then I later saw the article. It had the Gossip and the Need and Cherie, I think, from Two Tonne Boa and the Sleater-Kinney. And Sleater-Kinney were really big then.

K: Did that have any affect on the Ladyfest organising though? I know there was a media blackout from some elements of that group...

E: What happened was, there was Riot Grrrl and Riot Grrrl started getting boxed in by the media and whoever was saying the most radical, outrageous stuff, that's what the media would go towards. I mean this is my understanding of it. People would start getting boxed in and they'd be "oh, that's what Riot Grrrl is". Instead of people being able to be [autonomous] and doing their own thing. And I think people started giving up on it because they were frustrated by it getting so much media attention and then whatever they did as Riot Grrrl would always be associated with that and so people would be unable to do their own projects.

From what I heard, there is this museum in Seattle called the Experience Music Project and it was started by Paul Allen who helped start Microsoft. So he has a *lot* of money and he does a lot of different community arts things. It's at the Seattle Centre. It's this weird blob-like building that's supposed to look like a melting guitar because he's obsessed with Jimmy Hendrix.

Jimmy Hendrix is from Seattle so....it all comes back... It's all connected.

In the museum they have a history of the North-West music scene. They have all this stuff about grunge and all this. And then they have this section on Riot Grrrl and a lot of Olympia stuff which apparently they bought a lot of the archive stuff from Calvin Johnson who runs K Records cause he archives everything.

And they interviewed people from the Riot Grrl scene for that and apparently those interviews is what got people talking, y'know, "I don't really want to do this stuff anymore but we should have a really big kick-off" thing. And the whole thing about Ladyfest was and what they kept saying during the festival was "we're organising this, but we're not going to keep on organising this. We are *not* doing this again" (laughs). Instead, you guys have to go do this. This is your festival now. You do it, you take it to your communities and you do it. We'll have all the information up on the website and you guys do your own thing. And they just kept on saying that over and over and over again.

K: And that seems to be what has happened across the world though.

E: Yeah, which I think is really cool cause I think that a lot of festivals are a bit "oh, that's my idea. You can't copy me. That kind of looks like something I did". So, the whole thing was really different and a lot of people, i think, took Ladyfest on and owned it. So, everyone who was there really felt like "this is my festival". I remember two girls went and got Ladyfest tattooed on their back and went up on stage. I was like "ohmigod, where am I? These people are crazy!" (laughs).

It was a really amazing lineup and so I spent most of my time backstage watching the shows.

K: Who played that year?

Cat Power and Mary Timony. Sleater-Kinney and I think the Need probably played. I don't know. I was pretty much only Olympia music-centred. I just remember when Cat Power played cause she was on drugs or

something and ran away with her boyfriend and had sex in the car and nobody could find her.

And the workshops were really great. There was a lot of workshops on how to do music, how to build your own things and a lot of conversations. So, I don't know, I just feel like it was a format that maybe had been used before but it was the first time that I had really seen it utilised. And then, two years later, was the first Homo-a-gogo, which I was way more involved in organising than Ladyfest. From there, I went to Seattle and started the Bend-it extravaganza which is an arts festival by and for young queer people... which also ultimately has no funding. I'm really good at starting projects which can't get funding. It's good. <laughs>

K: Aren't we all.



Ladyfest Mural in Olympia (Photo by kate at yr own risk, shared under a creative commons license)

E: Anyway, Ladyfest is really amazing because I mean now really... and it's also changed it's name in different cultural contexts.

Well, i went to this Ladyfest discussion at Ladyfest Berlin and they were talking about how, in Australia, they've changed it to Sheilafest to make it centric to cultural

context. They were having a conversation in Berlin about that and how some people didn't like to be called a lady and how in British culture that's really class-oriented and how, in other places, there's not even a

translation for that.

“the whole thing about Ladyfest was and what they kept saying during the festival was “we’re organising this, but we’re not going to keep on organising this. We are *not* doing this again”. Instead, you guys have to go do this. This is your festival now. You do it, you take it to your communities and you do it.

And how people were really tired of everything being based on US Riot Grrrl culture. And I was like “I went to the first ladyfest, ask me questions” and it wasn't relevant. I'm glad I was

there just to listen to what everyone had to say, but there was nothing I could contribute to that conversation because it wasn't about the community that I was [from].

Yeah, I think that it has adapted itself so the format has become quite different...even if the name stays the same.

Yeah. I mean, I feel like the first Ladyfest was definitely

connected to Riot Grrrl because some stuff got stirred up for people who had been majorly involved in Riot Grrrl stuff originally and then they came together and started Ladyfest. And their whole spirit of it was just to pass it on and to continue something of Riot Grrrl...but that could look different and that people could create in their own communities and could have a different look and stuff but that would still be connected. And I think that it worked and it's been really, really successful. I'm kind of wondering if people are documenting the international thing of Ladyfest.

their whole spirit of it was just to pass it on and to continue something of Riot Grrrl...but that could look different and that people could create in their own communities

K: I know there is a Ladyfest Europe website that does keep track of all of the Ladyfests across Europe but that's all I've seen and they seem to just list dates. I mean, there is informal information sharing but there's been nothing formal...

E: And I wonder if you can even document it because it's so.. It's just affecting the lives of so many different people but it's become like a cultural institution almost that happens transnationally which is really fucking right-on. The thing is, I don't think that would've happened if people from different countries hadn't come to the first ladyfest. Because I think that, as people continue to create Ladyfest, I mean people say 'come get involved, help us organise it'. But I don't think there is the same message of 'Oh and you should start this in your community'. I think there is just this understanding that that's allowed. And so if people come to a Ladyfest, and they're from a different town, they're like "oh, I can start a Ladyfest". But there's not this encouraging... And I think a lot of people do get burned out on it and organising is really hard. But it seems like it's working so go team. ↵

Find out about Elliat's projects at:
www.travelqueeries.com and <http://www.myspace.com/elliat>

Other stuff mentioned:

Experience Music Project:
<http://www.emplive.org/aboutEMP/index.asp>

SheilaFest
<http://www.scooter.org.au/sheila.html>

Ladyfest Europe
<http://www.myspace.com/ladyfesteurope>

Knickers Renewed

One good pair from two old pairs—here's how to manage it. Usually it is the gusset that's worn—so cut a new gusset from the good side of one pair (1) and take the old gusset out of the second pair (2). Diagrams 3, 4 and 5 show how to shape and join the new gusset, which should then be stitched into place. The raw edges should be cut down and blanket stitched (6) closely on the wrong side to make this as strong as possible.

