

ASTROLOGIC: ARIES

Written December 1977, this feature column was published in *Drummer* 21, March 1978.

- I. Author's Eyewitness Historical-Context Introduction written April 21, 2002
- II. The feature column as published in *Drummer* 21, March 1978

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Written as a stand-up comedian's satire, my first "Astrologic" column mimicked the voice of Johnny Carson playing "The Great Karnak" on *The Tonight Show*. Every editor of a magazine faces emergencies, and as the clock ticked toward the deadline of *Drummer* 21, I was dismayed when publisher Embry told me that the LA columnist Aristede who had invented the "Astrologic" column was withholding the sending of his copy to San Francisco. Years later, Aristede told me DATE he was a bit tired of his monthly assignment which he had begun years earlier in *The Advocate*. He was, as were so many other contributors over the years, also in a standoff with Embry over payment past due for his column. At the eleventh hour, necessity became the mother of invention as I sat down at my manual Smith Corona portable typewriter which my parents had given me for Christmas 1956.

The critic pivots on the cliched popularity of astrology in the 1960s and 70s when the number one "opening line" at a bar was, "What's your sign?"

My content took one-liner swipes at then hot topics, S&M trends, and leather gossip from Eldridge Cleaver's "invention" of codpiece pants to Richard Nixon to Anita Bryant's hate campaign to Malcolm Boyd's new take on gay spirituality.

Also represented is Fred Halsted, who was one of the great columnists in *Drummer* 21, because in my Youngevity I liked his S&M films, and thought he was personally demon-hot—and oh-so-convenient when I was in LA. Halsted directly stated in his column that *Drummer* was in a direct line of descent from Bob Mizer's AMG *Physique Pictorial*. He meant that the heritage of *Drummer* had the same DNA as the homomascularity Mizer had set as a standard of male identity at his Athletic Model Guild studio which he founded in 1945 and ran until his death: Bob Mizer: 1922-1992. Homomascularity was, of course, the standard that Halsted had set for himself and portrayed in his film *L. A. Plays Itself* and his magazine *Package*. Mizer was the mentor of David Hurler whom I debuted as "Old Reliable" studio in *Drummer* and featured in several issues including *Drummer* 21. Mizer's vision and work by itself created the mid-century way that masculine-identified homosexuals looked at themselves. Mizer also influenced Andy Warhol, Derek Jarman, and Robert Mapplethorpe. If *Drummer* favored the AMG look, so did the films of Warhol, the films of Jarman, and the photographs of Mapplethorpe. Warhol built his film empire by hiring AMG model Joe D'Allesandro as his male Superstar. Jarman and Mapplethorpe as young artists (who did not then know each other) both

spent their time in art school making collages of pictures from AMG, and later from *Drummer*. As quintessential as those two artists were to gay culture, I recall it as odd that during twenty-four years, I happened to be the only editor and writer who included the work of both in *Drummer*. Such inclusion maybe defines my vision and version of *Drummer* : Mapplethorpe, *Drummer* 24 and *Son of Drummer*; Jarman, *Drummer* 22.

While both *Physique Pictorial* and *Drummer* aimed for the authenticity and reality embodied in *cinema verite* and Italian Neorealism, there were certain distinctions, such as, Mizer's penchant for camp that seeped in from the Hollywood that surrounded him. Nevertheless, neither magazine ever saw a Steve Reeves' gladiator movie they did not like.

In Los Angeles, Mizer's *Physique Pictorial* (founded 1950) was a small-format photo magazine of black-and-white pictures with "street cred," a political message crusading against censorship, and—like Mizer the man—a mag of few words. In San Francisco, *Drummer* (founded 1975) was a large format magazine with many pages of writing as ballast to the photographs and drawings, with covers in color, and with hardly more message than masculine entertainment.

(See "Queer Keywords" in this collection.) *Physique Pictorial* lasted years longer than *Drummer* and published thousands more photos and issues than *Drummer* because genius Bob Mizer was a one-man-band who didn't have to put up with any of the "ick and ilk" accumulating around gay publishing inventing itself in the 1970s.

For this "Aries" column, *Drummer* art director A. Jay knocked out an original drawing of a Pan as Man-Goat.

I interviewed Bob Mizer for *Drummer*, but the article was blackballed from *Drummer* after I exited the editorship, and was published as a "Virtual *Drummer*" feature in

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ARIES S: (Mar. 21 - Apr. 19) In spring a young man's love turns fancy. Try topping a trick wearing Adidas and a Lacoste. Yeah, just try it. (But don't mess his hair.)

ARIES M: This spring Uranus should be in conjunction with whatever fits. (And you will have fits.)

TAURUS S: (Apr. 20 - May 20) Put rocks in your M's red ruby boots.

TAURUS M: Ask your Top to take you dancing.

GEMINI S: (May 21 - June 20) Both your heads, Gem, are so fucking vain that you sleep on Mylar sheets. Get control of your selves.

GEMINI M: As an exercise in discipline, try to cum while pretending you're bound and gagged and living in Orange County. (The gagging should be easy.)

- CANCER S: (June 21 - July 21) Do your damndest to discover how to get into the most secret of macho leather clubs. Clue: it's based in SFO. *Drummer* knows all, but can tell nothing.
- CANCER M: On Good Friday, hang around from noon till three. Then sing "The Alleluia Chorus." With feeling.
- LEO S: (July 22 - Aug. 21) Your rising sign indicates you should arrange a prison tour of a local juvenile facility. Dress up like a good citizen. Let your sign rise further.
- LEO M: At heart, you're a chicken-hawk masochist who hates to travel. This month, double your displeasure. Take a Greyhound to Oklahoma and taunt the new Teenage Chapter of the KKK (especially founded to take care of maniacs like you).
- VIRGO S: (Aug. 22 - Sept 22) Cater to your domesticity. For a classic asshole-puckering experience, feed your slave alum brownies.
- VIRGO M: Grease the brownie pan. Grease your brownie hole. Put a knife under the bed to cut the pain. Object: fisticuffs.
- LIBRA S: (Sept 23 - Oct 22) Keep your balance. Shatter your M's cliches about what a one-sided Top you are. String yourself up. Work yourself over. Make him watch. Tell him to eat his heart out.
- LIBRA M: Tell your Top to fuck off. Get the extra set of tit clamps, put them on your own nipples, and watch *Charlie's Angels*. That's P-A-I-N.
- SCORPIO S: (Oct 23 - Nov. 21) Be meaner. Take your scumbag M to a Punk Rock concert. Safety-pin him into position in the front row facing the audience.
- SCORPIO M: Quickly learn the difference between S&M games and "getting punked." Forget your rubber duck and learn how, when they're thrown, to duck rubbers.
- SAGITTARIUS S: (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21) Host a "Masochist Luau." Invite several other Tops to bring their Bottoms.
- SAGITTARIUS M: Get your soda-straw from your Top Host and kneel with the other Bottoms around the cesspool. (You're so sick.)
- CAPRICORN S: (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20) Watch your diet. Get some quiet. Get ready to try it. On the next full moon, something you said you'd never do, you will in fact eat.
- CAPRICORN M: Stroll into an anti-smoking convention. Light up a big stogie and take it like a man. After that foreplay, for a good time, call Fred Halsted.
- AQUARIUS S: (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19) Call Born-Again and Star-Crossed Eldridge Cleaver (collect) in L.A. where he is marketing "Cleavers," the pants with the codpiece. Tell clever Cleaver that leather men have been wearing this style for years. Trust your lucky stars, but still don't identify yourself.
- AQUARIUS M: Wrap your head in Ace bandages and read either *If You Meet the Buddha on the Road, Kill Him*, or Malcolm Boyd's latest gay religion book: *Are You Running with Me, Jesus, or Just Breathing Hard?*
- PISCES S: (Feb. 20 - Mar. 20) Call Anita Bryant (collect). Tell her about the new ANITA BRYANT MEMORIAL MICROWAVE OVEN that seats 15. Remind the lady that, as usual, it's women and children first.
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PISCES M: Call Richard Nixon (collect) and let him put you down.

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