

the Buzz



From left: Cathy Richardson, Catherine Curtin, and Andra Mitrovich are the three faces of *Janis*.

Janis, Janis, Janis

ROCK ICON JANIS JOPLIN GOT IT while she could, and her bawdy, bluesy life is warmly celebrated in the musical *Love, Janis*, currently playing at the Village Theater in New York. Actor Catherine Curtin plays Joplin (delivering dialogue based on letters written to family and friends as well as media interviews), while two other performers belt out such classic numbers as "Ball and Chain."

Since the musical is "inspired by" the book of the same title by Laura Joplin (the singer's sister), it doesn't delve into the more intimate aspects of Joplin's life. Still, "Janis is clearly bisexual," says Curtin, adding that Joplin also talked about marriage in one of the last letters

she wrote. "Whether or not, if she had lived to be 50, she would have been like, 'Forget men, I'm totally into women,' I don't know."

According to Curtin—who's been playing Joplin on and off since the show premiered in Denver 1994—taking on the needy, larger-than-life Joplin has unexpected benefits. "I don't know why," she laughs, "but you do a role like Janis, and people hand you dope and hand you books on the soul. I have every self-help book ever imaginable."