

Summer Solstice 1999

SOLISTICE

Living in the New Millennium

Kenny & Julia Loggins

Singing
True Love
Songs...

WHY TO CHAOS?
BEYOND **Y2K**

SACRED
SEX

THE JOYS OF TANTRA

BEACH BOYS'
MIKE LOVE
PEACE IN THE
FAST LANE

PLUS:
AUSTIN
PECK

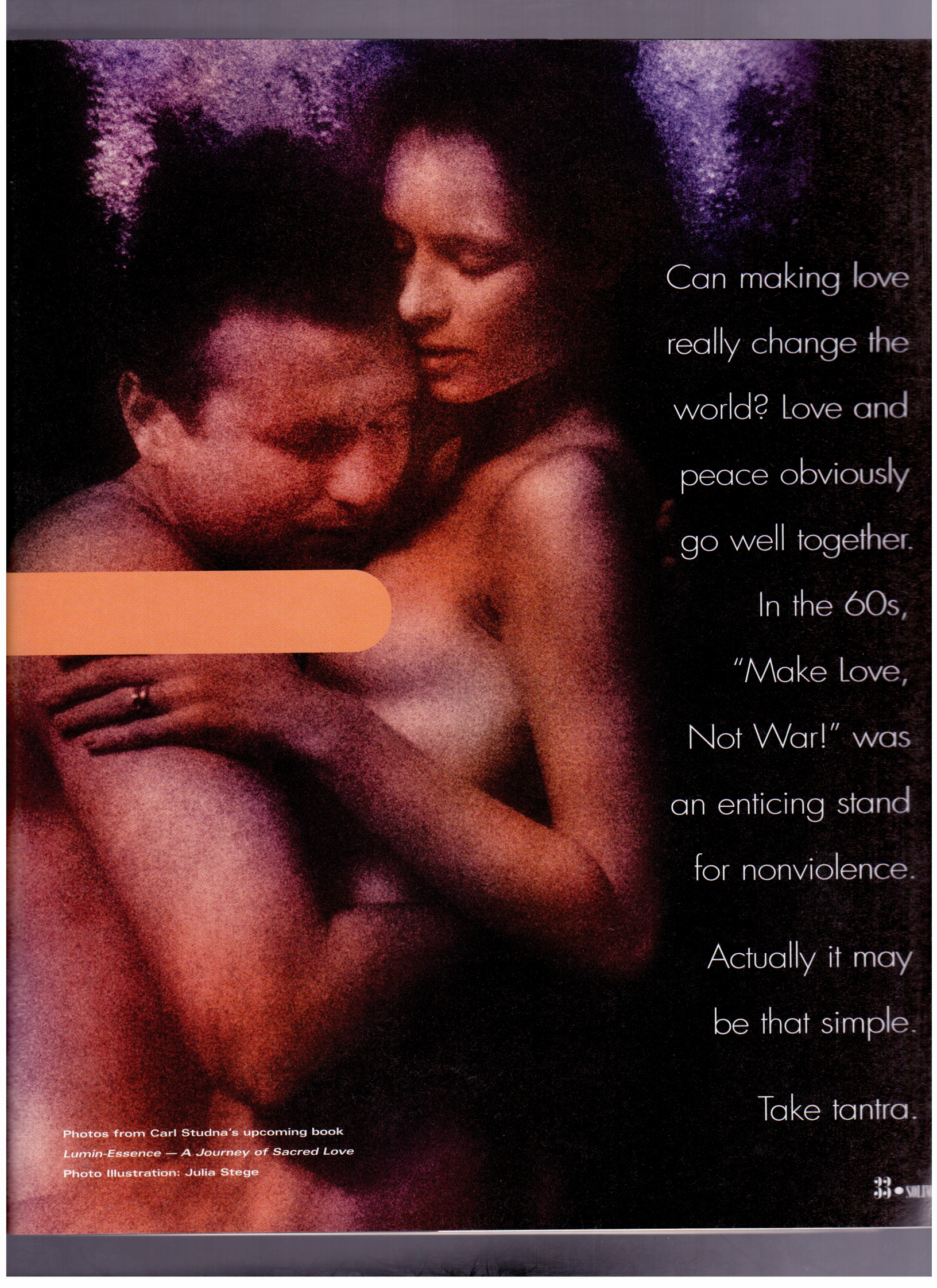
STAR WARS
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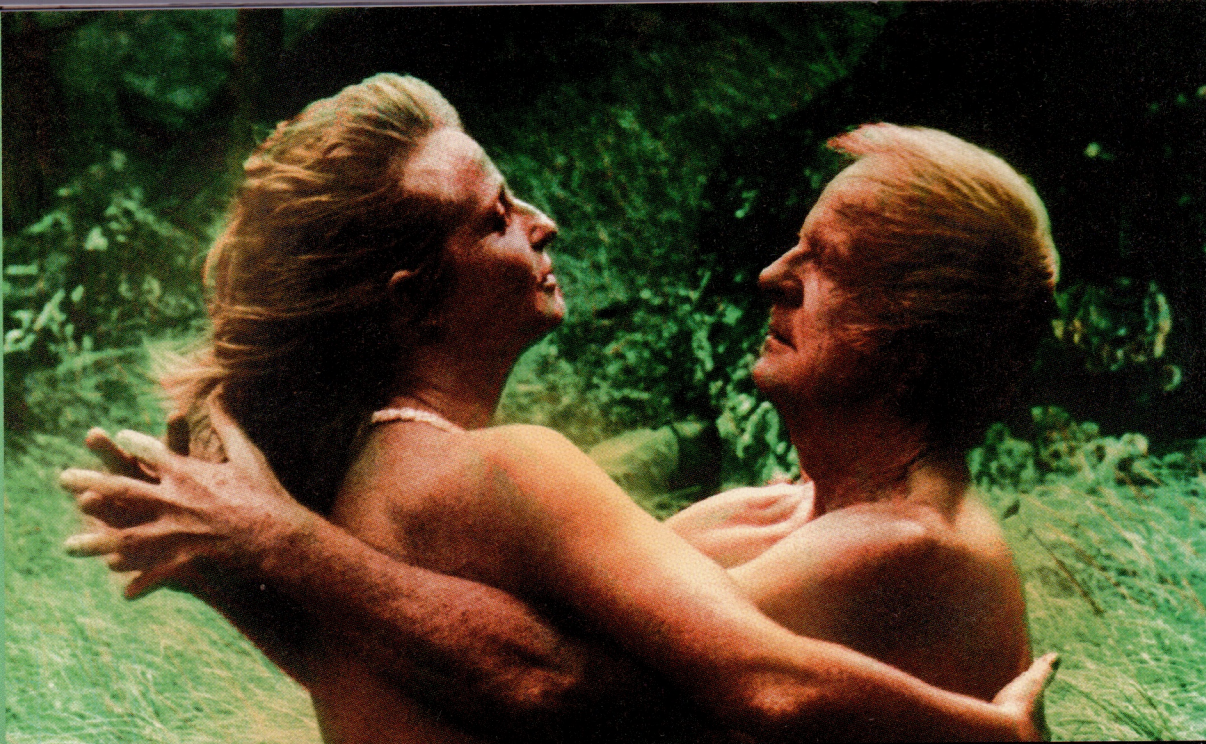
Can making love really change the world? Love and peace obviously go well together.

In the 60s, "Make Love, Not War!" was an enticing stand for nonviolence.

Actually it may be that simple.

Take tantra.

Photos from Carl Studna's upcoming book
Lumin-Essence — A Journey of Sacred Love
Photo Illustration: Julia Stege



In this ancient Eastern mystical practice, sexual love is a sacrament. Sometimes referred to as the yoga of sex, its goal is actual unity, a link with life force itself; the god Shakti (male, cosmic consciousness) merging with the goddess Shiva (female, creative energy).

"People have sex, but seldom really make more love happen," says Caroline Muir. She and her husband Charles are leading tantra teachers and authors of *Tantra, the Art of Conscious Loving*. Charles adds, "[When you are] empowered by love, the outside world doesn't discombobulate you. Bring God into the bedroom and sanctify the union. Let's bring more heaven to earth."

Attesting to tantra's popularity, the Muirs' workshops are consistently sold out. Lawyers, doctors, Hollywood stars and even ministers are among its practitioners. A priest who attended a program

alone said he was there on an inner journey. Tantra applies to loving yourself.

It is the kind of work that has potential to heal the earth, according to one of the Muirs' students. "There is so much pain, crime and abuse associated with sexuality," she shared, "so much wasted energy. . . Sex has become a commodity, and everyone's starving for real love and connection."

Opening up to the infinite possibilities of conscious loving is reported to be an awesome experience. In tantra, you learn to move your sexual energy inward and upward, and to interpret its real essence. Energy passes through the security and power centers and flows up into the heart center. When the energy hits the heart center, it opens your heart into a state of unconditional love. You feel in love with everyone and everything. You become a magnet; people are drawn to you because you are a radiant being.

At seminars, communication is improved to enhance lovemaking, and techniques are taught to help men and women attain multiple and prolonged orgasms. Students are given homeplay, not homework. SkyDancing Tantra

"People have sex, but seldom really make more love happen."

teachers Jeffre TallTrees and Sandy Pokras say, "Practicing feels so good. What a pity if you don't get an exercise [right] the first time. You've got to try again and again!"

On a more serious note, they point out that there is a build-up of guilt and regret around sexuality which blocks the natural forces that can cleanse and enlighten us. Also known as "spiritual sexuality," tantra helps use sexual energy to find truth and wisdom to clear these blocks. It also increases intuition and establishes a connection with the divine.

On the spiritual side, "Tantra means 'weaving,' in the sense of unifying the many and often contradictory aspects of the self into one harmonious whole," states Margo Anand, author of *The Art of Sexual Ecstasy*. "Tantra also means 'expansion,' in the sense that once our own energies are understood and unified, we grow and expand into joy. In tantra you discover that by honoring the god or goddess in your partner, you can . . . perceive the same potential in yourself."

On the sexual side, tantra suggests using positive names for genitalia to help transform guilt about those "hidden parts," to enhance erotic feelings and bring gentleness into lovemaking. Expressions for the male include: Vajra, Lingam, Peak, Hero, Jade Stalk, Magic Wand; for the female: Yoni, Great Jewel, Pearl, Lotus, Ripe Peach, Enchanted

"Tantra re-infuses sexuality with its original meaning..."



Garden. Some examples of metaphors are: "Beloved, may I visit your Enchanted Garden tonight?"

"May I dwell in the Valley of Delights?"

"Can Vajra leave the Valley?"

The pendulum of tantra swings from pleasure to healing. Pamela and Richard Skeie, graduates of Sancta Sophia seminary, a four-year accredited modern mystery school of esoteric wisdom, use tantric techniques in their healing work. They studied with Charles and Caroline Muir and participated in a year-long training with Margo Anand.

According to Pamela, their practice holds "healing as its intention, a sense of communion with God, which leads to pleasure." Richard adds, "Tantra teaches us to move into appreciation of the sacred — not holding it up as a deity,

but recognizing that everything is a part of the divine and should not be shunned."

He explains that in the West, the masculine mode is to distance yourself from the act. Therefore we have expressions such as "hitting on someone" and "scoring," instead of honoring words such as "attuning to" or "merging with;" "making love to someone" as opposed to "making love *with* someone."

"I had the classic American approach to relationships," confesses Richard. "I was sitting in a control tower, pushing buttons and levers. I didn't even know I was relating remotely. After tantra training, I joined in the experience, not just sexually, but of communing with another."

A focus in tantra that may not be offered anywhere else is that it helps you define appropriate boundaries and



breathe through blocks that hold you back. Releasing blocks may bring out difficult feelings, but on the other side bliss awaits you.

This release doesn't turn people into sexual addicts, but helps them to develop a healthier perspective on sexuality. It is said of tantra that it says "yes" to everything, even "no."

Pamela says, "Tantra re-infuses sexuality with its original meaning, of which sexual intercourse is a small part. It is sexuality in the sense of sensuality, of life force, of recognizing that when two opposites come together, whether it is in an electric motor or in people, that a charge is built and that charge is life force. It is the thing that causes trees to grow. It is the coming together of the masculine and feminine, Shakti and Shiva, in every form.

Tantra for me is a return to the innocence and the naturalness of what our bodies are here to do without shame, without all the negative

to do without shame, without all the negative connotations on it.

That's how tantra has most affected me."

Richard sums it up, "The essence of what tantra really brings is this: It is not about sex, it is about love. It is like the feeling I got last night looking at Lake Tahoe at sundown. Pre-tantra, pre-opening of these blocks, I'd have said, 'Oh, what a nice sunset.' Now it is a sense of bodily participation in the enjoyment; the masculine and the feminine coming together. The masculine is embodied by the feminine; spirit comes into matter. When this happens, that's wholeness."

Want to do your part for peace? Take tantra, see the goddess or god in your love partner, and "Make love, not sex!" •

Tantric Tidbits

(Thanks to the Muirs and the Skeies)

NURTURING MEDITATION "To have and to hold" takes on new meaning in tantra. For ten minutes, morning and night, lie together on your left sides, like spoons nestled together, with whoever feels most in need of nourishment on the inside. You practice breathing exercises, synchronized and alternated. It is physical communication: skin to skin, breath with breath and chakra to chakra. Immediately it connects two into one. Over time it creates synergy. One of you turns around to face your partner, and finish up with soul gazing.

SOUL GAZING Silently look at the light that radiates from your lover's eyes. Soul gazing is peering into the other's soul. It allows you to learn fundamental principles of connecting, to tune into someone else's essence, to be unafraid in their presence.

YABYUM Unique to tantra, this exercise can be done clothed or naked. One partner sits astride the other, who is sitting cross-legged. The legs of the partner on top wrap around the other's torso to touch the feet in back, sole to sole. This lines up the chakras, allows for soul gazing, and is sufficient unto itself or can lead to more lovemaking.

THE TONGS (Samdamsaja) a.k.a., the PC Pump
Taught as Kegels in childbirth classes, these are a lot more fun in tantra! The pubococcygeus (PC) muscle stretches like a hammock from the base of the spine to the pubic bone, supporting the sexual organs, the urethra and the rectum. It is the muscle that stops the flow of urine. Toning this muscle can benefit both men and women; it allows better ejaculatory control and it helps increase the power of orgasm. Tighten, hold, and relax. Inhale while on the contraction, hold on the hold, and exhale on the relaxation. Start strengthening your love muscle with 10 to 15 contractions a day, and slowly increase to 30 a day.

EJACULATION CONTROL What can I say, you just have to practice! Ejaculatory control is a way of plateauing instead of climaxing, higher and higher each time, allowing the energy to rise up through the chakras. Men can learn to separate orgasm from ejaculation.

AMRITA "Divine nectar," is actually female ejaculate — called "e-jill-ulation" by Dr. Judy Kuriansky in a *Penthouse* article on tantra (as in Jill vs Jack). It is similar to a physical surrender, but instead of "losing it," the woman becomes the energy, the love, the joy.

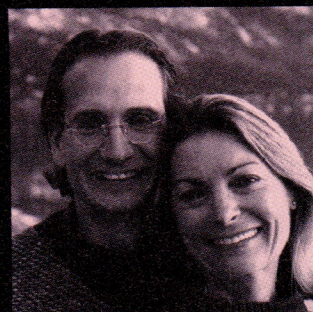


PHOTO: CHRIS TALBOT, LAKE TAHOE

Richard and Pamela Skeie offer a healing practice at Lake Tahoe, Nevada.



PHOTO: MICHAEL KANDUJF

Charles and Caroline Muir, leading tantra teachers and authors.



PHOTO: RUSSELL ROSEWOOD, PHOTOSENSITIVE, TRUCKEE

Jeffrey TallTrees and Sandy Pokras offer tantra training at Truckee-Tahoe in California.