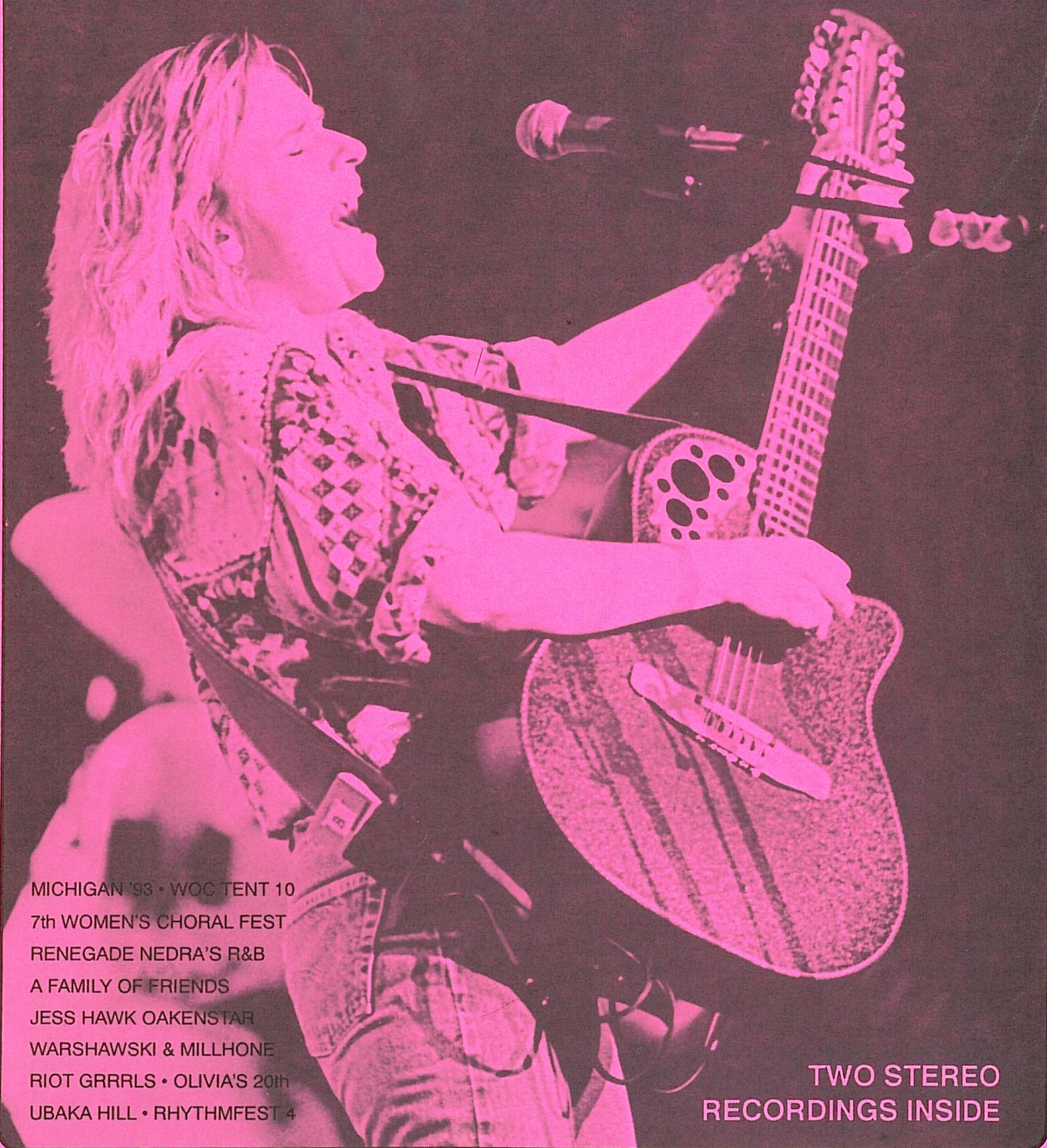


# HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

YES, SHE IS...

**MELISSA ETHERIDGE**



MICHIGAN '93 • WOC TENT 10  
7th WOMEN'S CHORAL FEST  
RENEGADE NEDRA'S R&B  
A FAMILY OF FRIENDS  
JESS HAWK OAKENSTAR  
WARSHAWSKI & MILLHONE  
RIOT GRRRLS • OLIVIA'S 20th  
UBAKA HILL • RHYTHMFEST 4

TWO STEREO  
RECORDINGS INSIDE

Kathy Tully

VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1 • JANUARY 1994

\$6.00

# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

**First cover (November 1984):** Kate Clinton  
**First subscriber:** Dorothy Hoogterp, Michigan  
**First to renew subscription:** Janet Soule, Chicago  
**First bookstore order:** Women & Children First, Chicago  
**First record distributor order:** Karen Merry, California  
**Staff still with us from first issue:** Jorjet Harper, Vada Vernée, Ann Morris, Paula Walowitz, Kay Gardner, Janna MacAuslan, and Toni Armstrong Jr.

Women often ask us where we got the name *HOT WIRE*. Here's the inspiration:

### FINDING THE HOT WIRE

By Yvonne Zipter

*There is a tension between us,  
physical as potential energy,  
a high voltage, untapped.  
Take this test:  
touch me.  
Not sexually,  
but with the flat of your hand,  
with the tips of your fingers,  
touch me:  
arms and shoulders;  
the bend where shoulder meets neck;  
my cheekbones;  
the hair above my ears;  
my shoulder blades;  
the ribs in my back  
and the small of it;  
my waist;  
elbows, forearms, wrists;  
and hands.*

*If you can do that  
and not want more,  
closer, harder,  
if you can do that and not want  
the press of hip bone on abdomen,  
breasts against breasts,  
my hand  
firm at the small of your back  
then we will know  
that you are not drawn—  
like an electromagnet—  
to my charge.*

Will you take the test?

## WITH MAINSTREAM LESBIAN CHIC, WHO NEEDS WOMEN'S CULTURE?

As *HOT WIRE* celebrates the beginning of its tenth year, we're at a fascinating moment in lesbian feminist history. We simultaneously have women's music happening as a vibrant subculture (music and film/video festivals, bookstores, concerts, publications) but also feminist consciousness and lesbian visibility beginning to be acknowledged in the mainstream. But don't be fooled: The need for the feminist entertainment subculture is as strong as ever. Women instrumentalists still experience extreme forms of discrimination, though we are seeing a few more women players in bands. The *Entertainment Weekly* list of top 100 CDs only includes



Vada Vernée

**The *HOT WIRE* founding mothers: Etaz (Michele) Gautreaux, Yvonne Zipter, Ann (The Vibrarian) Morris, and Toni Armstrong Jr. This photo was taken in 1984 on the night Annie Lennox performed "Sweet Dreams" in drag on the Grammy Awards show. *HOT WIRE* was born during the era when Meg Christian was leaving Olivia Records and Annie Lennox, Grace Jones, and Wendy O. Williams were mainstreaming androgyny for women in music.**

fourteen women (sixteen if you stretch it and include The Weavers starring Ronnie Gilbert and Big Brother and the Holding Company with Janis Joplin). What it's like to be in the audience also remains a serious issue. In the next issue of *HOT WIRE*, we'll take a close look at the mainstreaming of women's culture, so stay tuned.

## 1994 WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS

It's coming along, slowly but surely. The new edition will have more than 4,000 listings. *HOT WIRE* subscribers are on the mailing list, so you'll be the first to know when the new book is back from the printer.

## IN SEARCH OF...

(1) Good writers, especially to provide festival coverage and to research articles which require gathering material from multiple sources. (2) The album *Virgo Rising*. (3) Addresses of women DJs, especially DJs who provide music for live events. (4) To update *Women's Music Plus* directory, we also need addresses for: Sharon Ray, Annette Aguilar, L.A. Hyder, Edwina Lee Tyler, Maria Breyer, Nancy Day, Carrie Barton, Carol McDonald, Lori Noelle, Marlene Moore, Barbara Higbie, Kanika Kress, Beth York, Bernice Brooks, Jacqueline Stander, Cam Davis, Axis Dance Troupe, Matina Bevis, Moral Hazard, Carol Rahn, Eve Silverman, Vivian Berry, Deborah Jenkins, Dean Bradley, Sylvie LeMay,

Becky Birtha, Cherie Moraga, Melanie Kaye/Kantrovich, JoAnn Loulan, Kady-Axe Maker to the Queen, At the Foot of the Mountain, Barbara Hammer, Pat Ferrero, Boden Sandstrom, and the following producers: Karen Gotzler, Kerry Elizabeth, Jumpin' Jerusha, Strong Again, Su Pomerleau, OutWrite lesbian/gay writers' conference, Lesbian Separatist Gathering, Lismore Women's Music Festival, and any festivals/gatherings started during 1993 or 1994.

## NEW SEATTLEITES and NEW TEAM AMAZON

Well, they made it to Seattle, where they're settled into their new apartment in the 98109 ZIP code area. (Lynn will continue to be our display ad coordinator and Susan will continue to write grants for *HOT WIRE*.) They'd love to hear from any local women who would be interested in introducing them to the women's cultural scene there. Give them a call at (206) 217-9738.

Our new coordinators are well and living in the *HOT WIRE* basement. We welcome Arryn Hawthorne as office manager/volunteer coordinator; J. Ann Smith as business manager/bookkeeper; and Kim Griffin as production coordinator. Jeni Hamilton is managing classified ads, and Joy Rosenblatt continues as tireless soundsheet producer. I, of course, remain on as editorial dominatrix.

## THE FOUNDING MOTHERS

During the last decade, what's happened in the lives of the four women who dreamed that there could be a high-quality publication devoted to woman-identified women's music and culture?

ANN MORRIS and her photographer girlfriend Vada Vernée bought a home in Rogers Park in 1986, and will celebrate their tenth anniversary this February. Ann is still a law librarian. "I took three weeks between jobs in 1984 to layout/paste-up—all manual!—the first *HOT WIRE*," she says. "When Volume 1 #1 went to the printer [in October 1984], I went to the law firm of Skadden, Arps where I've been (sometimes more, sometimes less) contentedly toiling ever since." She has been the picture of perfect health—never anything more than a cold—until she was diagnosed with breast cancer in August 1993. "As this issue is being mailed, I will be halfway through chemotherapy. I plan to give a glowing health report in the twentieth anniversary of *HOT WIRE*," she says. "Sad to say, my diagnosis of breast cancer followed my own mother's by only eight months. Also sad to say it's the biggest thing we've had to talk about in many years." Ann has been a mainstay of Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus, for over a decade. She is also a member

*continued on page 55*

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**PRINTING**

Janeen Porter/C&D Print Shop, Chicago

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**HOT WIRE** (ISSN 0747-8887) is published in Jan.,  
May, and Sept. by Empty Closet Enterprises, Inc.,  
5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-  
9009, fax (312) 728-7002. • All material is **COPY-  
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USA: \$17/yr. **SURFACE MAIL** to countries outside  
USA: \$19/yr. **AIR MAIL** rates: Canada: \$24/yr.,  
Africa/Asia/Australia: \$31/yr, Europe/So. America:  
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# HOT WIRE: THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

## VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1, JANUARY 1994

### FEATURES

- 2 **Yes, she is...Melissa Etheridge** interviewed by Toni Armstrong Jr.
- 18 **Hardcore Feminist Rock** by Kathie Bergquist & Toni Armstrong Jr.
- 32 **Michigan Moments** by Toni Armstrong Jr., Bonnie Morris,  
Zenobia Conkerite, tatiana de la tierra, Therese Edell, Laura Love,  
Ruth Simkin & Mimi Baczewska
- 38 **On Being a Global Citizen and World Troubador**  
by Jess Hawk Oakenstar
- 40 **A Family of Friends: The Making of the Women's Music  
Sampler** by Sue Fink, Jamie Anderson & Dakota

### "I WAS THERE" REPORTS

- 20 **Voters For Choice Concert** by Kathy Tully
- 22 **A Feminist Fourth: the Seventh National Women's Choral  
Festival** by Catherine Roma & Marilyn Ebertz
- 24 **Olivia Turns Twenty** by Toni Armstrong Jr.
- 28 **Rhythmfest 4** by Ginny Risk
- 30 **The Tenth Michigan Womyn of Colors Tent** by Amoja Three  
Rivers, Lola Lai Jong, Marie Beaumont & Adriana Becerra

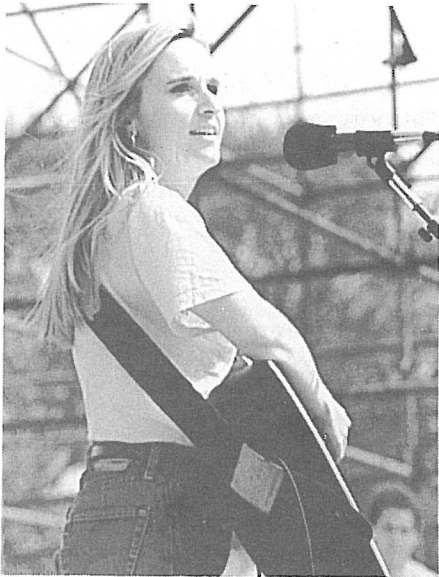
### DEPARTMENTS

- 6 **Soapbox** Letters from Readers
- 7 **Inquiring WimMinds Want to Know**  
Ginni Clemmens in Maui and Lynn Lavner on the Road
- 8 **Hotline** compiled by Jeni Hamilton, Kim Hines, Annie Lee,  
Jamie Anderson & Toni Armstrong Jr.
- 12 **On Stage and Off** by Zenobia Conkerite  
"Ubaka Hill: She Who Rises From the Fire"
- 14 **Lesbomania** by Jorjet Harper  
"Dykelangelo" and "The Ghost of Christmas Past"
- 16 **Mulling It Over** by Nedra Johnson  
"Renegade Rhythm and Blues"
- 48 **Re:Inking** by Kate Brandt & Paula Lichtenberg  
"On the Case With V.I. and Kinsey"
- 51 **Dykes to Watch Out For** cartoons by Alison Bechdel
- 61 **Ninth Annual HOT WIRE Readers' Choice Ballot**
- 64 **Classified Ads** compiled by Arryn Hawthorne & Jeni Hamilton
- 68 **Tenth Anniversary Special: Two Stereo Soundsheets**  
produced by Joy Rosenblatt • "Ticket to Wonderful" (June & Jean  
Millington) • "Gold in the Tapestry" (Jess Hawk Oakenstar) • "Where  
Will You Be?" (Nedra Johnson) • "Sugar Mama" (Gwen Avery)  
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a Dyke" (Alison Farrell) • "Coming Into My Years" (MUSE Choir)

Yes, she is

# MELISSA ETHERIDGE

Interviewed by Toni Armstrong Jr.



Melissa at the 1993 March on Washington • photo by Pat Bechdoit

Heartthrob Melissa Etheridge burst onto the mainstream rock scene in 1988 with her debut album 'Melissa Etheridge' (Island Records), which has gone on to sell more than a million copies. Prior to her fame, she had been featured at Robin Tyler's West Coast and Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festivals in the mid '80s; most of Melissa's music performances, however, have been in mainstream music venues.

In a precursor to the 1993 "lesbian chic" media blitz, strong, androgynous female musicians (notably Melissa, Tracy Chapman, k.d. lang, Phranc, and Michelle Shocked) were the darlings of the mainstream press the year Melissa's first album debuted. The emotionally intense rocker rode high on that wave, and is the most famous performer to continue a public association with the women's music scene. (She has performed occasionally at Rhythm-fest, gives interviews to women's publications such as 'HOT WIRE,' etc.).

Melissa Etheridge has never compromised her integrity or projected a false hetero image of herself to gain public acceptance. "Why should I change myself to fit into the mainstream? I can be me and go for the brass ring," she said in a 1990 'HOT WIRE' interview—and indeed, fame has come to Melissa on her own terms. She won the Grammy in 1993 for Best Female Rock Vocalist (for "Ain't It Heavy").

Raised in Leavenworth, Kansas, the 5'3" guitarist/singer began writing songs at

age ten and fronting a country band at twelve. She attended Berklee College of Music in Boston before moving to Los Angeles, where she was "discovered" (playing in the Long Beach bar Que Sera) by Island Records.

Melissa's second and third recordings—'Brave and Crazy' (1989) and 'Never Enough' (1992)—have each sold more than 750,000 copies. Worldwide, approximately four million Melissa recordings have been sold. She has appeared on numerous TV shows, her hit songs are heard on the radio nationwide, and her videos receive airplay on VH1, MTV, and other cable stations. She has received coverage in most of the major music and entertainment publications, as well as in the feminist and lesbian press.

Melissa Etheridge's performance of her song "Precious" at the 1993 March on Washington last April was, for many, a highlight of the six-hour rally. Her brave willingness to publicly come out with dignity and pride as a lesbian in the mainstream entertainment world is forging new ground. Although there are more than 200 women's music performers who have been out publicly for years, Melissa is at this moment in time one of only a half dozen mainstream-famous musicians to have done so.

Her eagerly awaited new album—entitled 'Yes, I Am'—was released last September. Melissa co-produced the project, and will be touring extensively this year. We know you'll be watching for her in your town.

## TELL US ABOUT YES, I AM.

It has ten songs and is inspired more by my first album than any of the others. It's very organic, very strong—it has a lot of strong themes. I made an effort to make sure that each of the songs was written with passion, and that they were songs that I could get up and perform live and feel them strongly.

## IS "I'LL NEVER BE THE SAME" ON IT?

Yes. "I'll Never Be the Same" was in a film a couple of years ago—*Welcome Home, Roxy Carmichael*—and people have kept asking me about it. They requested it and just bugged me, bugged me, bugged me so much that I finally said, "Okay, okay, I'll put it on an album." It hasn't been available anywhere else.

## THIS FALL, YOU'LL BE TOURING...?

I hope to be on tour for at least a year. We don't just want to go into the big places. I always appreciate being in the smaller venues, and enjoy it more. We're going to try to get creative with this tour.

## YOU'VE DONE QUITE A BIT OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, RIGHT?

Oh, yeah. I've been all over Western Europe. I do very well over there, except for England—not a lot of record sales in England for some reason.

## OF THE FAR-AWAY PLACES YOU'VE BEEN, WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE?

Actually, Australia. I went down to Australia and New Zealand and was there for a month. I think they are *fabulous* places. They're very ecologically minded, for one—very clean. They have some problems I don't know about, I'm sure, but they really love their music—they support organic, original music. Australia is beautiful...and good people.

## HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN TO EUROPE? AND WHEN YOU GO, HOW LONG DO YOU STAY?

Oh...I've been there six times. When I'm on a regular tour, I go for about six weeks—I'd say we go to about twenty cities.

## YOU WERE IN GERMANY WHEN THE WALL CAME DOWN?

I sure was. I was in Berlin. We were playing a European tour. I do very well in Germany, and we were scheduled to go to Berlin. We were hearing on the radio that things were happening; things were very electrified. At that point, people were leaving East Germany and traveling all the way through Hungary and Austria and coming up around and going back. You remember that. So, there were all these people kind of flowing into Germany, and everything was very much on edge—it was very exciting to be there. We'd heard that things were getting a little excited, so we didn't know whether we should go to Berlin—maybe there would be trouble, you know? But our tour manager said, "Look, we'll just go on the bus. It's an overnight drive. If there's a problem, we'll turn

around." So, there we are—we're driving, we wake up that morning, and there we are stuck in a traffic jam—a million East Germans driving into West Berlin. It was amazing. The Wall came down that morning, and we just happened to be there.

**DID YOU KNOW IN ADVANCE THAT THE WALL WAS COMING DOWN?**

No—we knew that night that there were people *at* the Wall, that there were, like, all these people, and they were gathering and gathering. We thought the soldiers might shoot us, or that things could get ugly. But we realized by that morning that they had actually *opened* the Wall and were letting everyone in. They just gave up that night. It was such a thrill to be there at that point, at that *moment*. My tour manager was German, so he took us all around—that made it even more personal.

**SO HOW WAS YOUR SHOW THERE?**

Unbelievable. I can't even describe it. We had that night off, so we were hooting and hollering and going around with everybody. The next day we had a free concert in this huge stadium by the Wall. There were a lot of German acts, and Joe Cocker, and us, in this show. Everybody came to that, and you could tell the East Germans from the West Germans because the East Germans were standing there with their mouths open...they'd not seen a rock concert before. That night I did my regular concert, and it was a big...well, it was like a party, but not a drunk, weird party. It was like everyone was just high. It was an amazing part of history, and we were there and high on freedom. Very, very inspiring. Very hopeful.



**THAT WOULD BE HARD TO TOP, BUT WHAT OTHER EXPERIENCES WOULD YOU RATE AS MOST INTERESTING IN YOUR CAREER SO FAR?**

Playing the [Presidential] Inauguration in January 1993. I sang "Stand By Me" with Luther Vandross. The whole event was mind-boggling. Everybody was there—Diana Ross, Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles,

From top: Melissa in 1988, the year of her self-titled debut album; in 1992, as seen on *Never Enough*; and today. The rocker is touring this year with her new album, *Yes, I Am*. "I don't think that being pretty means you're not strong, or that you can only be pretty for men. [On *Never Enough*], I was being pretty for my lover," she said in the November/ December 1993 issue of *Deneuve*.

everybody. You'd turn around and there was Jack Nicholson, etc. We were all stuffed in these tents in the back, and there was no one big star. I mean, even Michael Jackson came in with his bodyguards and it was like, "Oh, get over it." If there was a big star, it was our new president. It was such an amazing show; it really was. There we were on the Lincoln Memorial, with the band and the crowd, and President Clinton was right up front, like almost on the stage. You could just look at him, and you'd sing to him and he'd nod and smile—he was lovin' it. It was *great*.

**IT'S NICE TO HAVE A PRESIDENT WHO ACTUALLY SEEMS ALIVE AND IN TOUCH WITH PEOPLE.**

Isn't it, though? The whole time that I was there was magical and really special. So that event was right up there—and then there was the March on Washington in April 1993. I would say Berlin, the Inauguration, and the March on Washington are the three top points in my career so far.

**YOU'RE GETTING FAMOUS AROUND THE WORLD, HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL FOLLOWING IN THE STATES, AND HAVE PLAYED AT MAJOR SEE-AND-BE-SEEN EVENTS. THINK BACK TO YOUR EARLY DAYS—WHAT HAS TURNED OUT THE WAY YOU EXPECTED, AND WHAT HASN'T?**

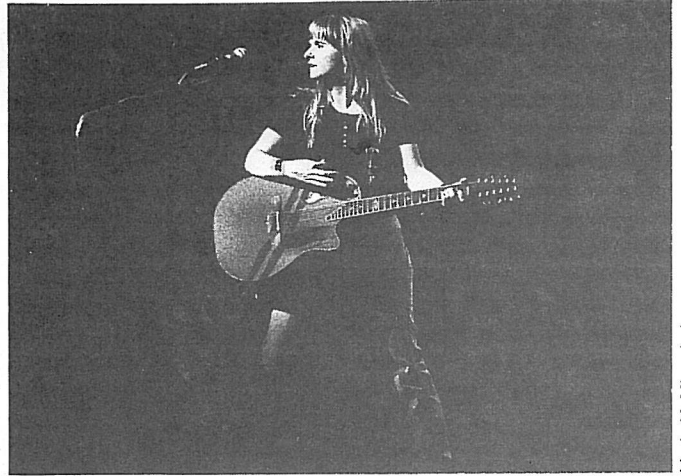
Well, you know you always imagine it a certain way, but it's never like that. I imagined I'd play in the bar, some person would come in and say, "Oh, you're great. I want to make a record," and the next month, the record would be out. That's big-headed! Instead, it took years and years. First the manager came in and said, "Okay, I think you're really good," and then he brought in like five record companies, and one would be really interested, and I'd think, "Okay, this is it." Then a few months later they'd all have gone away, and I'd be figuring out what happened. It took years, until finally Chris Blackwell of Island Records came in and said, "Yes, I want you on my record label." And then it was a year until we actually recorded. It just took forever.

**SO YOU SIGNED WITH ISLAND IN '86. WHAT ABOUT FAME ITSELF?**

Oh, it's very different. I mean, you think it's all going to be big cars, and wherever you go there's going to be screaming people—and it's not like that. But the concerts, and the hoopla surrounding the concerts, is what pretty much I thought it would be—because people know you're



Erica Chapman



Linda K. Misenheimer

Melissa sings the National Anthem at the Martell Celebrity Softball Game in Los Angeles last May (pictured left). The foundation raises money to fight cancer, AIDS, and leukemia. She played on the Rockers (vs. the Rollers) team. "People will be watching to see what happens to my career, to k.d.'s career," says Melissa. "Being an out lesbian and an entertainer has never been mainstreamed before." (Pictured right at Wolftrap Farm Park in Virginia in 1992.)

going to be there, and your fans are there.

#### THEY CERTAINLY ARE SCREAMERS.

Yes, they are. Don't you love 'em? But other than that, I walk around this town and every now and then someone will come up and say, "I really like your music." I'll thank them for it, but I live as close to normal as you can get...it's not bad.

#### YEAH, THE TABLOIDS DON'T SEEM TOO INTERESTED IN YOU—KNOCK ON WOOD.

I know. Since I came out, I've been in such a steady relationship, and for so many years. It's not like they can run a "Who's She Sleeping with Now?" feature. *US* magazine and *Time* have called, and they're interested in talking about my relationship, but I guess it's not steamy enough for the tabloids.

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND JULIE BEEN TOGETHER?

Four years.

#### AH, A GOOD, SOLID AMOUNT. YOU PASSED THAT DEADLY THREE-YEAR MARK.

Yes. Good, solid time.

#### IN TERMS OF COMING OUT PUBLICLY, WHY DID YOU PICK THE JANUARY INAUGURATION?

I didn't pick it. It truly just happened.

#### IT JUST SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE MOMENT?

Actually, yes. Here's the story. I told you that weekend was amazing, and coming out had been on my mind anyway. It was

something I thought about all the time, but I had a strange fear. I realized that it's the same fear that someone coming out to their parents might have. It's kind of a fear of the unknown—you think there's going to be some big backlash, something *horrible* is going to happen, because that's what was put in our brains a long time ago. I knew that the people who love my music would always love my music. I knew that nothing horrible was going to happen to me, but there was still this big, unknown area that I couldn't pin down. It was like, "Okay, do I need it? Will people think I'm pushing my personal life on them?" You just go 'round and 'round about it. I was one of the people who was very supportive of k.d., saying, "Yeah, go do it, go for it," you know? And I thought, "Well, hell, why don't I?" So I found myself saying, "You know what? The next album, I'm going to come out...."

#### ...AND THERE YOU WERE AT THE INAUGURATION...

...and there I was in Washington, feeling this big sort of freedom—it was such a powerful feeling, a big sense of *pride*. The gay community was there in full force at the Inauguration. I was talking to [influential gay activist] David Mixner, and then I was at the Triangle Ball. It was sponsored by three gay and lesbian rights organizations; the gay and lesbian political PAC was really powerful about getting Bill Clinton elected. Anyway, they all got together and put on this Inaugural Ball. And it turned out to be the best ball there—it was really a happening thing.

They had like this video going, and we were up on this balcony—it was k.d.

and a bunch of my friends, and we were just so thrilled. k.d. was speaking, and she was saying the best thing she did was to come out. Then they introduced me, and it kind of felt like I was talking to my friends, you know? People that I pretty much already knew. I said, "I'm just really proud to say that I've been a lesbian all my life..." and the crowd was like "Whaaaaa!!!!" Everybody went nuts. I thought, "I think I just came out. I think that's what happened!" I've been out to my family and to everyone I work with—anyone who knows me, knows. If you watch the Grammy Awards, my lover is always sitting right beside me. I've never been another way. But when it came to the press, they asked questions to try to get there, and I went around it. I just never came out and directly *said* it.

#### IN WHAT WAYS WOULD YOU EVADE WITHOUT TELLING OUTHRIGHT LIES?

I'd say...well, it's funny because the press would never really pointedly ask, "Are you a lesbian?" Instead, they'd ask leading questions: "You know, Melissa, your music is very popular with the *lesbian* community..." I'd say, "Yeah," and they'd say, "You know, your music is *genderless*..." and I'd say, "Well, yeah." I would truthfully say, "I write my music for anyone who really wants to relate to it"—which I still do. I'm not going to start writing girl-meets-girl songs, because I really want my music to *transcend* and be very universal. I think that love should be presented that way, and I want to keep it that way.

#### WELL, IT'S FUN TO BE IN YOUR AUDIENCES BECAUSE EVERYONE IS

**SCREAMING FOR YOU—THE LESBIANS, THE STRAIGHT WOMEN, THE STRAIGHT MEN... YOU DO SEEM TO HAVE A UNIVERSAL APPEAL.**

Passion is universal. I play in other countries, and I play in different languages. Every single audience I have includes straight and gay people. See, *love* is a universal. It's something we're born with, that stays with us, and there's no reason that it can't be presented that way. People love people and desire people. I hope it stays that way.

**DO YOU IDENTIFY AS A FEMINIST?**

I sure do.

**DID YOU ALWAYS?**

In '88, when my first album came out, they would ask me, "Are you a feminist?" and I'd go, "Well, I'm just trying to do my best. I don't want to get *political* or anything." I eventually realized that I was a product of that "feminism is bad, feminism is bra-burning" mentality—which is so untrue! In 1990 it hit me over the head, and I went, "Wait a minute, this is all wrong. Yes, I'm a feminist. I believe in political and personal and professional equality. Period. I *believe* in it."

**IN THE '80s, THE RADICAL RIGHT-WING AND THE MEDIA ANTI-FEMINIST FORCES WERE REALLY EFFECTIVE. THEY MANAGED TO TARNISH THE WORD SO MUCH THAT EVEN PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE IN ABSOLUTE EQUALITY DIDN'T WANT TO BE IDENTIFIED AS "FEMINIST."**

Right. People backed off from it. I did the *Arsenio Hall* show with Vanna White one time, and he asked her, "Are you a feminist?" She said, "Well, no—I'm *feminine*." I just shook my head.

**IT SEEMS TO BE ALMOST AS HARD TO PUBLICLY COME OUT AS A FEMINIST AS IT IS TO COME OUT AS A LESBIAN.**

True. But on the bright side, I'm finding in the music business today that there are some *radical* women coming up. Radical rock women.

**THE RIOT GRRRL MOVEMENT?**

Yeah, riot grrrl, the band L7—that sort of stuff. It's this way-out, wild feminism. That younger generation is definitely coming up. Where I was ten years ago saying, "Well, no, um, I'm not really a feminist," they're going, "Hey, fuck you, I am"—which I hope will cause people to go, "Oh yeah, right. This is what we need."

**LESBIANS SEEM TO BE THE MEDIA DARLINGS OF THE MOMENT...**

...aren't we trendy?...

**...ALTHOUGH I FIND IT AGGRAVATING THAT THEY NEVER MENTION ANYTHING ABOUT THE HUGE, INFLUENTIAL WOMEN'S MUSIC SUB-CULTURE. WHAT ABOUT THE FESTIVALS? LIKE MICHIGAN HASN'T RADICALLY INFLUENCED ABOUT 100,000 LESBIANS OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES? IT'S NOT EVEN WORTH A MENTION IN ALL THIS MEDIA COVERAGE?**

I think they're peeling it off layer by layer, and at each layer they're getting used to it. I think that they—the big *they*—can look at Northampton and say, "Okay, these are smart women, going to college. They're living very peacefully, very normally. Okay, I can deal with that." It may be a couple of layers down before they could say, "Okay, there's a place in Michigan where 9,000 women go and take off their clothes and dance wildly to the moon." It's going to take time before that can be presented and have people understand that it's a very natural and beautiful basic human *thing* that we're getting back to.



June Parlett

**FOR CELEBRITIES WHO COME OUT NOW WHEN IT'S SOMEWHAT FASHIONABLE, WHAT REPERCUSSIONS DO YOU EXPECT THEY'LL EXPERIENCE LATER?**

I think there's a lot of positive. For example, people will be watching to see what happens to my career, to k.d.'s career. It's never been tried before. Being an out les-

bian and an entertainer has never been *mainstreamed* before. Are they going to burn my records in Arkansas? I bet no, they're not. People will watch closely, and then some up-and-coming artist will eventually be able to say, in her *first* interview, "And oh, by the way, I'm gay." That's going to be the next step. I mean, k.d. and I are now established artists. I still don't know what it would be like for someone new to say, "Yes, I'm gay"—could they make it as far as I've made it? I don't know yet if there are going to be some boy radio programmers out there that aren't going to play me because..."ahh, she's queer."

**SO FAR SO GOOD? NO BAD BUZZ?**

So far so good. I haven't heard anything bad back from anybody. To my knowledge, none of my records have been returned.

**WE'LL KEEP OUR FINGERS CROSSED FOR YES, I AM. WHAT DID YOU LIKE ABOUT THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON LAST APRIL?**

I liked it because I could close my eyes and imagine—what if the world were like this? What if we were actually the majority?

**ALL "300,000" OF US?**

Well, that was very annoying. And very sad. [Editor's note: The Washington D.C. official park service estimate of the lesbian/gay march attendance was 300,000 people. The city TV newscasters as well as the march organizers reported attendance closer to a million participants.]

**I WAS OUT IN SAN FRANCISCO FOR THEIR PRIDE PARADE LAST JUNE, AND THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA THERE REPORTED 400,000 FOR THAT CROWD ALONE.**

Yeah, and 500,000 in L.A...it's like, "Helloooo? Come on, put all these numbers together now; we're not just moving from city to city!" It was sad that they underestimated the D.C. crowd so ridiculously. It was such a beautiful march. It wasn't like one of our Pride parades, where we're *continued on page 60*

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Toni Armstrong Jr. is managing editor and one of the founding mothers of *'HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture.'* She has played bass in several feminist bands over the years, including *Surrender Dorothy* (with Paula Walowitz), *the Starkissed Tunaband* (with Karen Pritikin), and *Lavender Jane* (with Alix Dobkin and Kay Gardner).

# SOAPBOX

## Letters From Readers

I'm absolutely Be-Dazzled by the New Title bestowed upon me by *HOT WIRE*: "Intergalactic Queen of Brainy Babes." I'll continue to try to live up to this honor. Since I'm horrendously over-committed, I cannot commit myself to writing anything for your column "Brainy Girls A Go-Go" at this time. All the same, I think it's a great idea and that you can find many qualified Bitches and Old Bats to continue to do a terrific job. Thank you so much for all the issues of *HOT WIRE*. I wish you continuing Luck.

Mary Daly, Newton Centre, Mass.

.....

In the September issue of *HOT WIRE*, Toni Jr. asks for information on lesbian vampires. Do you have information and/or a copy of a wonderful play about lesbian vampires who worked in a blood donation facility? I do not remember the name of the play, but it was written by Kathleen Thompson, who also was an author of the handbook for Chimera Self Defense located in Chicago. I saw the play in the early '80s, I think, at a small theater on the second floor of the building where the Granada Theatre was located on Sheridan Road just north of Devon Avenue. (That building has since been demolished and replaced.) As I recall, the play presented the lesbian vampires in a very positive sense. There was a poignant love story involved with a character having to decide whether to become a vampire to stay with her love or remain mortal and lose her love. Good luck if you look for this play.

Katherine V. Wilcox, Houston, Texas  
Thanks, Katherine! Okay, readers, can anyone carry the information ball further?

.....

Many women's lands have been created in different parts of the world. Womyn have organized themselves in different ways, yet we have one thing in common: We are womyn who have decided to live among womyn on lands that belong to us to discover the life we want to live—as far away as possible from men's societies and

**LETTERS may be edited for length and/or clarity. Send to Soapbox/HOT WIRE, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. Fax to (312) 728-7002.**



Toni Armstrong Jr.

"It really made my day to read the results of your poll," writes **Alix Dobkin (center, with Debbie Fier and Vicki Randle at the 1991 Michigan festival).**

values, and as close as possible to ourselves as womyn.

We are two womyn who have chosen to live in the mountains of the Doubs [France]. We are discovering what music and dances we want to make, what food we want to grow and eat, how we want to create our housing, our writing, our painting, how we want to be together, how we want to be alone. We want to choose and/or make everything that surrounds us there where we live.

We call this womyn's environment in which we are living Terra. We are looking to buy land (twelve to twenty-four acres) in this area. We hope to meet other womyn who would like to join or participate in doing this with us. Like yesterday, we are the amazons of today!

Viviane Clarac and Doris Buger  
Les Combes de Punay,  
25620 Mamirole, Malbrans, France

.....

The last issue of *HOT WIRE* was excellent, and I was particularly delighted to see that I was chosen by your readers as their "All-Time Favorite Performer." What an honor! Thanks a million to everyone who voted for me, and to *HW* for your consistent support. It really made my day to read the results of your poll. It's particularly exciting because contrary to the impression many people have gotten (due to my announcement that I was taking some

time off the road in order to begin writing my memoirs), I am still booking myself in concert and have resumed touring after a break of a year and a half.

I also found the article "Fifteen and Free at the Gulf Coast Festival" to be particularly inspiring. Thanks to Bonnie Morris for writing it and *HW* for publishing it, along with the other fine articles in the September '93 issue.

It did not surprise any of the veterans of the Michigan Festival long-term crews to see that Sandy Ramsey was the winner of the Trivia Contest. We have played Trivial Pursuit with Sandy for many years at Michigan, and she is the player most in demand for every team. As a matter of fact, Sandy won a game against a large team of workers single-handedly one evening this past summer during a post-fest competition.

Congratulations to all of your staff, past and present, for putting out a consistently high-quality journal that educates and amuses while supporting the culture of women-loving communities. Stay well, stay sweet, stay with it.

XX, Alix Dobkin  
Woodstock, New York

.....

A caregiver has begun reading *HOT WIRE* to me, and since I was delighted to hear my name in the list of Board of Advisor members—and I realize that it's a heavy-duty responsibility—I'm going to *act* like a board member and get the mag some money. Thus, with money earmarked for presents, I'll purchase some subscriptions for Jane, Meghan, and Linda, and create a Fairy Godmother (how often may a person *create* an actual Fairy Godmother?) at \$15 per issue (*HW* will remind me). Jane in Washington, D.C., has a good job, just got a raise, and now sends me money every month to help with disability stuff. So I asked her if I could use some of her money to buy her a subscription and make her a Fairy Godmother. She laughed and said, "Yes!" I felt very guilty for not having said something about *HOT WIRE* from the stage at Michigan. I forgot, but never again! I want to actively assist.

Therese Edell, Cincinnati



## LYDIA'S ISLE

(sung to the Gilligan's Island theme tune)

Opening theme:

Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale,  
The tale of a sapphic trip—  
It started from the '70s  
Bound for Lesbos on this ship.  
The separatists said, "Break away  
From patriarchal lore!"  
Six lesbians set sail that day  
To find something more,  
To find something more.  
The ship set ground on the shore of this  
Uncharted desert isle  
With Lydia...  
Her lover Lu...  
The '50s butch...and her femme,  
The baby dyke,  
The professor and not one man,  
Here on Lydia's Isle!

Closing theme:

No whips, no chains, no motorbikes,  
Our gynecocracy,  
Fighting for a different world,  
Utopian as can be.  
So join us here each week, my friends,  
You're sure to get a smile  
From six wacky separatists,  
Here on Lydia's Isle!

Carolyn Parkhurst, Washington, D.C.

.....

Thanks again for your great magazine. I always look forward to getting it. You women always do a great job on it. I am again very happy to renew and I am glad to help you a few times a year with a donation. I have a question about Jane Olivor. Does she still give concerts, and do you know if she ever appears in New York? Could you tell me where I could write to find out?

Phyllis Reifer, 158-34 96th St.

Howard Beach, NY 11414

We checked through the almost 2,000 listings in the performer section of our 'Women's Music Plus Directory' and saw we haven't yet acquired an address for Ms. Olivor. We'll keep looking. Meanwhile, can anyone help Phyllis in her quest? •

## TRIVIA CONTESTS

There were no winners to last issue's question: Between 1988 and 1993, Roseanne Arnold's character on her top-rated TV show held seven jobs (not counting housewife). What were they? Now that reruns of the show are in syndication, you'll have a better chance of catching up, so the question stands as an ongoing trivia contest. This time: Who was Honey West? Who played her on TV? And why should we care? (Answer correctly and win a year's subscription to *HOT WIRE*.)

## Inquiring WimMinds Want To Know



Toni Armstrong Jr.

### Ginni Clemmens: Alive and well and living in Maui.

Many years ago, when I first discovered women's music at the festivals held at the University of Illinois [National Women's Music Festival, now held in Bloomington, Indiana], I heard a woman named Ginni Clemmens. She sang and played banjo and guitar. She was the first person I'd seen do a "round robin" where everyone gets a turn to sing. Every time I've seen a round robin since, I've wondered what became of her. I used to live in the Midwest, so I saw her perform outside of the festivals, too. I still hear her old hit song "(I've Got My Feet On) Solid Ground" performed by other women. Whatever did become of Ginni "Wild Women Don't Get The Blues" Clemmens?

Gloria Sandahl, Ashland, Oregon

Ginni is alive and well and has had her feet on the sandy beaches of Maui for the last eight years. She has two children's albums on the Folkways/Smithsonian label ('Sing a Rainbow' and 'We All Have a Song'). Her early women's music recordings (including 'Wild Women Don't Get the Blues' and 'Straight and Gay Together') are out of print. Last August, Ginni performed at the Michigan Festival Day Stage Round Robin (pictured above) and gave a children's concert on Sunday at the Acoustic Stage. She is still writing songs, and is currently learning to play the ukulele and the slack key guitar. (Ginni Clemmens, 1160A Keala Loa Ave., Makawao, HI 96768.)

What is Lynn Lavner doing these days? I love her gay cabaret act. Seeing her picture in *HOT WIRE* at The Wedding [1993 March on Washington] made me wonder about her.

Lynda J. Morrison, Los Angeles

Lynn—who, incidentally, was "Miss September" in the 1994 March on Washington calendar [available from Manasse Photography, 1605 Bellevue #409, Seattle, WA 98122], is touring with her fourth album, 'Butch Fatale' [on Bent Records, 480 E. 17th St., Brooklyn, NY 11226]. In the last year, she's played the Australia Mardi Gras, for 500 during the annual Provincetown women's weekend, and the first lesbian cruise on the Nile [Robin Tyler Productions]. She continues to be invited to emcee and perform at various international conferences, including the P-FLAG conference (New Orleans) and the Fifteenth International Mr. Leather Contest in Chicago. At press time, Lynn was awaiting confirmation on two gigs in Los Angeles in January, so keep an eye on your local listings. She and her lover Ardis look forward to celebrating their eighteenth anniversary on March 31. ("I have no ex-lovers," says Lynn. "It's true. Well, actually, Robin Tyler is my beard—all of the women she's with are really **my** lovers.") Lynn's earlier albums, which feature witty social commentary on gay/lesbian life, include 'You Are What You Wear,' 'I'd Rather Be Cute,' and 'Something Different.' •

# HOTLINE

Compiled by Jeni Hamilton, Kim Hines, Annie Lee, and Toni Armstrong Jr.

## HONORS

**JANE ALEXANDER** was selected last summer by President Clinton to head the National Endowment for the Arts....**TONI MORRISON** became the first African American awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature last October.

The Women's Sports Foundation has developed the Miller Lite **WOMEN'S SPORTS JOURNALISM AWARDS** "to recognize and encourage those journalists who provide quality coverage of women's sports." Kathryn Reith, Women's Sports Foundation Office, Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, NY 11554....*Womyn's Words* reports that nominations for the 1994 **LAMBDA LITERARY AWARDS** will open December 1. Deadline: February 9. Last year's winners included Judith Katz, Audre Lorde (given posthumously), Alison Bechdel, Elizabeth Pincus, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Joan Nestle, Jaye Maiman, Nicola Griffith, Penny Raif Durant. *Lambda Book Report*, 1625 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009.

**KAY GARDNER's** orchestral composition "Rainforest" has been selected by three American symphony orchestras for performance during the 1993-94 season. The composition was performed last spring in Washington, D.C., as part of the National Women's Symphony spring concert, and has been recorded by the Bournemouth Sinfonietta (England).

At the 1993 Emmy Awards: **ROSEANNE ARNOLD** (Best Actress/Comedy)—finally!; **LAURIE METCALF** (Best Supporting Actress/Comedy)—again; and *Picket Fences'* **KATHY BAKER** (Best Actress/Drama)....At the 1993 MTV Awards: **K.D. LANG** (Best Female Video, for "Constant Craving"). Wearing tux and top hat, Madonna opened the show with a gender-bending song-and-dance number. According to *Outlines*, she stroked the thigh and slapped

**HOTLINE announces upcoming events, presents capsule reports of past happenings, and passes on various tidbits of info. This column is dedicated to Dr. Donna Allen, who has given a great deal of her life to facilitating and promoting the type of connections between women that "Hotline" is all about.**

the butt of a lingerie-wearing female dancer. "Get the picture?" she teased the audience.... Thirty-five women were inducted into the **WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME** in Seneca Falls last October, including **WILMA MANKILLER** (Cherokee leader), **SHIRLEY CHISHOLM** (first black woman to run for president), **HELEN STEPHENS** (1936 Olympic track star), **GLORIA YERKOVICH** (founder of Child Find), **ROSALYN YALOW** (first U.S. woman to win the Nobel Prize for medicine), and **CONSTANCE BAKER MOTLEY** (first black female federal judge).

## MAINSTREAM EXPOSURE

**KATE CLINTON** and **LEA DELARIA** have each appeared on the *Arsenio* show....(Kate was also on CNBC's *Tom Snyder Show*).... **PHRANC's** song "Miriam" was featured on NPR's Yom Kippur special last September.... The July 12 *Geraldo* (topic: lesbian visibility) featured comics **KAREN WILLIAMS** and **SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER**, Olivia president **JUDY DLUGACZ**, women from the lesbian-oriented dance band **FEM 2 FEM**, and writer **JOANN LOULAN**.... **VICKI RANDLE** continues to perform every night on NBC with Jay Leno's *The Tonight Show* band. When Billie Jean King and Elton John were on the show last September, Vicki sang back-up on the song "Philadelphia Freedom," which Elton wrote for Billie Jean in the 1970s.

A **FAMILY OF FRIENDS POSTER** may be used on the set of *The Client*. If the poster makes an appearance, it will most likely be in the office of Susan Sarandon's character, a feminist attorney who represents children in abuse cases. In addition to the poster, they're putting feminist books (rented from Meristem in Memphis) on the bookshelves....A *Star Trek* commercial now uses part of **MELISSA ETHERIDGE's** song "2001" as theme music....**KAY TURNER** (Girls in the Nose) has appeared on CNN, E/TV, and MTV's *Week in Rock* talking about her book *I Dream of Madonna*.

Comic **SARA CYTRON** appeared on *In the Life* (April) and on a panel of lesbian comics on CNBC's *Real Personal*; print media exposure included the *Massachusetts Daily*,

*The New Yorker*, *Out!*, and *Sojourner*....In addition to two appearances on *In The Life*, comic **GEORGIA RAGSDALE** appeared on Mo Gaffney's *Women Aloud!* (HBO) last winter, in the All Women, All Comedy show in Long Beach, at the Comedy Store in Los Angeles, and at the Dinah Shore Golf Weekend Comedy Show. She also hosted *Talk Soup* on E/TV....Three-time Bay Area Gold Winner **DIANE AMOS** is everywhere: Venues last year ranged from *Women Aloud* (HBO), *Evening at the Improv* (A&E), and *Short Attention Span Theater* (Comedy Central), to the Michigan festival, to two dozen straight comedy clubs—and have you seen her new Pine Sol ad on TV?

**AMANDA BEARSE** (Marcy on Fox-TV's *Married...With Children*), who is adopting a child with her partner, has been openly gay with the *National Enquirer* and *The Advocate* so far, in addition to being out to all of her TV industry co-workers....**LYNN LAVNER** appeared last September on *The Angela Show* (CBS) in New Orleans, talking about her music and the international PFLAG conference....For the first time ever, according to *Outlines*, "lesbian" and "gay" appeared on the **MARQUEE AT MADISON SQUARE GARDEN** in New York, promoting a tribute to Martina (to benefit the upcoming Gay Games IV and Cultural Festival).

## WOMEN

**LINDA STREGA**, co-author of *Dykes Loving Dykes*, was recently diagnosed with a type of cervical cancer that will require a radical hysterectomy. According to *Hikané*, Linda wants to connect with other lesbians who have ideas about alternative treatments. Write to her c/o Lisa Hubbard, 434 41st St., Oakland, CA 94609....Fond farewell to choreographer **AGNES DE MILLE**, who passed away last October at the age of eighty-eight. According to *Time*, her choreography of *Oklahoma!* in 1943 "transformed Broadway dance from a mere ornament to an essential, expressive element of theatrical storytelling."...Jockey **JULIE KRONE** has been out with serious injuries received at a race at Saratoga last August. Last June, Julie became the first woman to ride to a Triple Crown victory by winning the Belmont Stakes, reports *Fans of Women's Sports*.

## QUOTABLE QUOTES

"In the age of AIDS and people going fag-bashing, it becomes a civil rights issue," said singer **JANIS IAN** in *Outlines*. "If people like me don't start treating it normally with the press, people in America will think they don't know any [gays]. It's hard to justify having worked for black civil rights in the '60s and not work for my own civil rights in the '90s." ... "I think gay people are like blondes," said **RITA MAE BROWN** on the *Maury Povich Show*. "There's fewer of them, but they have more fun." ... "When I started, some women comics were jealous of other women comics, thinking, 'If she gets *The Tonight Show*, I can't,'" said **ROSIE O'DONNELL** in *People*. "My philosophy always was, 'If she did it, I can too.'" Watch for Rosie (as Betty Rubble) in the movie version of *The Flintstones*.

**MARY STUART MASTERSON** (*Fried Green Tomatoes*) complains about sexism in Hollywood: "They think they have to go with what works," she says in the *Advocate*. "Big breasts—sexy! Banana peel—funny!" (But she doesn't want to be misunderstood: "I like bananas, and I like a nice pair of breasts.")...Comic **PAULA POUNDSTONE** in *Mother Jones*, talking about the billboards she sponsored in Colorado opposing the state's anti-gay Amendment 2: "The ad guy...said that the most effective billboards have less than nine words and a picture. I was tempted to change all of mine until I remembered that the most effective billboards have a picture of spaghetti with Jesus's face in it or a large-breasted, blonde woman selling beer."

Mother Superior of *Windy City Times* reports that Holly Millea of *Premiere* magazine discussed the post-MTV awards press conference on *The Joan Rivers Show*: "A male reporter asked k.d. lang what she was thinking when she did that **VANITY FAIR COVER WITH CINDY CRAWFORD**. She looked at him and said, 'Wellll, what was going through my mind was probably the same thing that would have gone through yours.' She's a very clever girl, k.d., and we love her." ...**LILY TOMLIN** (as phone operator Ernestine, talking to a caller at an AIDS hotline) on the ABC special *In a New Light*: "Oh, yes, this call is completely confidential. My lips are sealed. Where do you think they got the phrase 'Don't ask, don't tell'?" The show featured an all-star cast, including Barbara Walters, Pat Benatar, Paula Abdul, Patti Austin, Angela Lansbury, Cindy Crawford, Kate Jackson, Elizabeth Taylor, and Melissa Etheridge.

## GROUPS

The producers of the Gulf Coast Women's Festival have purchased 120 acres of land northeast of Hattiesburg. They plan to create a **WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL RETREAT CENTER IN MISSISSIPPI**. They need donations of money to comply with payoff requirements and to make the camp operational. There are also opportunities to join them for working weekends. Wanda and Brenda Henson, Sister Spirit, Inc., 1806 Curcor Dr., Gulfport, MS 39507. (601) 896-3196.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Obvious Gossip**, k.d. lang's fan club, gives members the number to a twenty-four-hour hotline for up-to-date info. **Obvious Gossip**, P.O. Box 33800, Sta. D, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6J 5C7.

Membership in the **MELISSA ETHERIDGE INFORMATION NETWORK** includes preferred tickets at concerts, free access to the Melissa phone hotline, a newsletter, more. P.O. Box 884563, San Francisco, CA 94188....The **FEM 2 FEM FAN CLUB** can be reached c/o Lewis & Quinn Management, 9812 W. Olympic Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90212.

Members of the singing quartet En Vogue said last fall on MTV that they are starting a **SUPPORT GROUP FOR WOMEN MUSICIANS** called Sisters....Mary-Chapin Carpenter is co-chair of the "**COUNTRY MUSIC AIDS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN NASHVILLE**." Public service announcements will feature Wynonna Judd, Dolly Parton, Kathy Mattea, and Tammy Wynette, among others.

PEN American Center has announced the development of the Lesbian and Gay Committee, formed to combat the **CENSORSHIP OF LESBIAN AND GAY WRITING**. They will challenge textbook portrayals of writers that purposely avoid mentioning sexual orientation, as in the cases of Adrienne Rich, Walt Whitman, and Langston Hughes. PEN, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012....Book-of-the-Month Club has developed the Triangle Classics series of **LESBIAN AND GAY LITERARY CLASSICS**, launched with a special evening of readings in New York last April. Each of three lesbian and gay archives received \$1,000 from the proceeds. Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle* will be among the first books to be published.

**REDWOOD CULTURAL WORK**, which has brought us the music of such wonderful artists as Holly Near, Ferron, Linda Tillery, Altazor, Lillian Allen, Faith Nolan, and Mary Watkins, has been struggling with a serious financial crisis this year. They need to raise \$300,000. At press time, they had collected more than \$100,000. Send tax-deductible donations to Redwood, P.O. Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610.

New tactic: The anti-animal rights group Putting People First is publicly accusing animal-rights activists of being gay in an attempt to discredit them. According to *Windy City Times*, PPF has especially singled out **PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS**, whose spokespeople include k.d. lang, Elvira, and the B-52s....**LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND GAY UNITED EMPLOYEES (LEAGUE)** at AT&T hopes to prompt the corporate giant to market directly to our community, reports *Atlanta*. For brochures that include a return-mail questionnaire, contact LEAGUE at (908) 658-6013.

The New York-based **LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES** has purchased a building in Brooklyn in an area known for its large lesbian population. The archives has become the first openly-identified lesbian organization to own a building in the Big Apple. The archives now includes more than 10,000 books, 1,200 photographs, and 1,400 periodical titles....The **LESBIAN SPACE PROJECT** of Australia is buying a building to house a lesbian-owned and operated concert venue/community center in Sydney. LSP, Box 503, Glebe, NSW, Australia 2037.

The Lesbian Community Cancer Project is holding its first annual **T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST**. SASE to P.O. Box 138202, Chi-

cago, IL 60613-1012....A coalition of feminist and peace groups have joined together to form the Cape Cod Women's Agenda. They've created the **CLOTHESLINE PROJECT**, a visual display designed to raise consciousness about violence towards women. Different-colored shirts hang on the Clothesline in tribute to victims of murder, rape, battery, child sexual abuse, and abuse due to lesbian orientation.

Interested in **WRITING TO WOMEN** from Eastern Europe? Contact the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission Pen Pal Project, 520 Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94114....Lavender Waves plans **VACATIONS IN SOBER ENVIRONMENTS**. PO Box 44, Seal Park, OR 97376....A new nonprofit association called **GAY & LESBIAN ORGANIZATIONS BRIDGING ACROSS THE LAND** is composed of groups that wish to communicate with each other. Call Maureen O'Leary at (510) 652-1946....The **BLACK WOMEN'S NETWORK** publishes a resource guide and plans trips. Box 5, 136 Kingsland High St., London, Great Britain E8 2NS.

## NEWS

Reach out and touch someone: The **FEMINIST MAJORITY LONG DISTANCE ADVANTAGE PROGRAM** benefits women's rights by donating a portion of every long-distance charge directly to the Feminist Majority. No charge to join. (800) 435-6832.... Producer Lee Glanton (Campfest, Womongathering) has pledged \$10,000 to the Lesbian Herstory Archives. She calls her action a "**SISTERSHARE 21st CENTURY CHALLENGE**" and encourages others who enjoy financial success to contribute to lesbian institutions.

**WOMEN'S SOCCER** may be included in the 1996 Olympics. Contact Women's Soccer Foundation, 608 NE 63rd St., Seattle, WA 98115-6545. (206) 527-4035....High school **GIRLS' ATHLETIC TEAMS** in Iowa are dropping their "ettes" (defined by Webster as "little"). Teams like the Huskettes are changing their names to the original (and formerly boys-only) names, like Huskies. *Feminist Teacher* reports that some players feel this will make them seem more powerful.

In honor of the fact that 1994 is the centennial of the birth of blues legend Bessie Smith, jazz historian Rosetta Reitz has created petitions to ask the post office to offer a commemorative **STAMP FEATURING BESSIE** in 1994. Petitions from: Rosetta Records, 115 W. 16th #267, New York, NY

10011. (212) 243-3583....Gayblade, the new **FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAME** for Macintosh computer users, is now available. According to *Open Arms*, the goal of the game is to save the Empress from politicians, fundamentalist preachers, the FBI, and other vile creatures.

*U.S. News and World Report* ran a piece called "Straight Talk About Gays" that discusses polls on **ATTITUDES TOWARD GAYS**. Seventy-three percent of those who know gay people favor equal rights; only fifty-five percent of those who don't know any gays favor the idea. (So come out, come out, wherever you are.)...A study published in the *New York Times* last October revealed that forty percent of U.S. **WOMEN WHO DIE ON THE JOB** are murdered, compared to fifteen percent of men. It also states that men more often hold hazardous jobs.... "Sexual orientation" was added to the **AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION'S** non-discrimination code last year.

After conducting special hearings held by a state commission where **LESBIAN AND GAY TEENS** testified about dealing with their homosexuality, Massachusetts became the first state to create a health and suicide prevention program. Studies show that lesbian/gay teens are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than heterosexual teens....Northwestern University has completed a study that finds homosexual women are more likely to have **HOMOSEXUAL SISTERS**. Lesbians reported twelve to thirty-five percent of their sisters are also lesbians. Heterosexual women reported only two to fourteen percent of their sisters are gay.

## GATHERINGS

In celebration of the **TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE STONEWALL REBELLION**, many events are scheduled in New York City for the weekend of June 26, including a huge lesbian/gay **PRIDE MARCH**, an international **MARCH ON THE UNITED NATIONS**, and the **GAY GAMES IV** and Cultural Celebration. This combined weekend is expected to be the largest gay event in history. Book your housing and travel *now!* Stonewall 25, 208 W. 13th St., New York, NY 10011-7799. Gay Games/Unity '94, 19 W. 21st St. #1202, New York, NY 10010. (212) 633-9494.

The first **NATIONAL WOMEN'S COMEDY CONFERENCE** held last November in Cleveland was produced by Karen Williams. For info on future events: 26151 Lake

Shore Blvd. #2112, Euclid, OH 44132. (216) 289-2939....Mountain Moving Coffeehouse is sponsoring its annual **MIDWINTER MINIFEST** (featuring dozens of crafts-women) on December 11 in Chicago. Call Kathy at (312) 883-0619....The **U.K. WOMEN IN MUSIC FESTIVAL** has been rescheduled for March 1994. Women in Music, Battersea Arts Centre, Old Town Hall, Lavender Hill, London, England SW11 5TF....Get on the mailing list of the new **CAMP DYKE** festival (Memorial Day weekend, near Santa Cruz): Particular Productions, 2854 Coastal Hwy. #7, St. Augustine, FL 32095. (904) 826-0410.

The first **NORTH AMERICAN ASIAN PACIFIC ISLAND LESBIAN AND GAY CONFERENCE** was held Labor Day weekend in Los Angeles. For info on future events: P.O. Box 461104, Los Angeles, CA 90046....Last September, the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago opened a new exhibit entitled *From 'My Little Margie' to 'Murphy Brown': IMAGES OF WOMEN ON TELEVISION*....On June 24-25 the **GAY AND LESBIAN PARENTS COALITION INTERNATIONAL** will hold its fifteenth annual conference in New York City. P.O. Box 50360, Washington, DC 20091. (202) 583-8029....For info on the **NATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH PROJECT** annual conference next summer: 1237 R.D. Abernathy Blvd. SW, Atlanta, GA 30310.

The **WOMEN'S SOCCER** Foundation is hosting an international leadership conference in Seattle December 10-13, 1993. Though approximately forty percent of U.S. soccer players are female, very few women fill leadership positions. 608 NE 63rd St., Seattle, WA 98115. (206) 527-4035....The first annual thirty-six hole **LESBIAN GOLF TOURNAMENT** was held in Minneapolis last August. To get on the Women's Golf Tours mailing list: 1515 W. Lake St., Minneapolis, MN 55408. (612) 823-7244.

## MOVIES • VIDEO

The San Francisco International **LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL** is now accepting entries for its eighteenth annual program (June 9-19). Application fees are waived until January 1. The festival is the largest lesbian and gay media arts event in the world. (The 1993 festival featured 117 programs at seven different venues.) Final applications are due February 28. Frameline, 346 Ninth St., San Francisco, CA 94103. (415) 703-8650, fax (415) 861-1404....Women in the Director's Chair will present its thirteenth **INTERNATIONAL FILM AND**

**VIDEO FESTIVAL** this March. This non-competitive festival is the largest of its kind in the Midwest. 3435 N. Sheffield #202, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 281-4988.

Watch for the movie *THE BALLAD OF LITTLE JO*, about a woman who lived her life as a man in order to be an Idaho rancher. Other movies featuring women in action: *OUTLAWS*, with Laura Dern and Nicole Kidman as cowgirls in a gang; *ANNE BONNY*, with Geena Davis as the eighteenth century, real-life pirate; and *THE QUICK AND THE DEAD*, starring Sharon Stone as a gunslinger...The film version of the lesbian detective novel *MURDER AT THE NIGHTWOOD BAR* is now in the development stages.

The Technology Information Project is reaching out to multicultural, multilingual communities that have limited access to **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION** (info about any product/equipment that can help a person with a disability do more for herself). According to *Hikané*, TIP has produced a short VHS video, *Independence Through Technology*, that demonstrates a range of products. The video—available in many languages, including English/ASL and English/open captions—can be borrowed at no charge. Paula Sotnik, P.O. Box

341, Lincoln Center, MA 01773. (800) 886-8477 (V/TTY)...Dr. Dee Mosbacher is seeking financial support for a proposed educational video on **HOMOPHOBIA IN WOMEN'S SPORTS**. The video will be shown to college athletes and other students/adults who work with them. Contact Dr. Mosbacher c/o Woman Vision Productions at (415) 346-2336.

*OUT IN VIDEO* is a quarterly newsletter that features reviews about video releases of interest to the lesbian/gay community. Persona Press, P.O. Box 14022, San Francisco, CA 94114....*VOICES FROM THE AFRICAN DIASPORA* is a selection of independent film/video from around the world, including media issues and human rights. Free catalog from Third World Newsreel, 335 West 38th St. #5, New York, NY 10018.

New Line Home Video allowed retailers and distributors to pick their preferred ending for the cassette release of *THREE OF HEARTS*, according to *Entertainment Weekly*. In what a spokesperson calls the "happy" ending, the male gigolo lures the bisexual woman (Sherilyn Fenn) away from her girlfriend (Kelly Lynch)...Demi-Monde Productions is offering a special collectors' edition of *CLAIRE OF THE MOON*. The video will be autographed by writer/director Nicole

Conn. P.O. Box 1245, Cannon Beach, OR 97110. (503) 436-2054. (818) 355-7376....The film production rights have been purchased to Joanne Parrent's book *Witchhunt*, based on the true story of two women who were **FORCED OUT OF THE MARINE CORPS** during a two-year witchhunt at Parris Island, South Carolina. Sharon Stone and Demi Moore are being considered for the lead roles.

## TV • RADIO

"Lesbian chic" or not, PBS has refused to nationally distribute the lesbian/gay TV show *IN THE LIFE*. (Shows have featured Kate Clinton, Lea DeLaria, Janis Ian, Melissa Etheridge, Me'shell, Karen Williams, Georgia Ragsdale, and k.d. lang, among others.) This means the show's producers must arrange for air-time with each station individually, and the show is therefore excluded from the best time slots. Some markets simply refuse to carry the show, or schedule it at erratic times. Order it on video from (212) 255-6012, pressure your local PBS station to carry it in a consistent time slot, and write to PBS to protest its refusal to distribute it. Jennifer Lawson, Executive Vice President, PBS, 1320 Braddock Pl., Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 739-5000.

*continued on page 58*



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## ON STAGE AND OFF

# UBAKA HILL: SHE WHO RISES FROM THE FIRE

By Zenobia Conkerite

Fire, as we know it today, is used for warmth and for food preparation. It is also known to destroy the very things we love most. In primitive times, fire was used strictly for survival, and was considered a prime necessity in one's life.

Metaphorically speaking, "edutainer" Ubaka Hill has risen from the fire that could have very well destroyed her physically and emotionally. One of thirteen children, she was born in the Bronx (New York), and between the ages of two and six was raised in foster care services. As a child, she experienced abuse in most of the known forms—inside and outside of her homes—until she was in her late teens.

She grew up on self-help books, poetry, and metaphysical studies. She felt the need to find ways to take care of herself, because no one else was.

Today, Ubaka is estranged from most members of her family. "I think partly it has to do with my earlier childhood—being separated from them, never having had the opportunity to establish a family bond, and the amount of abuse that came from my mother and my older brothers and sisters. And there are stark differences between me and all of them—I'm just very different. I've got different political views, different values; I just have a different perspective on life. One difference is I've never been addicted to any substances. I just don't have a core connection with these individuals; the only thing we have in common is that we share the same mother," says Ubaka.

Today she makes a personal commitment to assist young people in their search for their own empowerment. An independent consultant who designs and facilitates youth leadership workshops and retreats through several city contracts (such as the national leadership organization Youth Build and through New York City's Department of Employment), Ubaka's goals include assisting adults who have influence on young people's lives by helping them expand their knowledge and skills to

**ON STAGE AND OFF** addresses issues of interest to and about musicians and performers.



Jetta Fraser

**Ubaka Hill: "We should not carry this to our graves. Keep the light of the fire alive!"**

become better allies to young people. Ubaka has been doing youth leadership development for the last fifteen years.

Despite the challenges life has given her, she chose to walk the path that would eventually lead her to become a visual artist, performing artist, publisher, graphic designer, and teacher. Ubaka sees this path as a "calling," something that came from way beyond this lifetime—a deep sense of responsibility she feels in her stomach, her heart, and through her intuition.

"It's like Harriet Tubman who had a calling, something she needed to do," Ubaka says. "She didn't sit down and think, 'My mission here, my life work, is to free enslaved Africans.' It was something that came from beyond her that asked her to do this, a vision. And this is where it comes from for me—from within me," she says.

Amidst the violence and racism in the urban areas in which she grew up, including Jersey City, this child always drew pictures and in fact remembers drawing as a saving grace. ("It kept me focused on positive things, and it was the one thing that I

got the most positive recognition for," she says now.) Ubaka felt invisible to everybody, but when people looked at her artwork, they noticed her and appreciated her for that. "As a young person I thought I was going to be an art teacher because I loved art so much; I wanted to teach others how to do that," she says. "Well, I'm not an art teacher, but I am an artist, and I am a teacher."

Ubaka brings her life's experience to everything she does. Her vision motivates her: personal, creative, and mental freedom; self-realization; empowerment; and self-authorization for all. "I have given myself permission to be," she adds.

As a visionary, Ubaka has explored the possibilities, seeking out ultimate growth. She has experienced a Vision Quest (a Native American rite of passage), a Fire Walk, and has traveled to El Salvador, Japan, and Hawaii.

"I did the Vision Quest [in 1992] because I needed validation beyond my own reasoning regarding my life work, so that I could be sure of my next steps and to make them with certainty and firmness," she recalls. "I knew I had a real deep sense of why I'm on this planet and what my work needs to be. I want to be here with reason and purpose, not just for the sake of living." Regardless of venue today, Ubaka considers her work to be a hybrid of entertainment and education, leading her to label herself an "edutainer."

In 1978, she traveled to El Salvador as a performing artist with the Brooklyn-based group The Human Condition. They were invited to participate in the Third World Music Conference *Nueva Cancion*, which featured Holly Near and several international groups. Ubaka was the only African American performer there. "Though it was quite an honorable role for me, it also was quite a heavy one, because I was the representative of my people in terms of building solidarity with the struggles of Salvadoran people," she says.

"While in San Miguel, which was closest to the guerrilla warfare, it was the one time in my entire life that I felt my life was in danger—and I've lived in the ghetto and in high crime areas," she says. "I knew

about the death squads, the secrecy of the El Salvadoran government. People could die—*have* died—and it's been covered up. As we were preparing ourselves to do the concert in the park, the organizers pulled us together and said that the soldiers were tearing down the sound system and threatening the Salvadorans who had gathered there awaiting the concert. They were using intimidation tactics, saying that there wasn't going to be a concert that night, telling everyone to go home. We were told by our guides and the organizers that we might have to leave San Miguel immediately because our lives were in danger. It was then that I realized I could die in El Salvador—and just how powerful music is. The government found our words and instruments just as powerful as the traditional form of weapons, the guns and machinery—music threatened their power," she says.

"We decided to go down to the park to pick up some of our people who were already there. We lined up our vans in a caravan, because you couldn't be in San Miguel when the sun went down—that was when the death squads came out. When we arrived at the park, soldiers were still there and a lot of people were still gathered. It was quite inspiring; the people were not intimidated enough to disperse. As we waited in the vans, one of the organizers said, 'Look, we're here, the Salvadorans are here; what do you want to do? It's up to you.'

"We got up on the little stage, then all of a sudden we heard the military helicopters flying at treetop level around our heads, too close. They were leaning into the crowd, and we could see the artillery. There was dead silence. Then they left and we sang, 'Que Viva El Salvador,' and the night went on. Everybody stayed—old people, children, everybody!"

## IGNITING THE FIRE WITHIN

Ubaka's courage has been inspired by Harriet Tubman, who she considers to be her personal mentor and who continues to play a very important role in her life. The famous leader of the underground railroad has become a constant reminder to Ubaka in her daily struggles for personal freedom for all oppressed peoples. Why Harriet Tubman? "She came to me, I didn't select her," explains Ubaka, who says when she was growing up she had many role models, but none she wanted to emulate.

For many years, she's been singing "Lifeline" (the song about Harriet Tubman, which is also performed by Holly Near,

Seraiah Carol, and other women's music performers). This piece has helped to focus Ubaka's thinking on the time during which Harriet lived, the conditions under which she lived, and the external reality with which she was faced. "I saw the similarities of oppression and limitation that someone imposed, and the similarities of our saying today, 'No! It's got to be better than this; the grass is greener on the other side,'" she says. In 1979, she directed a play about the underground railroad with a young adult theater company called Kuumba.

In the women's music and culture scene of the 1990s, Ubaka Hill is best known for her percussion work—solo and with Rhythm Express. "I started playing around 1975," she recalls. "I had some friends who had a conga drum, and we'd just hang out and drum." This led her to purchase her first drum, a white fiberglass conga she got from a pawn shop for \$50. She co-founded a group called The Spirit of Life Ensemble in 1975.

In 1979, she started hanging out in Washington Square Park in New York City, because there was always drumming there, and that's where she met Edwina Lee Tyler. "I remember I would just go to the park and sit down, write poetry, and sketch. One day, I heard drumming. I looked around and there was this Black woman playing a conga drum. Edwina was the first woman I saw in living color playing the djimbé drum," she recalls.

"There was a house on Adelphi Street in Brooklyn, a woman-owned space where I discovered a lot more women who jammed and danced with drums, shekeres, and bells," she says. "Edwina, Madeleine Yayo-dele Nelson, Roberta Stokes, Caru Thompson, Debra McGee, Joan Ashley, Pam Patrick—and many nameless women—would jam at this house. That was really the first 'womyn's venue' that I ever played."

In addition to co-founding the multimedia jazz group The Spirit of Life Ensemble, Ubaka was also instrumental in creating Celebration and Rebellion (in 1982); the women's percussion ensemble Kuumba Caravan (1985); and the women's drumming trio Rhythm Express (1987). Notable performances last year included The March on Washington (April), the National Women's Music Festival (June), and work at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (August).

Ubaka does what she can to promote the creativity of other women as well as her own. According to poet Pamela Sneed, Ubaka was the first person who pushed her to put her poetry on stage. "It was the birth of a career for me," says Pamela. "Ubaka is consistent, very loving, and very clear. I've

watched how drummers approach a song, and she's an incredible inspiration. She's a leader, and that's a very hard role to be—a role that a lot of people stay away from. She's amazing, especially in her leadership towards Black women."

In addition to her musical achievements, Ubaka has often had the opportunity to show her original oil paintings. In August 1993, for example, her work was showing for a month at CB's Gallery in New York City. She collaborated in a performance called *Art Lives* with Judith Casselberry and Jaqué DuPreé; the three performers created poetry, performance pieces, and choreography to three of Ubaka's paintings.

Currently, Ubaka is moving on from The Rhythm Express, which was a difficult decision to make. "But," she says, "I'm changing, evolving, and expanding my creative expression and direction. When you have reached your peak, you are less likely to create fresh ideas and take creative risks." She's also involved in smaller enterprises, such as mail-order selling of drums and cream for drummers' hands. (She takes Shea butter, which comes from Central Africa, and adds essential healing oils to it.)

Ubaka's special projects for 1994 include *A Drumsong for World Peace*; drumming workshops for deaf and hard-of-hearing women; a women and drum research book; how-to audiotapes and videotapes on drumming; and a wall calendar and notecards featuring her artwork. She will also be in the studio recording her soon-to-be-released album.

Ubaka is leaving a legacy for women, young people, and people of all cultures and ages. She offers appreciations to all of the women drummers who have come before her and who are of her generation. "I want to encourage all of them to continue to do what they're doing," she says. "Make sure that you're passing drumming down, passing it on to other women and girl children. We must view drumming as a developing tradition in the United States that has to be preserved and passed on. We should not carry this to our graves. Keep the light of the fire alive!" •

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*ABOUT THE WRITER: Singer-songwriter Zenobia Conkerite was one of the original Weather Girls, and has sung backup for many mainstream artists. In addition, several of her songs have been recorded by mainstream artists. She's collaborated in the groups Street Fighting Women and Musicians Against Violence, and is an award-winning radio and music producer who has worked with Patti Austin and Valerie Simpson.*

# LESBOMANIA

## SEASON'S GREETINGS

From Jorjet Harper

### DYKELANGELO

Every November I sit at my workbench amid paint tubes, brushes, tweezers, needlenose pliers, glue gun, snippets of felt, tubs of plaster, and rubber molds and sculpey modeling clay. Doing my Art Thing. Making stuff for the Mountain Moving Coffeehouse Midwinter Minifest.

The Minifest, usually held the first weekend in December, is a Chicago lesbian tradition that I really love—a day and evening of craft-browsing, noshing, and women-only socializing. More women come to the Minifest than any other coffeehouse event—so it's really an annual gathering of the community.

I display my handiwork to sell, but the real fun of being there is renewing acquaintances with women I may not have seen all year. I chat with old friends. I meet newly out lesbians, lesbians who have recently moved to the city, and lesbians from other parts of the Midwest who come to Chicago just for the Minifest. Some straight women I know come, too, to buy gifts for their friends.

Some people make batches of cookies this time of year; I make batches of lesbians: lesbian refrigerator magnets, lesbian notecards, and, especially, lesbian tree ornaments. Some of the ornaments are purely symbolic: labyrises, lambdas, triangles. Others are tiny detailed figurines I sculpt out of modeling compound: goddess images based on ancient female statuary, mythological images like mermaids (lesbian mermaids, of course). Some are simply women embracing or kissing. I make a rubber mold of the original pieces I

**LESBOMANIA:** 1) An overwhelming interest in all things pertaining to lesbians. 2) Elevation of mood, enthusiasm, or pulse rate at the thought or mention of anything relating to lesbians. 3) An extreme form of lesbophilia. 4) A euphoric state in the coming out process for many lesbians. 5) A syndicated lesbian humor column written by confirmed lesbomaniac Jorjet Harper.

like best, so I can make duplicates of them.

This is all part of my ongoing crusade to replace patriarchal imagery with lesbian iconography—a project that, I realize, may take several more lifetimes to complete. My lesbian magnets, of course, are a bit more practical than the ornaments, since the refrigerator stays up all year. But never is the need for lesbian imagery more keenly felt than at xmas time.

Michelangelo believed that he didn't create his sculptures so much as he revealed them, by chipping away at the material surrounding each figure, releasing its soul, so to speak, from the stone block that previously encased it.

I feel the same way about my lesbian goddess ornaments. As I hack at my lump of clay, I can feel the soul of each tiny lesbian goddess being released from the surrounding super-sculpey modeling compound that previously encased it. As a lesbomaniac, I have a tendency to lesbo-

morphize—that is, to see lesbian spirits even in certain inanimate objects. (Plus, I love sculpting naked women.)

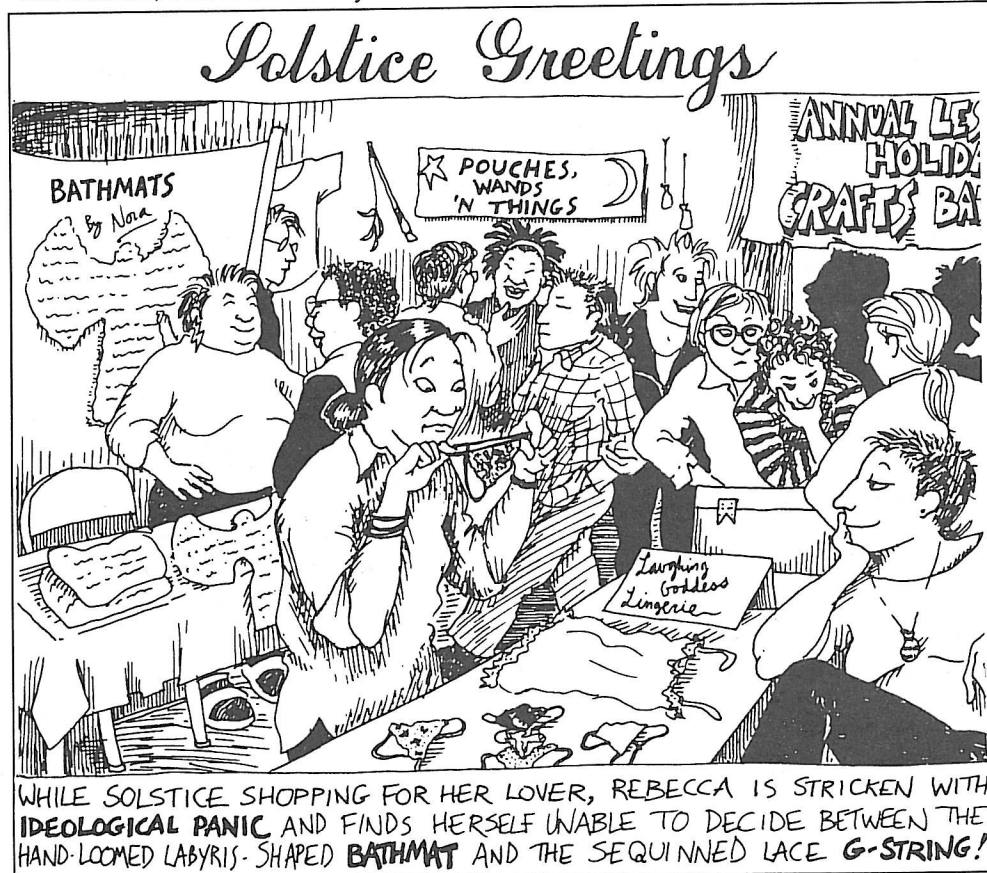
I really get into it: forming their happy little faces, little arms draped lovingly around each other. But I confess that whenever I begin to shape their tiny crotches or their eensy breasts with almost microscopic nipples, I get a little squeamish. I don't want to injure them. I'm extra careful with my razor sharp sculpting tool in these areas.

It almost seems like an invasion of their privacy.

I wonder if Michelangelo felt kinda funny sculpting David's fig leaf area...

"Now you've gone too far," an xmas-loving friend of mine scolded me several years ago when I showed her my latest work: it was simply a vulva with a hand groping toward it—nothing else. Painted gold.

"You expect people to hang *cunts* on their christmas trees?"



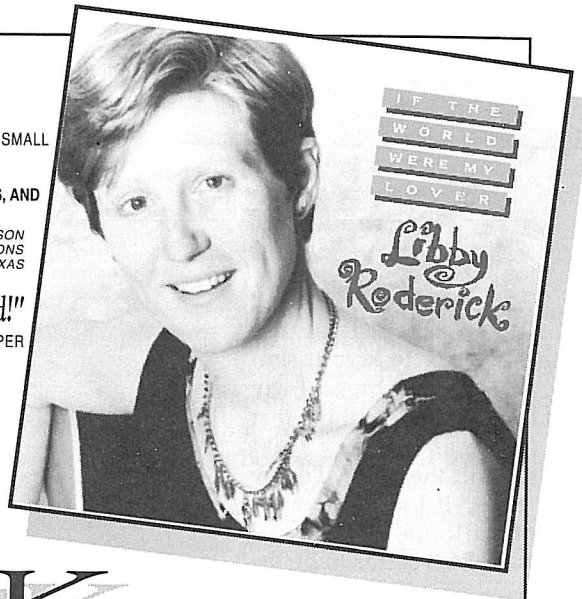


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"Solstice trees," I corrected her.

"And is that supposed to be her own hand there, or someone else's?"

"It's Art," I said defensively. "So you tell me."

"It's objectification," she countered. "Naked lesbians and big breasted goddesses are one thing, but this is sheer body parts."

"It's not objectification, it's the opposite—it's lesbomorphism," I said. "Think: How would a lesbian sex organ act if it were alive all by itself? Would it hop up and down, and instinctively nuzzle against you?"

I guess I was imagining something along the lines of the *Nutcracker Suite*, with dancing vulvas instead of sugar plum fairies.

But my friend was unmoved. "It might just pee everywhere," she said.

"No way! If it didn't have a brain, it wouldn't have a bladder either."

At the Minifest that year, I was a little nervous. The very first woman to come up to my table looked over my rows of hanging ornaments, and her eyes zeroed right in on one of the tiny golden vulvas.

She pinched up her face and squinted. She grabbed it off the rack, and held it

in her hands.

Uh-oh, I thought, here comes a lecture on my crude insensitivity, on objectifying women, maybe even accusations of pornography.

"What is this?" she said, puzzled, staring intently at the tiny crotch in her palm. "A tree?"

Now I grant you, my artistry could probably stand some improvement, but I've learned that lesbian spirit, like beauty itself, is often in the eye of the beholder.

.....

## THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST

Scene: A picturesque little Presbyterian church on a side street in ye olde New York City borough of Queens. Time: December 1960, a more innocent era, back when gangs jumped people but rarely shot them, and the drug of choice was not crack cocaine but hobby airplane glue inhaled from a paper bag.

In the church hall, my young adult Sunday School class—ten wiseass, punky kids about thirteen years old—slouched towards Bethlehem around a wooden table as we discussed the meaning of the Nativity. Our teacher, Mr. Paschke, was a

timid, kindly, devout gray-haired gentleman who had no control whatsoever over the foul-mouthed juvenile delinquents he'd been saddled with in the name of religious education. We amused ourselves by trying to torture and embarrass him as much as possible.

Mr. Paschke read out loud how the Angel Gabriel came down unto Mary to tell her that God had singled her out as Blessed Among Women. The Angel Gabriel whispered into Mary's ear, and she became filled with the Holy Spirit. At that moment, he said, Our Savior was conceived.

"You saying she got pregnant through her ear?" said Alice Brown from under a thick crust of pancake makeup, black mascara, and white lipstick. She popped her bubblegum thoughtfully. "Holy Cow."

Someone else asked: "But how did  
*continued on page 60*

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** *Jorjet Harper's reviews, news articles, features, and interviews have appeared in more than thirty journals and magazines. She has performed her show 'Lesbomania' in Berlin, Chicago, Paris, New York, and at the National Women's Music Festival. Watch for the book-length 'Lesbomania.'*

# MULLING IT OVER

## RENEGADE RHYTHM & BLUES

By Nedra Johnson

When asked, I say my music is "R&B" to keep it simple. Rhythm and blues: I say that because I like to think that my music at the very least begins with the blues. I'd say just "blues" if I always stayed with traditional form, but I don't—so R&B seems to be the most accurate, if the conversation has to be short.

Blues, to me, is like the poetry of music—simple in form, powerful in content. For me it is therapy. Without words, you can feel the players' happiness, sadness, sexual desire—all kinds of emotions. It's important to me that I feel something *in the music itself*. Otherwise, lyrics are simply speeches and love letters, which can be pretty boring on a record or in concert.

When I think about rock & roll, I think about its origin, which is the blues. You know you haven't heard "Hound Dog" 'til you've heard Big Mama Thornton sing it. But I like to think I can also fit into modern rock. Ten years ago I was heavy into hard-core punk. I used to love slamming—it was a great release. What attracted me was the emotion, which at seventeen was rage.

I liked the humor and the irony that I heard in punk bands. Take a band like Tribe 8, for example. I think they're great because they challenge the status quo of the women's music scene. I don't think of myself as a "gentle angry" person. I'd much rather be thought of as dangerous and not to be fucked with.

I like to describe myself in the words of poet Storme Webber as a "renegade half-

**MULLING IT OVER is a forum for the discussion of the connections between art and politics.**



**Nedra Johnson: "Love may seem hostile in a place where hatred is the norm. So yeah, I'll be hostile—a renegade in the name of love."**

breed bulldagger." One definition for renegade is "having rejected tradition." I guess I like all of the definitions in my dictionary, actually—how about "having deserted a faith, cause, or religion for a hostile one"? I like that.

I believe in something that some might call God, or Buddah, or Jesus. Sometimes I say "she," sometimes "the." It all breaks down to love. Love may seem hostile in a place where hatred is the norm. So yeah, I'll be hostile—a renegade

in the name of love.

The "half-breed" part comes from being biracial. I never really liked the word before, because of its "not whole" connotation, and because it's often used against biracial people. In the context Storme uses, I do like it—because it's so confrontational. It makes me think about being a child and getting called that and saying, "I'll be a half-breed—I'll be a half-breed whooping your ass." Maybe it's a black thing; anyway, I find it empowering.

"Bulldagger" is, again, confrontational. (Like "dyke.") I think it's a very Southern term, also a black term, and there are all kinds of theories about its origin. The magazine *Black Lace* featured an article dedicated to the word bulldagger in its first issue.

I have much respect for Alix Dobkin and all the women who have been performing as out lesbians for the past twenty-plus years of women's music; I acknowledge that I could not do what I do without that foundation. And I like the term "women's music," because I know that playing music is a challenge to all women who do it.

What I don't like is seeing women turned away from this music scene because they don't identify as lesbians, or because their style of music is identified somehow as "patriarchal." To me, women's music is music made by women; lesbian music ought to be called "lesbian music."

(Luckily, I fit into both categories.)

Sometimes when we say there's room for "all women" we really mean "all lesbians." I have a problem with that. I can't afford to write off straight women and all men; I love women regardless of their sexual preference. I often encounter racism from white lesbians, and if the only person around who can identify with the experience and give me comfort is a black man, so be it.

The women's music and culture

Toni Armstrong Jr.

scene is important to me; it's part of where I come from. I can't forget that the mainstream music scene may never embrace me, and if it does, it's likely to be a temporary thing. That's the nature of the beast. It's not real. It's marketing. I'd be happy if I could support myself with my music, and there's potential for that in the women's scene.

I used to be very cynical about women's music, but that was before I really knew what was out there. What's great about this particular audience is that it wants to hear women playing various styles of music—not just folksinging women like some people think, but *all* women. There's not really any other community that I could say that about. A record store in my neighborhood has a women's music section. It has jazz, blues, rock, R&B, folk, country, etc. sections too, but in the women's music section you find all of the genres. (It's just unfortunate that they don't put the women's music artists in their respective other musical categories as well.)

There are a lot of great women bass players these days. (I grew up listening to James Jamerson and Larry Graham.) Nowadays, you have Myra Singleton (with Family Stand); Tracy Wormworth (who plays with Sting, among others); Kim Clarke (with Defunkt); Toshi Reagon; Laura Love; Joy Julks—and that's just off the top of my head. I don't care if they're lesbians or not; they're all inspirations, and I think it's important to embrace their talent.

I grew up with a deep appreciation for music. My brother David is a musician. (He's a member of the Lavender Light Gospel Choir in New York now.) Both of my parents are also musicians. My mother (Shaen Johnson) plays guitar, sings, and writes her own songs, though she didn't play out much professionally when I was growing up. My father (Howard Johnson) is a multi-instrumentalist jazz musician who plays mostly tuba and baritone sax. Because of them, I was lucky enough to grow up listening to really great music. My father has played with Taj Mahal, Paul Simon, Charles Mingus, The Band, the *Saturday Night Live* band, and many more. I played with Helen Hooke a couple of years ago at Michigan, and also in a band we formed together called the Renegade Lost Girls. The first time I went to her house, she played me cuts from her '70s band *Deadly Nightshade*, and it turns out Howard had played on their first album.

My first instrument was trumpet. I never got into it, though, because I really wanted a tuba—but I was too little at the time. (I must have been four or five years

old.) In the school orchestra and band, I played sax and baritone, and I picked up bass at fourteen. I finally started playing tuba at fifteen. I received a very classical musical training, and I'd say that I didn't really start *playing* bass until seven or eight years ago. That's when I started thinking I could possibly be taken seriously, and it was the first time I got real encouragement from other musicians.

I started playing professionally at twenty-three with Toshi Reagon; she was the first to hire me. I went to see her play at a Rock Against Racism gig in Central Park. I had heard her mother's music, and I was curious. Of course I liked Toshi's music, and I liked the way she handled herself on stage, too. At that gig, she didn't just jump on and play. She waited for the sound people to get it together. She asked them to make some adjustments, talked for awhile to the crowd, and got ready to play. It was obvious they hadn't changed a thing, so she said she was going to wait until they did. I love that about her.

I also liked that she played the blues, so I called her on the phone. I thought maybe we'd get together—you know, play in the house. Next thing I know, I'm on a plane going to Michigan.

Talk about freaked. You can't really prepare yourself for the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. "Used to be just a state, now it's a state of mind," a friend of mine said. And it's true. I celebrate the New Year in August. I keep thinking if I build it up too much, I'll be disappointed, but that hasn't happened yet in five years.

Today I play the bass and sing. I write my own music from the basslines, and I like the bass to be way out front. Funky. Groovy. Danceable—like it is on "Where Will You Be?" [on the soundsheet in this issue], or soft and melodic, but still out front, like in "Jubilee!"

Lyrically, I tend to be a very literal writer. "Hail Mary" is basically the story of a love affair. "Are You G.A.Y. (Getting Angry Yet)?" tells a true story of mine: In New York, ACT UP and Queer Nation were doing some heavy wheat pasting around the city, and there was often homophobic, heterosexist graffiti in response. The one that really enraged me was: "G.A.Y.—Got AIDS Yet?" I would scratch that out and write "Getting Angry Yet?" This was around the time of the St. Patrick's Action, when a good number of activists were arrested and brought to trial, and I went to one of the court dates. The song goes:

*Went to the courthouse to cop my plea  
the judge wouldn't listen, she objected to me*

*I said, "Judge, Your Honor,  
I'm just trying to raise  
the life expectancy of a renegade.  
I'm taking my chances, gonna speak my pain  
and I'm not going to let my people die in vain  
at a church cathedral or the CDC.  
Ain't gonna let nobody silence me.  
Are you happy? Are you gay?  
Are you getting angry yet?*

I write in what I call "gospel tradition." (I don't use the Bible to write songs, so that's why I tack "tradition" on to the description of my writing style.) I tend to work from poetry. For example, "Where Will You Be?" was inspired by Pat Parker and Audre Lorde.

*Where will you be when they come?  
Are you gonna stand by me  
when they come?  
Your silence won't protect you;  
mine never did protect me.  
Where will you be?*

"Where Will You Be?" is the title of a poem by Pat Parker (published in the *Home Girls* anthology [Kitchen Table Women of Color Press] and also in *Movement in Black* [Firebrand Books]). Anyone who hasn't read it needs to do that. My song is no substitute; the poem itself is too fierce. My lyrics, "Your silence won't protect you; mine never did protect me," are inspired by a speech by Audre Lorde ("Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," published in *The Cancer Journals* and *Sister Outsider*).

Specific works that have been inspirational include "Good Night Willie Lee I'll See You in the Morning" and "Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful" (Alice Walker), *Sister Outsider* (Audre Lorde), *For Colored Girls Who've Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* (Ntozake Shange), and *The Gnostic Gospels* (Elaine Pagels), which I learned of when reading Alice Walker's *In Search of Our Mother's Garden*.

I'm inspired a great deal by poets. I think I'm at least as inspired by poets as I am by poetry. Pat Parker, Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, Ntozake Shange, Storme Webber, Pamela Sneed, Saffire...If you've ever seen them, you know that individually they have an amazing presence. Take

*continued on page 50*

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**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Nedra Johnson, who lives in New York City and is currently in the studio working on her debut album, always enjoys hearing from kindred spirits and other women bass players. Write her at P.O. Box 20308, Thompsons Sq. Station, New York, NY 10009.

Riot Grrrls, Amazons of Rock, and Dyke-core

# HARDCORE FEMINIST ROCK

By Kathie Bergquist & Toni Armstrong Jr.

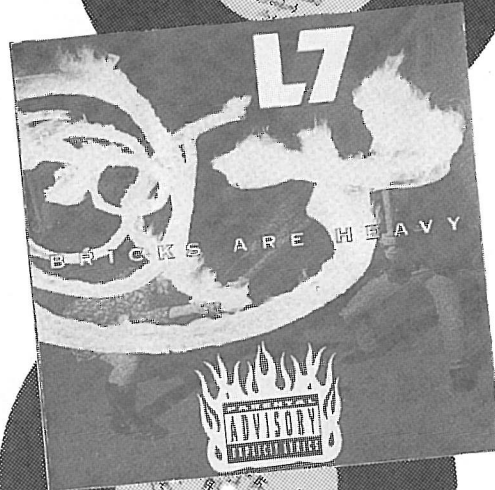
From the *New York Times* to *Rolling Stone*, in hip teen magazines like *Sassy* and in Riot Grrrl manifestos across the country, the message is clear: A feminist uprising is occurring in the male-sanctified hyper-testosteroned world of hard-core rock & roll.

There have always been women rockers involved in the women's music scene, of course—June and Jean Millington, Sherry Shute, Carol MacDonald's many bands, Two Nice Girls, Girls in the Nose, Helen Hooke, Toshi Reagon, Holy War, Yer Girlfriend, The Fabulous Dyketones, Nancy Wenstrom (Tommy), Laura Love, Karen Ashton, Tiik, and so many others. But today's hardcore feminist rock revolution is, for the most part, happening outside of the traditional women's music realm.

As in women's music, girl-rule mentality is the name of the game. Mainstream music media is eager to lump all the newly emerging women rockers under the same non-genre, something they're calling "fox-core." They attempt to write it off as fluke or fashion. Not only is it extremely patronizing to do so; it also softens the impact of the reality of changes taking place.

"There has always been what, to me, is the music community's disturbing tendency to 'ghettoize' women," wrote Natalie Nichols last July in the *Bay Area Music Magazine*. "Bands that are made up of or dominated by women are inevitably referred to as 'girl bands' or 'female rockers.' Which is a bogus 'genre'; can anyone tell me what characterizes 'female rock'?...There are plenty of women in bands—not as many as there should be, but it's hardly a novelty these days to find a woman playing any instrument or role in a band, especially a punk band. So the whole 'girl group' label has got to go."

The only thing that bands like L7, Lunachicks, Tribe 8, Scrawl, Bratmobile, or Bikini Kill have in common is the fact that they are all-women bands—and for a few even that wasn't a conscious choice. Otherwise, their musical styles and experience and philosophical beliefs all vary wildly. Still, for the purpose of providing a primer on this unilateral feminist-rock siege, the musical groups are divided in this article into three camps: Riot Grrrls, Amazons of Rock, and Dyke-core.



## RIOT GRRRLS

"Like She-Devils out of Rush Limbaugh's worst nightmare, a battery of young women with guitars, drums, and a generous dose of outrage stamped into popular consciousness earlier this year," wrote Kim France last July in *Rolling Stone*. "They do things like scrawl SLUT and RAPE across their torsos before gigs, produce fanzines with names like *Girl Germs*, and hate the media's guts. They're called Riot Grrrls, and they've come for your daughters."

Riot Grrrl is a movement, a grassroots consciousness-raising affiliation of primarily high school and early-college-aged women around the country. Its roots are credited to Olympia, Washington, (about sixty miles from Seattle), where a handful of young women in the summer of 1991 formed an ad-hoc peer support group where they could rant, chant, and organize on their own terms. Like most other things in the Seattle scene at that time, Riot Grrrl was heavily infused with the city's do-it-yourself (D.I.Y.) punk rock sensibility. One of Riot Grrrl's early missions was to encourage and nurture women who wanted to be musicians, not date them.

Putting women first is the name of the game, though Riot Grrrl isn't a scene that always requires women-only space. The all-female band Bikini Kill has toured with the mixed (both women and men) British band Huggy Bear. (Huggy Bear includes the statement "Queercore for the Queercorps" on the album the bands made together, *Our Troubled Youth/Yeah, Yeah, Yeah*.) On tour, Bikini Kill and Huggy Bear posted signs at their concerts asking men to leave the front of the stage area so women in the audience could be closest. They haven't been afraid to bounce rowdy men out.

According to Kim France, there are five assumptions the general public has about Riot Grrrls: "1) They can't play, 2) They hate men, 3) They're fakers, 4) They're elitist, and 5) They aren't really a movement. Tell this to a Riot Grrrl and chances are as good as not she'll say, 'Yeah? So?' Riot Grrrls' unifying principle is that being female is inherently confusing and contradictory, and that women have to find a way to be sexy, angry, and powerful at the same



P. Paula P.

In the three years Tribe 8 has been together, they've gained notoriety both for the throngs of topless dykes slam dancing at their shows and for their "take no shit" attitude when dealing with the occasional homophobic heckler.

time." Kathleen Hanna (Bikini Kill), one of Riot Grrrl's co-founders, has been known to pass around a mic in the audience for shared stories of childhood sexual abuse, and the band has received mixed reviews for their practice of handing out free lyric sheets only to the girls in the audience.

Although the birth of Riot Grrrl bears many similarities to the feminist consciousness-raising (CR) movement of the late '60s/early '70s—as well as to the roots of women's music culture—the connection seems to be lost on parties in both camps. Women's music traditionalists and Riot Grrrls don't necessarily work at odds; it's more that participants in each group don't know what actually goes on in each unique subculture, and may not share each other's musical tastes. (Will we see a Riot Grrrl stage at any women's music festival in the near future?) In any case, the Riot Grrrl phenomenon—like CR in the '70s—has spread like wildfire in high schools and on campuses around the country.

"Revolution Grrrl-style Now," the unofficial Riot Grrrl slogan, has been spreading in alternative and mainstream music media from coast to coast. The print media's tendency to describe the Riot Grrrl movement in "cutesy" terms—often focusing more on the group's fashion image than politics—has so exasperated the activists that Riot Grrrl nationwide called for an all-out media boycott. Riot Grrrl-affiliated women have been encouraged to stay tight-lipped with the press, preferring their own networks of communication to spread the Riot Grrrl word.

Still, the cutesy image sticks. In an article on the Riot Grrrl convention in Washington, D.C., last year, the *New York Times* included a sidebar on "Riot Grrrl fashion tips." And in an interview in *Fiz* magazine, even a member of the all-woman rock band Babes in Toyland was quoted as saying, "They're just too cute to be taken seriously."

## AMAZONS OF ROCK

Amazons of Rock are hard-rocking, radical types who play in powerhouse bands comprised of all (or mostly all) women musicians and singers. Several of these bands have been around for years.

Babes in Toyland, for example, had been playing together and touring extensively for about five years before the release of their major-label debut *Fontanelle* in 1992. They had put out three well-received independent albums (*Spanking Machine*, *To Mother*, and *The Peel Sessions*) before *Fontanelle* brought them national media attention. Babes in Toyland was the first (and only) all-woman band to play in the Lollapalooza rock music/cultural extravaganza when it toured last summer.

Articles are rarely written about this group without referring to the fact that the band members are sick of being asked what it's like to be in an "all-girl" band. Babes in Toyland, like most other Amazons of Rock bands, also resent being put in the same camp as Riot Grrrl, particularly because they're professional adult working musicians, and resist being labeled as a trend.

The hard-rocking Los Angeles group L7 (*Bricks Are Heavy*, *L7*, and *Smell The*

*Magic*) express similar sentiments, since the media has insisted on aligning them with Riot Grrrl despite the fact that L7 has virtually no connection with the alternative movement. Like many bands, they'd been playing together for several years before "Revolution Grrrl-style Now" broke loose.

The resistance to this alignment has more to do with the desire the groups have not to be marginalized than with any lack of feminist consciousness. Suzi Gardner (L7) is the founder of the pro-choice benefit Rock For Choice, which donates all proceeds to The Fund For the Feminist Majority.

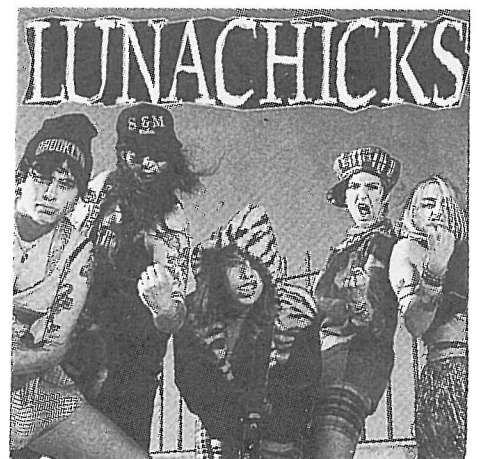
Courtney Love (of the band Hole, often called "the bad girl of indie rock") has been known to do women-only concerts, and has been a long-time supporter of the Riot Grrrl scene. Still, she expresses dismay at being pigeonholed by the media. "If I'm in Babes in Toyland, I'm 'pre-political,'" she wrote in *Melody Maker*. "If I'm in L7, I'm 'assimilationist'; if I'm PJ Harvey or Kim Deal I'm 'inspirational but not very now.'"

"The problem now is that if you're a woman in a band, Riot Grrrl has become a yardstick by which you're measured," said Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth) in the *Rolling Stone* article. "I don't have anything against it, but I've been doing what I do for ten years."

## DYKE-CORE

For all the media's accolades in regard  
*continued on page 45*

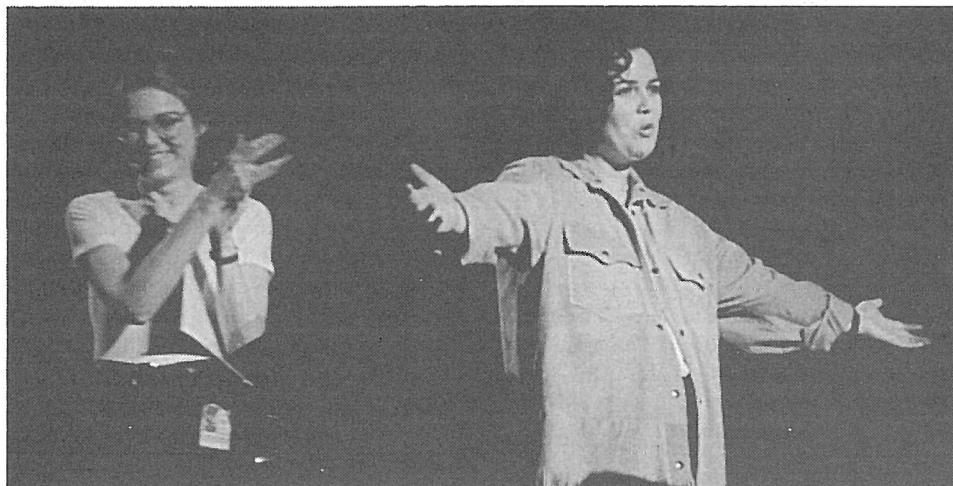
**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** *Kathie Bergquist is the music editor for 'Outlines' news-monthly and co-editor of the dyke rock fanzine 'Siren' when she's not working at Women and Children First Bookstore. Toni Jr. plays bass and got early musical/womanist inspiration in the '60s and '70s by watching trumpet player Cynthia Robinson (who performed with the group Sly and the Family Stone). Toni and Cynthia share a January 12 birthday.*



Women stars come out in concert for reproductive choice

# VOTERS FOR CHOICE

Reported by Kathy Tully



Kathy Tully

**Gloria Steinem (left) and Rosie O'Donnell were two of the headliners at the Voters for Choice benefit. Entertainers included Melissa Etheridge and the band HEART.**

"As far as I'm concerned," joked Rosie O'Donnell at the Voters for Choice concert last summer, "nobody should control my body—except me and maybe Michelle Pfeiffer." (*Wooooo's* from the audience.)

The mainstream feminist concert, held at the Santa Monica Civic last August 26, drew 2,700 people. In addition to Rosie O'Donnell, the show—which lasted from 8 p.m. to midnight—included such performers as Melissa Etheridge, Shawn Colvin, Gloria Steinem, HEART, and Spinal Tap. Each had about fifteen or twenty minutes of individual stage time.

The star-studded gala event was a fundraiser for the organization Voters for Choice, whose board of directors includes Cybill Shepherd, Hon. Maxine Waters, Christie Hefner, and Susan Faludi. Julie Burton is the organization's current executive director.

Melissa Etheridge performed a passionate rendition of Janis Joplin's "Take Another Piece of My Heart," and she told a story to go with it: Melissa falls in love, and the woman stays at her place. They make love all day and all night, subsisting on cereal for days—until one day the woman says she needs to go home to feed her dog. Melissa waits and waits for her to return or call, but she never does. As days turn into weeks, Melissa is depressed; she doesn't even want to get out of bed. Her

friends come over and get her dressed. They take her out to the bar to make her feel better ("even though that's where the whole thing started in the first place"). Just when she's feeling a little better, she hears a tapping at the door. She opens it up, and who's standing there but that woman! All Melissa could say was, "Come on and take another little piece of my heart now, baby."

At this Voters for Choice show, I realized for the first time just how much Melissa reminds me of Janis Joplin, and how much Janis may have influenced her. They have the same emotional rawness. I remember thinking, "Wow, this is what it would have been like to see Janis Joplin."

Gloria Steinem, long-time feminist activist and current president of the board of Voters for Choice, read "If Men Could Menstruate" (from her book *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*). "So what would happen if suddenly, magically, men could menstruate and women could not? Clearly, menstruation would become an enviable, boast-worthy, masculine event. Men would brag about how long and how much. Young boys would talk about it as the envied beginning of manhood. Gifts, religious ceremonies, family dinners, and stag parties would mark the day...Sanitary supplies would be federally funded and free. Of course, some men would still pay for the prestige of such commercial brands as Paul Newman Tampons, Muhammad

Ali's' Rope-a-Dope Pads, John Wayne Maxi Pads, and Joe Namath Jock Shields—'for those light bachelor days.' Statistical surveys would show that men did better in sports and won more Olympic medals during their periods," Gloria said.

"Generals, right-wing politicians, and religious fundamentalists would cite menstruation ('men-struation') as proof that only men could serve God and country in combat ('You have to give blood to take blood'); occupy high political office ('Can women be properly fierce without a monthly cycle governed by the planet Mars?'); be priests, ministers, God himself ('He gave this blood for our sins') or rabbis ('Without a monthly purge of impurities, women are unclean'). Menopause would be celebrated as a positive event, the symbol that men had accumulated enough years of cyclical wisdom to need no more....The truth is that if men could menstruate, the power justifications would go on and on. If we let them."

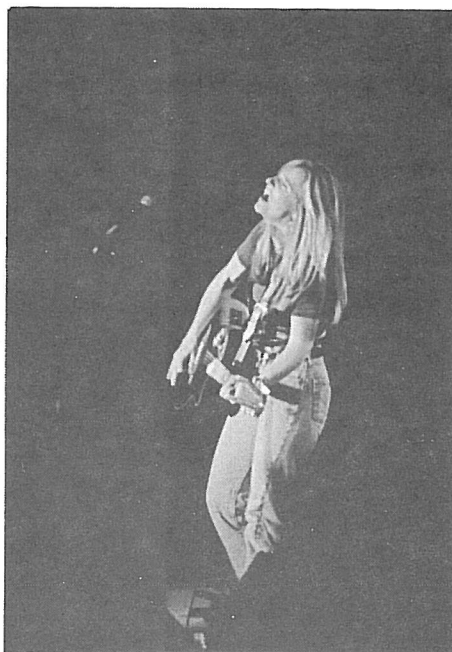
All in all, the evening was a smashing success. With reproductive rights under constant attack, it's useful to have large-scale concerts and public events that help to focus attention on the struggle. It's fun to see a wide variety of performers together, cooperating in the name of women. (During the grand finale, when all of the artists sang en masse, I got a photo of Rosie and Melissa singing together—though Rosie mostly just sang the "Hey" parts.) Finally, it's useful to have events which draw together celebrities and ordinary ticket-buying people who are like-minded about this pivotal feminist issue. The media loves "events" with "stars," and concerts like these (and the L7-initiated Rock for Choice shows) help to counteract the Operation Rescue anti-choice media blitz.

Reproductive rights in general are up for grabs in the U.S.—there is a continuous legal "steps forward/steps back" progression. While there is a constant concern that *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned, the rights of low-income women have often been the first to be sacrificed in the political arena. To help establish and preserve reproductive rights for low-income women, Voters

for Choice encourages all women to call their senators and congresspeople immediately, and more than once. Call (202) 224-3121 and ask to be put through to your legislator's office; make it clear that you support the campaign for abortion and reproductive equity. Members of the radical right and the religious fundamentalists know how to make their voices heard in Washington, and their impact on civil rights has been substantial; let's use our speaking as well as singing voices to do the same.

For more info about Voters for Choice, write 2604 Connecticut Ave. NW #200, Washington, DC 20008. •

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** In addition to her photographic endeavors, Kathy Tully is currently working on developing a cassette tape program for adolescents with the theme that everyone is important and has a mission in life. She has a doctorate from the University of Metaphysics and is now enrolled in their Ph.D. program for counseling.

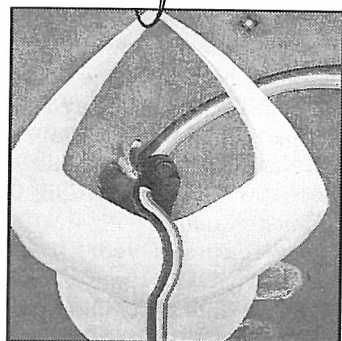


Kathy Tully

Melissa Etheridge performed a passionate rendition of Janis Joplin's "Take Another Piece of My Heart" for the audience of 2,700 people.

# Heartstreams

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HW93

# A FEMINIST FOURTH

Reported by Catherine Roma and Marilyn Ebertz

The first four days of July 1993 were hazy, hot, and humid for the 540 women assembled in Cincinnati. They had come to participate in A Feminist Fourth: The Seventh National Women's Choral Festival, hosted this year by MUSE, Cincinnati's Women's Choir.

Every couple of years, the Sister Singers choral network sponsors a festival. [See "Women's Choral Communities: Singing For Our Lives" (January 1992 issue of *HOT WIRE*), and "Sister Singers Network" (March 1987), both by Catherine Roma.] This year's international gathering included choirs from Vancouver and Ottawa, and The Pre-Madonnas—a trio from London's feminist choir—graced the stage on short notice. Twenty choirs performed, and for the first time in women's choral festival history, participants came from all over the United States.

A number of guest artists presented intensive sessions to teach singing from different cultural traditions. And in addition to the usual networking and cross-chorus partying, twenty-six workshops offered activities from Country-Western line dancing to sight singing and conducting.

UMOJA (the organizing committee from MUSE) invited an impressive array of talented women from a variety of backgrounds. Accomplished arranger, composer, and workshop leader Ysaye Barnwell (best known for her work with Sweet Honey in the Rock) held three workshops on singing in the African-American tradition. Ethel Raim (founder/music director of the seven-woman vocal ensemble The Pennywhistlers) taught Balkan singing. Erika Luckett (who grew up in Venezuela and Argentina and now performs Latin jazz with Mango Jam) led workshops in writing and singing *nueva cancion* (new song). Jackeline Rago (from Venezuela; currently a member of Altazor and Mango Jam) taught Latin American percussion.

AmyLee (an artist-storyteller of Iroquois ancestry) led "Music as Medicine For Earth and Her Daughters," as well as a workshop in which participants made traditional drums and rattles. Drummer, dancer, and educator Linda Thomas Jones held two African drum and dance intensives. For sign language interpreters, Shirley



Karen Allen

Catherine Roma conducts the mass chorus of 300 women on "Perfect Night" at the seventh women's choral festival last July in Cincinnati.

Childress Johnson (Sweet Honey in the Rock) presented a one-day intensive called "The Art of Sign Interpreting Music."

Other types of workshops gave practical training in aspects of functional musicality; others focused on the internal processes of consensus-model decision making and options for healthy conflict resolution within choirs. Still others invited participants to examine the deeper and more difficult issues of racism and diversity in both choir membership and the selection of repertoire. Caucuses for Jewish women and women of color were formed, as well as groups for heterosexual and bisexual women together, and for lesbian teachers.

The line dancing workshop was so enthusiastically attended that it quickly overflowed its original assigned meeting place, as 100 women gathered to learn to shake it. Fortunately, one of the workshop leaders (Pam Wright of MUSE) also happened to be the on-site workshop coordinator; she quickly arranged to use a different hall that had plenty of stompin' room.

Four evening concerts and one Sunday matinee featured choir performances, short sets by leaders of intensive workshops, memorable emcees, several songs from Melanie DeMore (director of VOICES: Bay Area Lesbian Choral Ensemble), smooth stage production, and, on the final night, the mass chorus of 300 women.

## THURSDAY

The opening night concert played to a sold-out, standing-room-only crowd. The concert opened with a message from Catherine Roma which gave the overall vision of the Feminist Fourth weekend.

"We rejoice in the diversity of our cultural connections one to another," said the founder/director of MUSE, Cincinnati's Women's Choir. "All of us gathered here are carriers of women's culture through our dynamic choral communities. It is our hope that through these festival days, we all—every one of us—will recognize our contributions to this amazing collective women's choral movement, and will recognize our interdependence cross-culturally. Let us continue to nurture resistance and sing the truth about women's lives."

As AmyLee opened the evening concert with a story about the stars, the first women on earth, the firmament, and the creativity in women, loud claps of thunder roared outside. From inside the hall, AmyLee asked for animal sounds from the audience, and a call-response atmosphere developed. Sounds of thunder (outside, the weather, and inside, applause) could be heard every night until Sunday.

In Harmony: A Women's Chorus from Ottawa (Canada) opened their set with a sassy choreographed medley called "60s Partyline." Other highlights included



Debussy's "Beau Soir," and Carole Etzler's "Standing Before Us" with slides of famous Canadian women (similar to the film *One Fine Day* by Kay Weaver and Martha Wheelock).

Ethel Raim began the individual artists' set by singing with Catherine Foster to illustrate the close harmony of the riveting Balkan style of singing. Ysaye Barnwell, stating she wasn't accustomed to singing alone, got the whole auditorium of 650 people singing the spiritual "Stood On the River of Jordan" in four-part harmony.

Erika Luckett (guitar) and Jackeline Rago (quatro, bongos, and maracas) performed songs from their native Venezuela. Melanie DeMore, contralto extraordinaire, followed with several of her own songs, and was joined by a quintet from VOICES on "Rise Up" and Joan Armatrading's "Love and Affection." The evening ended with a set from the host choir, MUSE. [Hear their rendition of "Coming Into My Years" on the soundsheet in this issue.] MUSEs gathered from every festival station—registration, backstage, transportation, housing, workshops, childcare, and the communications center—to close out the night. Highlights of their set included "Simply Love" (by Holly Near, arranged by Joan Simcoe) and "Azanian Freedom Song" (by Bernice Johnson Reagon).

## FRIDAY

Friday night's emcee, Gail Chester of The Pre-Madonnas, valiantly tried to keep the concert running on time, since 350 of the women in the audience had tickets for an 11 p.m. cruise down the Ohio River. But the audience clearly wanted time to savor

all the wonderful music.

The San Diego Women's Chorus opened the concert with a program including "Rosa" (by Libby Roderick) and "In This Moment" (by Gary Simmons). The Vancouver Women's Chorus followed with "There Comes A Time" (by Connie Kaldor) and "Together We Stand."

Next, Sunny Hall (director of Crescendo: The Tampa Bay Women's Chorus), dressed in black and severe in demeanor, beckoned her flock to the stage, and they did a wild rendition of "Hail Holy Queen" (from *Sister Act*) in full habit. They followed this immediately with "Witch Hunt," a dramatic, stunning piece by Uschi Schrell.

Following Crescendo was Take Note!, one of two small groups in the Denver Women's Chorus, which specializes in contemporary pop, jazz, Broadway, and country. Their choreography was artful, and highlights of their set included "Sweet Inspiration" (as done by the Washington Sisters) and "This Island Earth" (by Paul Cooper). Anna Crusis Women's Choir (Philadelphia), now the longest-running feminist women's choir, did a polished set. Led by Linda Thomas Jones, they came on stage to "Babethandaza" (a traditional Zulu piece arranged for choir and five percussionists by Ysaye Barnwell). Another highlight was "The Blue Eye of God," a difficult contemporary work by Canadian composer Nancy Telfer.

And even after this full evening of music, everyone made it to the boat on time!

## SATURDAY

Sistrum—Lansing Women's Chorus

started the evening. Highlights of their set included a piece written by Gideon Klein that was retrieved from the concentration camp at Teresin in Nazi-occupied Europe. Also featured was a work in progress by Sistrum accompanist Sarah E. Miller (with texts by Susan Griffin).

Hersong Quad-Cities

Women's Chorus had the audience in stitches with their homespun song "Be-ware" (written by choir member Linda Slabon and artistic director Toni Tollerud), then Cathy Fink's poignant song "Names" proved a striking contrast. The Mukwonago Feminist Singers and Eaters (Wisconsin), in their relaxed, living room style presentation, sang a laid-back set featuring Deidre McCalla's "Oh, the Earth" and the South African freedom song "Epharadis."

A special bonus during the evening were two unannounced sets. Linda Thomas Jones sang her compositions "True Love" and "African Woman Drumming," after which she invited Melanie DeMore, Jackeline Rago, Erika Luckett, Ysaye Barnwell, Jennifer Gayle, and Rachel Bagby to the stage. Five of the women on stage had pairs of quitiplas, which are pitched hollow bamboo sticks that resonate when struck on brick or each other. The brilliance of the instrumental and vocal sound generated from the stage sent energy and elation throughout the hall, bringing every audience member to her feet.

The second impromptu set was The Pre-Madonnas trio. ("For years we were simply known as The Feminist Choir, because we could not agree on a name," said Gail Chester by way of introduction. "There were many suggestions, but we feel that The Pre-Madonnas suits us because we were famous before she was, and we all like to have our way.") The general humor carried through their set.

Director Lynda Garner and nine of the seventy members of the Portland Lesbian Choir invited the audience to imagine an additional sixty women on stage. (Back home in Oregon, their choir has seventy members.) But judging from the heat generated by their version of Toni Ten-nile's "The Way That I Want To Touch You," and the fun of their "Co-Dependent Medley," nine of them was all it took.

*continued on page 57*

**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** Catherine Roma is a passionate advocate of choral music. She is founder and director of MUSE, Cincinnati's Women's Choir, and is assistant professor of music at Wilmington College in Ohio. She conducts the choir at St. John's Unitarian Church and the Martin Luther King Coalition Chorale. Marilyn Ebertz is the ardent section leader of the MUSE alto 2s. She is one-quarter of the new Jazzabelles, an outrageous a cappella quartet. The mother of three is founder of Cadenza Press, which specializes in computer transcription of musical scores.



On Saturday night, Linda Thomas Jones invited women to join her on stage after her two songs. Five of the women played pairs of quitiplas, and the brilliance of the instrumental and vocal sound generated from the stage brought the audience to its feet. (Pictured: Erika Luckett, Rachel Bagby, Jackeline Rago, and Jennifer Gayle.)

Anniversary weekend

# OLIVIA TURNS TWENTY

Reported by Toni Armstrong Jr.

Once upon a time in 1973, a tiny collective of young women—some not yet twenty years old—proved to the world that a small independent record company could be run on feminist principles, with almost no working capital; that women's records could be created with pride—using women musicians, technicians, distributors, and concert promoters; that entertainment made by and for women—especially lesbians—could become a viable enterprise.

The original Olivia collective scraped up a few thousand dollars and began making records by lesbian musicians years before k.d. or Melissa ever set foot into a recording studio—during the era when many of today's riot grrrls were literally being born. Two full decades before "lesbian chic" hit the major media newsstands, this small but powerful group of women embarked on a journey that would influence millions of lives.

For many of us, Olivia in the '70s and '80s was much more than just another independent record company. It was a dream, a new paradigm. And it became an institution. Judging by the number of Olivia products being distributed today, and the success of the Olivia cruises, it's evident that in the '90s the spirit of the institution is still going strong. (And still with almost no working capital.) [See the July 1988 and January 1989 issues of *HOT WIRE* for the history of the early Olivia years.]

Olivia has grown considerably since the days when the collective started with \$4,000 and expansive lesbian feminist dreams. Presently, the company has nine full-time and three part-time employees. The annual budget can be as much as \$4 million. About half of the income is from the cruise/travel business; music and catalog sales each account for approximately a quarter. According to president Judy Dlugacz, the only founding mother who still works with Olivia, the music arm of the company is now largely supported by profits from the travel enterprises. Cris Williamson's *The Changer and The Changed* (1975) continues to be their biggest seller, with more than 300,000 copies sold. At this point, total Olivia album sales amount to just under two million units.

Since 1990, Olivia has taken more than



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**The Friday night anniversary concert featured old and new Olivia favorites, including Cris Williamson, Tret Fure, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Deidre McCalla, Dianne Davidson, Nancy Vogl, Linda Tillery, Teresa Trull, and (not pictured) Mary Watkins, Karen Williams, and Suzanne Westenhofer.**

6,000 cruisers to Playa Blanca, Ecuador, the Galapagos Islands, the Caribbean, Alaska, Canada, and the island of Lesbos.

"Lesbos now calls itself Medelini because of the connotation of the name Lesbos," says Judy. "We stopped off where Sappho had her school—all 300 of us descended on this town. Half of the community wanted us there, and half didn't. But the mayor arranged for a special celebration in the town square: children danced, a band played for us. They gave me a statue of Sappho to commemorate our being there, and we raised some money for them to put a statue of Sappho in their square. The main newspaper even printed a double-page spread, talking about this 'women's club of lesbians,' calling us 'priestesses of Sappho.' Nothing like that had ever happened in a Greek newspaper before." The expedition also got TV and radio coverage.

"We change reality because we create visibility," says Judy, echoing words that Olivians have been saying about their various enterprises for the last twenty years.

.....

Last June, during Gay Pride weekend in the Bay Area, Olivia celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a full weekend of events, including a concert and a lesbian ball (held in conjunction with the Bay Area Career Women's organization). The anniversary weekend culminated in a rousing celebration and presence in one of the largest Gay Pride parades in the country.

## FRIDAY NIGHT CONCERT AT ZELLERBACH

On the night of June 25, I gathered with more than 2,000 other enthusiastic Olivia supporters at Zellerbach Hall in Berkeley for the concert that would kick off the official anniversary weekend. My "date" for the weekend—festival producer Lin Daniels—dropped me off in front of the concert hall and went (praying to the goddess Asphalta) to find parking.

The performance space, which has 2,168 seats in its three tiers, was filled to near capacity, buzzing with 2,083 anxious audience members. A slide show greeted us as

we filed in, projecting a montage of photos of Olivia artists and cruises through the years, accompanied by "So Good, So Right" (from *Meg and Cris at Carnegie*, 1983) and Teresa Trull's "You're My Home" (from *Let It Be Known*, 1980), a song she wrote in the late 1970s especially for the women of Olivia.

As 2,000 women settled into their seats, Judy gave an inspiring speech about perspective and accomplishment [see sidebar], which warmed the crowd up for the all-star show that was to come.

The lights dimmed, and the crowd heard only a whistle in the dark. Lucie Blue Tremblay appeared in a spotlight on the right side of the stage. During her set, she discussed the recent anti-gay ordinances that are plaguing several states and cities, offering a parable about left-handed people: If they're told repeatedly that they're inferior and bad—if these ideas are debated endlessly by radical right-handed activists who say all lefties should be shot—then after awhile, even a certain amount of the left-handers think they should be shot. Her set included "What If Bears Were Queer," and ended with "Two Lives," during which she surprised the crowd by playing the drums.

Throughout the show, some of the Bay Area's finest instrumentalists played backup

wives!") She shared with us that satanic rituals were going on backstage, and advised us that if we play Cris Williamson's song "Dream Child" backwards we'll hear it say, "Tret is just a friend..."

Next, Mary Watkins and Linda Tillery, two original Olivia collective members (who haven't performed together for ten years), took the stage. Highlights of their set included "Womanly Way" (from Linda's 1977 album *Linda Tillery*) and "Shortnin' Bread," performed with Dianne Davidson, Deidre McCalla, Nancy Vogl, Teresa Trull, Cris Williamson, Tret Fure, and Lucie Blue. Linda, who has been touring with the Cultural Heritage show, dedicated the hymn "Amazing Grace" to Vicki Randle, a long-time performer on many Olivia recordings, who can now be seen every night on national television, playing percussion in Jay Leno's *Tonight Show* band (to the delight of Vicki-philos everywhere).

Deidre McCalla sang from her album *Everyday Heroes and Heroines*, and Linda and Dianne joined her for "Girl You Don't Know." She did a particularly sweet rendition of her love ballad "Because I Have You." Deidre says she tours for months at a time, and to keep herself inspired, she always listens to one of her own tapes as she drives the final few

by the "U Bet U Dancers": Karen Williams dancing seductively with the very pregnant Bonnie. This brought down the house.

After intermission, Karen returned as emcee, regaling us with witticisms and advice about prosperity and upward mobility for lesbians. ("No more covered dishes," she admonishes.)

Dianne Davidson kicked off the second set with her usual high energy and good humor. She was joined by a chorus for "What'm I Gonna Do," and, describing herself as a "hopeless romantic," continued with "Looking For You." She did "Built for Comfort" (about being a large woman), and paid tribute to Judy Dlugacz, "who's kept the flame burning for twenty years."

Nancy Vogl appeared for one solo, called "Peace, It Begins With Me." She emphasized just how effective our work in the community has been over the last twenty years by recalling a lesbian dance she attended in 1973 at St. Mark's, located just down the street from Zellerbach. The women at that time were amazed at the great turnout: *almost 100 women!* "Now," observed Nancy, "the world is our community."

Cris Williamson and Tret Fure, playing cuts from their new album *Postcards From Paradise*, closed the evening. Cris, one of



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Dianne Davidson (left) was among the all-star roster of musicians and comics celebrating Olivia's twentieth anniversary with a concert in Berkeley last June. Cris Williamson, whose remarks provided the impetus to start the record company in the early 1970s, presented president/co-founder Judy Dlugacz with a dozen roses in appreciation of her two decades of commitment and service to Olivia and to the lesbian cultural community.**

for the artists, including Jan Martinelli (bass), Michaëlle Goerlitz (drums), and Nancy Wenstrom (electric guitar).

Emcee Suzanne Westenhofer kept the crowd in stitches with a stream of lesbian-oriented jokes. She addressed the hot topic of gays in the military, saying that she wouldn't mind if straights had to fight for us. ("You be careful," we'd say as we waved them off to war. "We'll take care of your

miles toward home at the end of each tour.

Teresa Trull was joined by keyboardist Bonnie Hayes, performing "Pretty Bird" and "I Saddled a Cow (All Because You Held Me Tight Last Night)." She announced that she's currently recording another album of upbeat songs—thrilling news to her many dedicated fans. Teresa concluded with the rowdy "Could It Hurt?" (which she wrote for the *Claire of the Moon* soundtrack), accompanied

Olivia's original artists, waxed philosophical. "We're mature now...don't we look mature?" she asked the crowd.

"You're adorable!" offered someone, eliciting chuckles from the crowd.

"That's exactly what I was going for," replied Cris with a laugh.

Cris and Tret performed their snappy "Little Room Spinning Blue," and then had Michael Callan from the Flirtations sing

**OLIVIA RECORDS' TWENTIETH  
ANNIVERSARY CONCERT  
JUNE 25, 1993**

*Introductory remarks  
by Olivia president*

**JUDY DLUGACZ**

It's an amazing time, isn't it? A time I had not expected to see in my lifetime. Lesbians on the cover of *Newsweek*? Clinton appointing Roberta Achtenberg? k.d. lang coming out? And Olivia turning twenty.

Twenty years ago, we had a vision that spoke of changing the world. We believed that lesbianism was not only a lifestyle, but an incredibly positive choice women could make in their lives, to change their lives, to liberate their lives.

Twenty years ago, Nixon was president, and feminism was just beginning. We were still using typewriters, and cassettes had not yet been invented.

Do you remember where *you* were twenty years ago?

In those twenty years, Olivia has come of age. We have produced over fifty recordings, performed thousands of concerts around the world, and in the last three years created cruises and vacations for women that were never possible before.

We have sold millions of records, and by next year we will have taken 10,000 women on fifteen cruises throughout the world.

Olivia—with her artists—has reached more lesbians than any other institution in the world, and has helped literally millions of women change their lives. Olivia has helped open the closet doors for so many, and has removed the isolation and stigma for so many more who thought they were the only ones.

We had virtually no help from the recording industry or the media, who saw us as an enigma and so often as a personal threat. Even three years ago, when I did a *Billboard* interview about being gay in the music business, the reporter called me back and said, "Judy, I couldn't find one other person in the industry who would come out in this article."

In the past year, things have changed dramatically. k.d. lang, Melissa Etheridge, the Indigo Girls, and Janis Ian joined Cris Williamson, Teresa Trull, Meg Christian, Linda  
..... *continued on page 47*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**The Puttin' on the Ritz dance held Saturday night featured top-notch musicians, including Jean Fineberg (pictured), Ellen Seeling, Nancy Wenstrom, Joy Julks, Maria Martinez, and Bonnie Hayes.**

"Living On" with them. Later, June Millington—who played on the *Changer* album—brought out her guitar and joined Cris and Tret. Seeing both "Auntie June" and Cris with gray hair sure drove home the reality that twenty years have indeed passed for our community.

Cris did "Sister" as a sing-along. "You know this one," she said, playing the opening chords.

"Yeah, Cris, we know 'em all!" came one of several responses from the audience, eliciting another laugh from the crowd.

Cris presented a dozen long-stem roses to Judy (calling her "O captain, my captain"), and urged us all to write to the major media who cover lesbians in their articles but consistently fail to mention women's music.

For the grand finale, all of the singers, comics, and back-up musicians from the night's line-up honored Meg Christian. [Meg was one of the original Olivians in 1973. She recorded four albums before she left the company in 1984: *I Know You Know* (1974), *Face the Music* (1977), *Turning It Over* (1981), and *From The Heart* (1984). Since then, she has devoted her energies to full-time involvement with Syda Yoga and the Gurumayi Chidvilasananda.] The Olivia anniversary concert finale included "The Road I Took to You," "The Rock Will Wear Away," and "Every Woman."

Seeing all of the artists together (with

Linda Tillery towering over everyone, and Karen and Suzanne dancing in the background), provided a fun and moving "inter-generational" conclusion to this powerful and emotional evening of tribute.

The night concluded with a reception, starting at 11:30, in the upstairs lobby. It was a good opportunity for fans, Olivia supporters, and artists to mingle, talk, laugh, and share experiences around the catered food tables. (The chocolate-covered strawberries were reportedly the favorite finger food.) Plenty of photos were snapped and compliments exchanged before the soirée finally wound down around 1 a.m.

## **SATURDAY NIGHT PUTTIN' ON THE RITZ**

The festivities continued on Saturday night at the Gift Center in San Francisco. More than 1,200 women attended Puttin' on the Ritz, a dance co-sponsored by Olivia and the organization of Bay Area Career Women (BACW).

"BACW is a San Francisco-based, non-profit organization established more than ten years ago to bring lesbian career women together," says current-day Olivian Joelle Yule. "BACW has been Puttin' on the Ritz for ten years—it's their major annual fundraiser and is always held during Gay Pride weekend. This year, rather than compete with a dance of our own, we asked BACW if they would like to collaborate for their tenth anniversary and our twentieth. It was a positive experience for us all, and the crossover resulted in greater ticket sales."

During the half-hour wait to get into the dance, I had plenty of time to check out what fashion is like in Lesbian Mecca this season. Dress and tux colors tended toward white, black, and magenta—with a sprinkling of outfits featuring black and silver sequins. The crowd seemed to range in age from thirtysomething to fiftysomething. While waiting, I overheard bits and pieces of conversations, several revolving around adventures they'd had on Olivia cruises.

Inside, the mood was very festive. A  
*continued on page 46*

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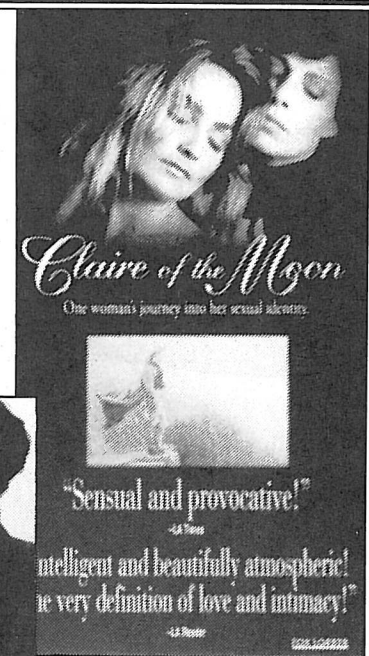
**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Toni Armstrong Jr.'s first involvement in women's music was at the National Women's Music Festival in the mid 1970s. She worked on the magazine 'Paid My Dues' from 1976 to 1979; created the 'We Shall Go Forth' (now 'Women's Music Plus') directory in 1977; and helped give birth to 'HOT WIRE' in 1984. She listens to the recordings of Meg Christian from time to time, and still finds them fresh and inspiring.

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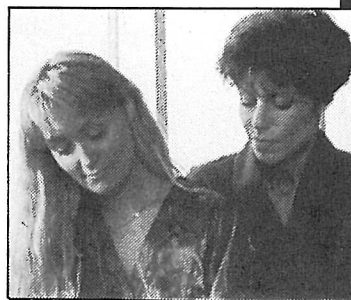
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# RHYTHMFEST 4

By Ginny Risk



Jetta Fraser

**Angie (left) shows a dreamcatcher made for a newborn out of materials found on the land. The three tiers are for each of the three family members.**

On the Thursday morning prior to Labor Day Weekend, I left my tiny Chicago apartment just before dawn and rode through the city toward the Great Smoky Mountains of North Carolina. I was in search of a festival that's relaxing and friendly, inclusive and egalitarian. I wanted to feel refreshed, enriched, and grounded in community.

RhythmFest had much to recommend it. Now in its fourth year, it's known as a well-organized festival without an elitist attitude. I had never been to this particular festival before, though I had read Marcy J. Hochberg's description of it in the January 1990 issue of *HOT WIRE*. I carried with me a brochure reminding me that the producers (Michelle Crone, Barbara Savage, Mandy Carter, Kathleen Mahoney, and Billie Herman) and the workers are "committed to working in a way that encourages and utilizes women's strength and creativity...with the goals of diversity and solidarity." Music to my ears.

On the other hand, there was an ominous warning that the male owner of the land would remain on the premises during the festival, and that bathing suits or cloth-

ing would be required in and around the lake. Furthermore, Hurricane Emily was just off the coast.

## THURSDAY AFTERNOON

I selected my campsite: a spot in the chem-tolerant space, near a section of the artificial lake—but not too near. There was an oak tree and a few other picturesque sites down the slope near the water, but fear of extreme rain had most of us avoiding those spots. I found myself next to two single women, who—like myself—came alone to the festival. One was attending for the first time; the other had come once before, and she was especially helpful with suggestions about drainage and the importance of placing a ground cloth inside the tent. We looked at the land around us and imagined how it would be later, filled out with many new neighbors. The chem-free area was huge—and right next to the area marked "biker dykes." (P.S. There weren't any fights.)

Almost immediately after my tent was pitched, I heard distant thunder. The tops of the mountains began to mist over; dark clouds moved in. The rain began

lightly, and the scene was so pleasant that I almost forgot to gather up my gear and throw it inside the tent. A brief but spirited thunderstorm passed over us. The raindrops made a pinging sound as they hit the tightly-stretched fly of my tent, and then most of them ran off. Peering out the window, I saw a few women continue to set up in the rain. As the storm became more violent, I heard a cry. One of the tents near me had started to blow over. The owner was inside, anchoring it to the ground with all her weight.

Dinner that day was spaghetti (with or without meat), garlic bread, tossed salad, and fruit. No line. We ate on rocking chairs and picnic tables on the porch of the dining hall overlooking the main lake and swimming area. Flocks of ducks congregated alongside, turning their heads up at us. A worker stood on the dock blowing big, floppy soap bubbles.

There were coolers of plain water, citrus water, and lemonade (and one day we had a fine alfalfa tea). During the festival, the food was consistently superb, especially the spicy chicken. Good hot meals were served at designated times, and the dining hall was always open, so women could wander in for fruit and a peanut butter sandwich at any hour of the day or night. Food lines ranged from very short to nonexistent.

I walked up to the Night Stage with the women from my campsite. River offered an opening invocation of spirits, and women on stage represented the spirits of Gaia, sky, the four directions, and the seventh direction. The South was portrayed by the Crone (who was powerful and beautiful as she took off her clothes and danced). To the West we honored the Goddess of Country-Western Dancing, depicted by a two-stepping couple. The seventh direction was represented by a fire-eating leather woman.

The Night Stage was set up in a beautifully framed space with a mountain behind us. The acoustics were marvellous, and it was easy to get good seats. I just sat there smiling from ear to ear, so glad to be there, so pleased that Deidre McCalla was the opening artist. She sang "Sweet Baby

Girl" as well as songs from *Everyday Heroes and Heroines*. Between "Your Heart Left Long Ago" and "Sing Me to Sleep," we were all weeping about something—losing lovers, losing our own health, losing friends—so we could only applaud softly. Each woman brings her own stories to these festivals.

Performances by Mimi Freed and Smith & Bakken filled out the night. The encore was a very sexy drawn-out version of "Summertime" from *Porgy & Bess*.

## FRIDAY

When I woke up, the ground was wet and I heard women talking about how hard it had rained overnight. (I guess I slept right through it.) Heavy rain was forecast, so I tied an extra tarp over my tent.

The program for Day Stage on Friday listed readings by Southern women writers, an open mic, Sue Massek, Jesse Richards with Sister Earth, Tracy Drach, Liz Brown, Ditto?, and Elysium Sex Drive.

For my workshift, I chose Registration on Friday afternoon. They (especially Woody) had been so friendly to me when I checked in that I just wanted to hang out in that little booth some more. We greeted women after they came through the front gate, and saw to the administrative details of ticketing, cabin assignments, programs and maps, workshifts, and liability release forms. Everyone was in a sunny, glad-to-be-here mood. The workers were easy to talk to, and I was surprised at how cheerful they were.

After my workshift, I showered and headed down to the crafts area for my first-ever massage. It was about a half hour before dusk, and a small group of women were saying blessings in Hebrew. I was a few minutes early; the masseuse was lying on the table with her girlfriend on top of her. She saw me approach and called my name. I was welcomed with a big, open hug. I took off my clothes and lay down, explaining the places on my body that held on to stress. It was great.

With my body feeling like sand on a beach, I wandered over to the Night Stage as Reel World String Band began their set. My favorite was "Give Yourself to Love," featuring a fancy violin solo by Karen Jones. Next came ani difranco from New York City, a twenty-three-year-old who has produced four albums on her own label. (I had already met ani, riding the shuttle from the airport. She was nice: Our driver offered her a cool drink; she quietly declined and made a point of turning and offering the same to me.) When she's on stage, the singer/songwriter is incredibly

powerful, very direct. I'll remember her "blood in the boardroom" imagery whenever I feel stifled in my own downtown corporate job and need to adjust my perspective. (Most radio stations refuse to play the song, and the highly controversial video hasn't gotten much airplay.)

The Cactus Cowgirls (contemporary country music with relevant lyrics) rounded out the bill. Desiree, Nydia "Liberty" Mata, and Dori Rhodes say, "Cactus...it's not just music...it's a lifestyle!"

After the concert, I went to the fire-pit, located on a hill facing the Night Stage. People had been listening from up there, warming themselves by the gigantic bonfire. At first there were two experienced drummers, then three, then women with cans, sticks, cymbals, more and more drums, and dancers adorned in scarves.

While I was there, a Country-Western two-stepping dance (with instruction by Donna E) was in full swing until 2 a.m. down at the Hipsway Cafe.

## SATURDAY

Saturday was a nice lazy day. I stayed in my sleeping bag as long as I could, listening to the light rain. Fog hung over us until afternoon. Events started slowly, and some were rescheduled or moved to indoor locations. I was pleased to find granola and yogurt still available at 10 a.m. I wandered around in a daze most of the day. Jamie Morton, Erica Wheeler, Jamie Anderson, Ellen Rosner's band Word of Mouth, Yer Girlfriend, and Whig Party ("AKA The Noreens") were sched-

uled to be the Day Stage entertainment.

I spent at least an hour in one of the large, indoor showers. I enjoy communal showers, almost as much as swimming naked. I had one of those handy miniature rayon camp towels, and it wasn't getting me very dry on such a humid day. I started to get dressed anyway, and opened a conversation with Lauren, who was brushing her teeth.

"This is fun," I said. To which she replied, "I know—I live alone, and so it's good to do these everyday things with other people." I pictured her living in a secluded log cabin in the woods—until I realized that I too lived alone. She had understood exactly what I was feeling about the showers. We agreed to meet later for lunch.

Next, I went up to the healers' cabin and asked for some help with my tendonitis. A very kind woman sat with me and rubbed my arm for awhile. Then she brought me a soothing herbal tea. Cloudy days can be just fine when you're in the right place.

Had I been so inclined, I could have participated in World Bra Soccer ("rain or shine, meet at the basketball court"). RhythmFest provides a daily sports schedule, which includes tennis clinics and matches, children's games, all-speeds

*continued on page 56*

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**ABOUT THE WRITER:** *Ginny Risk is a Scorpio librarian whose last trip to North Carolina was in 1981, canoeing in the Great Dismal Swamp.*



Women flocked to Ubaka Hill's drumsong workshop.

Jetta Fraser

# *Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Michigan Festival* **WOMYN OF COLORS TENT**

By Amoja Three Rivers, Lola Lai Jong, Marie Beaumont, and Adriana Becerra

Just what is the Womyn of Colors Tent? Who are those womyn in there, and what do they do anyway?

The staff of the Womyn of Colors Tent at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival celebrated our tenth anniversary this year, and we want to take this opportunity to reflect on what we have become over the years and what goes on in and around the canvas.

Womyn of Color have, of course, been a part of the Michigan festival since her beginning. Many of us have been just as swept away by the incredibly beautiful woman's world of festival as have white womyn. We have joined the womyn who painted themselves with mud and cavorted through a raging thunderstorm shrieking defiant replies to the lightning. We have been part of who-knows-how-many thousand womyn spontaneously humming a primal undulating moan in greeting to the full rising moon. This was truly once and future magic.

But within this matriarchal wonderland, American reality often seeps through. Casual acts of racism are as pesky as gnats, and nearly as abundant. In the early years, there was a visible lack of Womyn of Color participation throughout the festival and among festie-goers. Was this to be just a white womyn's theme park?

What to do? What to do? We caucused. We workshoped. We wrote letters. The festival responded over the years with more W.O.C. performers, W.O.C. staff, and festie-goer outreach. But frustration thrived. We were starving for our own companionship, for "Colored" perspectives. We were so comparatively few in

A Tent! Our own Tent! That was it!

In 1984 we were given half of a small meeting tent, which we overflowed immediately. This was followed the next year by a small (but whole) tent, and then a larger 20'x30' tent. Created to serve and be responsive to the needs of W.O.C., the Tent spawned a multitude of workshops, networking meetings, parties, and other gatherings. It became haven—a home and a comfort zone.

Gradually we became aware that the Tent was almost an entity unto itself, with the staff kind of functioning as worker cells. It grows, it changes, and it teaches. More than just another workshop area, it has become a private space within the festival where we can figure out who we are and where we want to go. It has been and continues to be a kind of laboratory for spiritual and cultural growth.

Originally the entire Tent was open to all womyn, but because of a series of intrusive, disruptive, and essentially racist incidents, many festie-goers began to feel a need for a W.O.C.-only space. So the W.O.C. Tent gave birth to a subsection: an inner, private W.O.C.-only space.

But isn't that divisive? Isn't it segregation? Isn't it just racism in reverse? This space was designed to be not just a sanctuary from racism (no small thing), but also to be a place where we could experience W.O.C. energy within the larger context of the festival. Just as all womyn in general get their "batteries" recharged in a woman-only environment, W.O.C. in particular use the Sanctuary for the recharging needed to function in a mostly white environment. This enables us to

which to explore our various cultures. It's family time, and it is sweet and precious.

By 1993—our tenth year—the Sanctuary had grown to include two-thirds of our W.O.C. Tent space, as well as a large outdoor area sprawling under shade trees, into the ferns, and shielded by a woven bushy brush and twine fence. We furnish the Tent and Sanctuary with luxurious hay bale couches, lamps, lace, multicolored lights, and carpets. We are too swank.

Amoja Three Rivers, as coordinator, was the first staff person. Because it was a last-minute deal, the first W.O.C. Tent had to hijack two more staff from other festival areas. During the next few years, staffing the Tent was somewhat bumpy and erratic, but by the fourth year—with the addition of Lola Lai Jong, and in the fifth year, with Marie Beaumont—the W.O.C. Tent staff became not only a permanent fixture (more or less), but also a well-oiled, girl-gang, family-type unit. We have gradually acquired one staff woman to represent each major "food group" of womyn: African, Asian, Latina, Mixed Race, and Native American. Other staff have included Willy Wilkerson, Loba Nemajea, Celia Rodriguez, Judy Chen, Yolanda Noriega, Blanche Jackson, Ubaka Hill, Adriana Becerra, and Deb Williams.

Even though the W.O.C. Tent has always sought its shape and direction from the festie-goers, we have also maintained some firm guidelines and philosophies. We intend it to be a safe and comfortable space for all Womyn of Color, regardless of what a woman looks like, what she wears, what her politics are, who her friends and lovers are. The W.O.C.-

*More than just another workshop area, it has become a private space within the festival where we can figure out who we are and where we want to go.*

numbers—and so scattered—that apart from a stray workshop now and then, most of our connections came from fleeting hellos on the path. What we needed was a place where we could find each other, a place to be together, a place shaped to fit our values. We needed a structure in which we were the main course, not an afterthought or a garnish.

focus more of our energy on each other.

Over the years, Latina, Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American, African-American, Arab, Middle Eastern, and Mixed Race womyn have become more acquainted, have shared experiences and insights, and have strengthened family ties in this environment. The Sanctuary also provides us with a spectator-free area in

only Sanctuary space operates on an honor system—we do not interrogate light-skinned sisters about their backgrounds. We support W.O.C. who are in interracial relationships. We do not tolerate physical, verbal, or emotional abuse of any woman in the area. We try to provide a varied environment with social areas and quiet corners, so that shy, quiet womyn will feel



just as at home as loud, bouncy womyn. The Tent provides materials for sign, flyer, and poster making. We encourage womyn to use the facilities however they please.

Over the years there have been wonderful occurrences and connections. Womyn have sung and drummed and testified by candlelight and firelight. Womyn have called down the Spirit. Africans and Japanese taiko players have drummed together. Native Americans and African Americans have drummed, sung, and done sweat lodge together. Asians have instructed Africans, Latinas, and First Nation womyn in the art of Mah Jong. And all groups of womyn are learning to salsa. In this unique, once-a-year setting, we are learning kinship and we are learning of our common grounds. Perhaps we're not completely sure where we are going, but it definitely feels as though this is the right path.

Womyn's music festivals are, in part, these grand social experiments that seed the wider world with expanded consciousness, growth, and change. The Womyn of Colors Tent, a vital component of this phenomenon, provides the setting for us to take charge of shaping solutions. We are feeling our way along new paths, forming new ideas and rules, setting guideposts,

## Collective Statement from the Womyn of Colors Tent Staff

The Womyn of Colors Tent is, at the behest of the spirits, a place of learning and growing, a place of magic where we are open to learning from our ancestresses—all our mothers and grandmothers and great grandmothers.

She is a place where we go and remember how to love—love ourselves and love each other, celebrating our uniqueness while respecting each other across cultural differences, a place where we come as we are shaping our paths and redefining ourselves. The WOC Tent is our home away from home, or the home we never had. She is the home we want to make outside.

The WOC Tent is a place where we can come when we feel weak, where we can touch our strengths, discover and enjoy our own and each other's beauty. She is a place where we can feel visible, value our beauty, and acknowledge our own ways.

We have experienced the wild surprise at finding that which we had sought. We bring home the things we learn here of breaking through the barriers between us as Womyn of Colors, creating respectful ways to be gentle with ourselves and with each other.

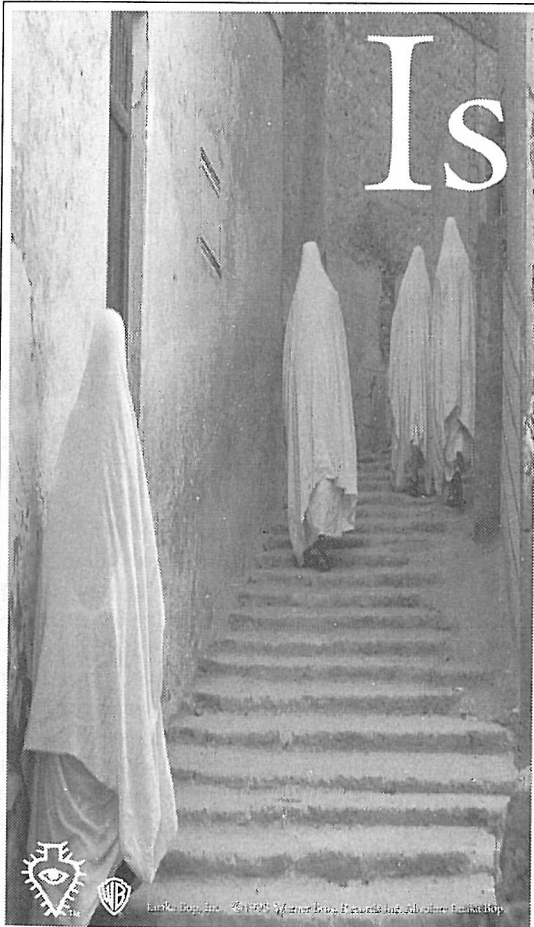
The Womyn of Colors Tent is a place where we can be who we are with each other AND HAVE FUN!!!

—Amoja Three Rivers, Marie Beaumont, Lola Lai Jong, Adriana Becerra, Blanche Jackson, Charlene O'Rourke, Judy Chen, Deb Williams, and Nettie Lee.

making mistakes, retracing our steps, redefining values, and clarifying concepts.

In this tenth year of our existence, we have much to celebrate.

For Amoja Three Rivers' 'Cultural Etiquette Guide' or more info about the Michigan W.O.C. Tent: Market Wimmin, Box 28, Indian Valley, VA 24105. (703) 992-0248. •



Is

it a dream? Is it an omen?

*Her family did everything they could to stop her from singing. Everything included threatening her, stalking her, slashing her and imprisoning her, on two continents. They wanted her to live as a traditional Berber woman. She had other plans.*

ADVENTURES IN AFROPEA 2:

THE BEST OF

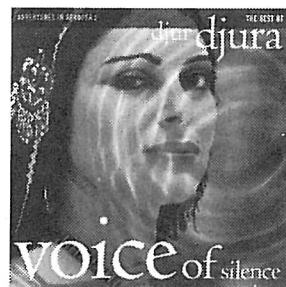
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18th year on "the land"

# MICHIGAN MOMENTS

*It's often said that you'd have to be several people at once to fully have the "Michigan Experience." This article is written, therefore, by many women, including workers, festies, technicians, craftswomen, and performers. Time at Michigan is relative, so while this narrative is mostly chronologically accurate, it's not rigidly so. We invite you to sit back, relax, and enjoy these experiential snapshots of the 18th Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, contributed by Toni Jr., Bonnie, Zenobia, Tatiana, Therese, Laura, Ruth, and Mimi.*

.....

On the road again, on our way to Lesbian Mecca. One of the most cherished landmarks is the yellow sign in front of the little carry-out store, the last outpost of civilization before we reach "the land." Each year, I've come to expect the smile that will cross my face as I first lay eyes on the message: "Welcome Womyn." By the time we've turned down the dirt road at 156th, my heart is pounding with excitement and I'm grinning from ear to ear. We arrive at the gate Monday morning (opening day) at noon; we're car #304 in the line.

.....

I've been on the land since yesterday. One of my favorite rituals each year is to wait to greet the first cars that cross the threshold into "Michigan." Car after tattered car purrs expectantly outside the front gate, the long line of vehicles bearing testimony to this festival's nationwide appeal. One shuttle van bringing artists from the airport suddenly bursts open its doors, and out come Judith Casselberry, Jaqué DuPreé, Linda Tillery, and Margaret Sloan-Hunter, singing "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" to the delight of the onlookers.

.....

By the time I reach the gates of the festival, I have a headache. I have been traveling by air with five pieces of luggage and can't fathom lugging them around any more. But I still have to set up camp. To make matters worse, I've left my ticket at home. Evening is approaching, and I want to cry. As I wander by the gate, two aspirin appear with a cup of water. Coordinators hustle around me, making phone calls and arranging paperwork, patting me on the head in between. Someone carts all my stuff onto a van, and then off the van after I get to the

camping area. It's dark by then, and strangers help me move my luggage to a covered tent. Someone lends me a flashlight and leads me to food and showers. Someone else offers to share her tent for the night. My headache goes away.

.....

I hitch a ride out to the main gate with the transportation coordinator, who's going to meet the huge buses coming from Grand Rapids. Another half-hour until the gates open. The box office girls are ready, the boom box is playing, the signs are spectacular, and the orientation tent is open and awaiting the first arrivals. A new worker and I watch the short introductory video as we wait for the gates to be officially opened. Many workers are now here to greet the festies. We count down: five, four, three, two, one...! A cheer erupts from both the worker side and the road side as the gate swings open and the first vehicle pulls in. I laugh—I see a woman of perhaps fifty or sixty drive in with her bra hooked over her rearview mirror.

.....

The greeters are waving enthusiastic hellos at women arriving in dusty vehicles with plates from Nova Scotia to California and from Vancouver to Florida. Workers are giving instructions to drivers of bumper-stickered cars and placard-covered vans—*Michigan and/or bust(s)...My other car is a broom...If this van is rockin', don't come a-knockin'...*and the ever-popular *See you in August*. I find myself behind a tough-looking butch in leather, who's just parked her motorcycle and is now registering. More greetings, instructions regarding workshifts. Ms. Leatherbiker swaggers off down the road, shouldering her baggage. When she reaches a particular patch of ferns, she throws down her gear and jumps up and down like a little kid, shouting, "Yippee!" Abruptly aware that she's being watched, she turns to me with a sheepish grin. "I always camp in this spot, every year," she says. "It's mine."

.....

I walk home at night to my own tent under an impossible smear of Milky Way and stars. I sleep, despite the sloping woods floor upon which my tent is pitched. During the night I find myself inexorably sliding

feet-first in a slo-mo hockey-puck serve to the bottom of my tent. While I'm awake, I hear the rustlings of small animals poking about my campsite for what they hope will be a midnight snack.

.....

I come home to my tent. It's 2 a.m. I hear a rustling as I putter around just outside the door. Is it the neighbors coming home? No, it's closer than that. A plastic bag sound? I'm confused, because the only bag I have is filled with extra ropes—and anyway, it doesn't *sound* like a plastic bag. Aiming my flashlight around the side of the tent, I see a bulge where there shouldn't be one. Something is caught between the tent and the rain fly, which goes all the way to the ground. Aware that raccoons often prowl our campsites at night, I start talking. "Who are you? How did you get in there? Are you stuck?" (Rustle, rustle, rustle.) I tap on the tent. "Do you need some help getting out? What should I do?" (Sounds like teeth clicking rapidly together.) At this point, I tap a stick gently on the tent. "Now look, you have to get out of there, 'cuz I'm tired and want to get to bed." (Click, click, click, click.) I get firmer. "Okay, now, you got in there, you can get back out. And don't rip the tent—it's not mine." (A final large rustle, and I hear it behind the tent, circling into the woods.) Now I'm following with my dim flashlight, saying, "Wait, what are you?" As I shine the light on it, it stops—raising its quill-filled back and looking me in the eye. Wow! I didn't even know there were porcupines here. "Thank you! And goodnight." Back in the tent, I find two quills left behind, stuck through the tent into one of my socks.

.....

Maile and Marina have begun their week-long blast of Country Western line dancing instruction at the Community Center. How they continually coordinate their impeccable, darin' and darlin' outfits is a wonder in this heat and dust. Everyone shows up sooner or later at the Community Center; Alix Dobkin is watching the two-steppers; Alix's daughter Adrian pounces on her mom's back and demands, "Where have you *been*?"

.....

Michigan is the only place where I simulta-

neously experience primitive camping alongside business activities. I'm sleeping on rooted ground, yet delivering paperwork "downtown" for other workers. A city in the woods. There is even a hidden campsite near the front gate with a large sign announcing THE MAYOR.

.....

A quick flip through the eighty-four page program booklet. Lots of intriguing shows planned for the Movies Under The Stars series. Among them: the Academy Award-winning *Chicks in White Satin* (lesbian matrimony); Pratibha Parmar's *Khush* (about lesbians/gays of South Asian Indian heritage), and *A Place of Rage* (featuring Angela Davis, June Jordan, and Alice Walker); and *Full Circle* by Donna Read (third in the women and spirituality series, following *Goddess Remembered* and *The Burning Times*).

.....

My time in Michigan is truly the richest, I think. I get a chance to hang with friends from Park Slope (in Brooklyn). Can you imagine coming all the way to Michigan so I can hang with friends who live only blocks away from me?

.....

Near the workers' showers, grasshoppers spring from underwear to underwear as technicians lather up. Retts emerges from

hands. (It *sort of* works; the next day Karen Kane, who'd borrowed \$20 the day before, does come down the aisle with it in her hand.) From my vantage point in the booth, I watch a preadolescent girl enjoying Alison Bechdel's comic book; I watch dragonflies soaring through a drumming lesson in the adjacent stall; I see friends of mine from college, graduate school, my first job, my last job—every year of my life seems represented here.

.....

Morning fog becomes hot sun, and I'm leading my workshop on Jewish women's history. One participant lovingly describes the heavenly food smells of the synagogue kitchen from her childhood. Another woman describes visiting a famous deli her mother had told her about for years. "When I finally walked into that deli myself," says the storyteller, "I realized I'd had my mother's memories without ever experiencing them."

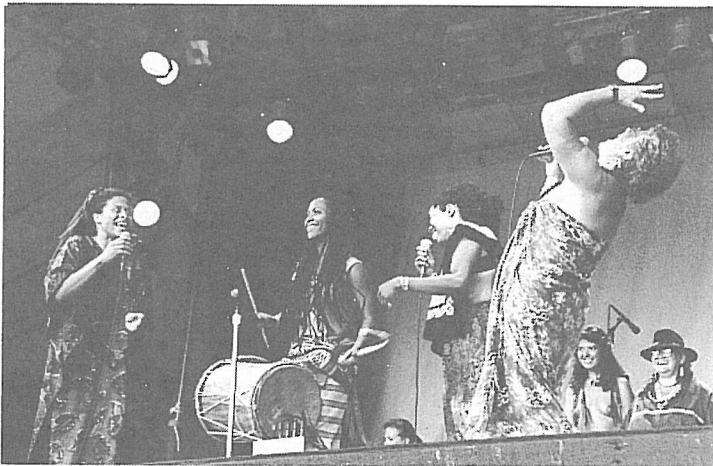
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In the massage tent of the workers' area a holy silence prevails. Limp, tender bodies of all colors and sizes ooze off the soft tables, awaiting or recovering from varieties of bodywork. I take my place under Leanne's competent hands. I try to empty my head of thoughts, of intellectual busywork, but into

carved dildos and what looks like horsehair tails attached god-knows-how to their gleaming naked bodies; teenaged women with flowers braided into their hair; lovers strolling two-by-two holding hands. I hear a very young girl call, "Grandma, we'll miss our *shuttle!*" How many mothers and daughters on the land this year? Granddaughters and grandmothers? Women menstruating? I chuckle, recalling one comic I've heard suggesting we call our periods "WOMENstruating."

.....

Quite a choice of Tuesday and Wednesday intensive workshops. Should I delve for hours into topics such as racism, herbal healing, incest, cultural appreciation (Deaf, Latina, African American, Jewish), intimacy, legal protection? Maybe Linda Tillery's vocal/percussion workshop? "Let's Laugh About Sex" with Karen Williams? Learn karate or Chi Kung? Or perhaps participate in activities like comedy improv, dancing, creative writing, singing, drumming, two-stepping, puppetmaking? I've always wanted to try that stilt thing—I see there's a workshop led by Terry Sendgraff (Womyn Walking Tall); those Treelings are always a hit at Michigan. I wonder if I could do it. I haven't played my bassoon since high school, so being in the concert band is out—



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Left: Rashida Oji, Ubaka Hill, Melanie DeMore, and Rhiannon sing "Amazon" as part of the opening ceremony. Right: Linda Severt and Laura Love urge festie-goers to get wild on Planet Estrogena.

the shower naked and crows, "I just realized I don't have to put on clothes if I don't want to! Haw!"

.....

I bring a snack to Toni Jr. at the *HOT WIRE* booth. (Someone asks if she is a vegetarian, and she replies, "I'm an omnivore. No—I'm a gynevore.") We try a visualization to improve business in the baking afternoon heat: We imagine naked women running toward the booth with \$20 bills in their outstretched

my half-hour of privileged relaxation dance random ideas and schemes: what would it be like to seduce *that* one, or *this* one...

.....

By nightfall I am so mellow, so saturated with love and affection, that I resemble Alice's Cheshire Cat: body dissolving, but the long grin remaining. Curled in my beach chair by day, I have watched an endless parade: stilt-walkers and clowns; a group of women posing, wearing intricately

though I'd love to be able to say that I have performed on a Michigan stage. Maybe the gospel choir or festival choir; their conductors are among the most respected in Lesbian Nation.

.....

I make it a point to get up at 7 a.m. most mornings to go running on the land. This morning I decide to run a different path than before, daring myself to get lost. What interesting and diverse camping situations I

pass—colorful banners proclaiming hometowns, crafts, and even just announcing someone's arrival! I challenge my legs to go further, venture down another unknown trail. Before I know it, I'm standing in front of the Acoustic Stage. It's as if I can see and hear the ghosts of performances past. I can definitely hear the morning birds singing their songs to the rising sun. As I continue my run, I receive encouragement and greetings from many women and other runners.

.....

I'm sitting stunned, recovering from Sherry Glaser's one-woman tour de force *Family Secrets*. In this ninety-minute comic drama, she metamorphoses into various members of her family, crossing gender and age boundaries with minimal costuming and a sparse Acoustic Stage set. She "becomes" each member of the family, transforming right in front of us. The power of this production reminds me of Marga Gomez's *Memory Tricks*—you laugh, you cry. (Amusing synchronicity: in one scene there's a reference to a fetal heart monitor, and at that precise moment we in the audience hear the rhythmic beeps of a truck backing up at the porta-Janes! The momentary silence is broken as the crowd erupts into laughter.) Sherry tearfully tells us after the extended standing ovation that this is the last performance of the play before it runs off-Broadway, and thanks us for the warm support. I really wish we were going to be in New York, to see it again. Wait a minute...it is our anniversary at the end of September... and we *did* go there to see Lily Tomlin...

.....

The dedication of the Women of Colors Tent really moves me. I arrived a little late, but still in time for the personal appreciations that were being shared among my sisters of color. Like the times when I find my power through the drums to be so powerful that I stop playing, the power being expressed through these beautiful women scares me so that I want to get up and leave. But I stay. Each woman shares her gratitude and appreciation to the founders, Blanche and Amoja. Some thank their warrior mothers. I know I'm on sacred land for sure! Each woman offers her courage and power to the process of growing. I start crying, the kind where you can't stop. I don't think that I can talk as it gets to be my turn, but I find my strength and offer a song in thanks—"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." As my voice raises, so does everyone else's. What a tribute to sisterhood. What a contribution to my growth as an African and Native American woman.

.....

*Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery*, "a Black Woman's journey through

recovery from emotional and psychological enslavement. A contemporary tale of Harriet Tubman." I'll give her ten seconds to prove herself, I think. Sleek Pamela Sneed takes the stage and one-woman me into a drama that bashes god and unabashedly exposes a pain that hovers between self-hatred and healing. She makes racism sound like a recipe and psychotherapy like an intellectual jaunt. I forget that I hate theater. The wooden stage is perfectly framed by trees. The sun is not kind to me as I sit uncomfortably on scratchy grass wearing my psychedelic bell bottoms. Pamela Sneed is wearing a black slip and isn't letting me go. Later, I thank her.

.....

I am asked if I will participate in the international greetings segment of the opening ceremonies. I would love to! This year, there are thirty-four of us bringing greetings from other countries and cultures. It's always one of my favorite parts of the opening ceremonies. We're standing backstage waiting to go. I look over at my friend Alix, who will be emcee tonight, and we smile at each other. Then I'm standing on the stage with all the other women bringing greetings, looking out into a sea of thousands upon thousands of women, feeling the drumming heartbeat in my body. I know that no matter where I go when I leave, this reality—the reality of my lesbian culture and all the magnificent women here—can never be erased. And I will layer it upon any other reality to which I might come in contact.

.....

"Welcome to the land" in dozens of languages, and the traditional singing of "Amazon," Maxine Feldman's anthem to the matriarchy. If the festival producers had commissioned someone to write a theme song for this tribal gathering, they couldn't have done better. This year, it's soaring to the heavens, sung by the incomparable vocal genius Rhiannon, with Melanie DeMore, Rashida Oji, and Ubaka Hill.

.....

Margie Adam is onstage at Michigan for the first time in many years. Glowing with excitement, she informs the Night Stage audience that later that evening we'll have the opportunity to watch the Perseid meteor showers. These words are barely out of Margie's mouth when the finest, most grand meteor shoots across the dark sky in a purple and golden streak, a display so enormously dazzling and unexpected that the entire audience screams loud and long—and the meteors continue. Finally, Margie herself leaves the piano and comes out to the end of the ramp to watch the celestial show with us. I wonder what it would be

like to *be* live background music to that cosmic event.

.....

The rehearsal tent in the performers' area backstage is alive with jamming; Alix dances with Nydia Mata's mother on the woodchip path. In the workers' kitchen, Holly Near leans over a piano, belting out torch songs as steam wafts upwards from huge soup pots.

.....

Marcy J. Hochberg and Toni Jr. are taking photos for *HOT WIRE* as usual—adjusting their lenses and shooting, bam, bam, bam. With my own camera I look at images I want to take home with me: the parade of redheads (a Michigan tradition!), giant puppets on stilts, women at the pump filling lavender water bottles, clouds of dust puffing up from dancers' feet, women in jesters' bells, couples asleep in each other's necks.

.....

On my second night, I put my name in the lottery to sing at the August Night Cafe and am chosen. The Night Stage is running late and the fog is rolling in. Though I only sing two songs and can't hear myself (because there are no monitors), the response from the audience is sure welcoming.

.....

My friends and I are here with ten-year-old Cassie, who's never been to Michigan before. She checked out Gaia Girls' Camp and other festival activities early on. With her outgoing personality and quick wit, she's made friends easily. Looking around the festival this year, we see many more girls than usual—from infants to teens, our girl children are here and growing up right here in the community. I run into a pal, who tells me about her encounter with one of the students from the high school where she teaches. "I've been coming to Michigan for thirteen summers!" the young woman told her.

.....

I think about my dyke destiny. When I was born (on Mother's Day, a Sunday) some Protestant friend of my Jewish mother gave her a baby book for me inscribed: "And the child that is born on this Sabbath Day shall be bonny and blithe and good and gay." Four out of four ain't bad, I think.

.....

"How's your festival going?" I ask Day Stage sound tech Ruth, who's wearing her headphones draped like a scarf around her neck. "Well, Alix told me that every night she finds herself in her tent, taking her shoes off, and smiling," she says. "That about sums it up."

.....

Drummer Ubaka Hill and I meet for a bit of land gossip. I learn, to my horror, that some white woman went steamrolling into the

Women of Colors Sanctuary, asking if there were drugs for sale. Two cups of hot chocolate and a bagel can't wash the taste of anger and shame from my throat.

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Aimée and I are resting at our side-by-side tents. She's sharing the details of a commitment ceremony—a "webbing"—she attended here at the festival. She tells me how she played the flute, and how two drinking vessels were passed around. Each woman present "put in" her best wishes for the newly-betrothed, and at the end the "newlywebs" drank all the wishes.

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It's been hot and dusty, hiking on the main road today. Many times I've passed Sober Support, the Over 50s area, the Community Center, the Women of Colors Tent, the August Night Cafe, the Saints concession booth, the Homebase security tent, DART (disabled women's area), the Oasis and Womb healthcare areas, and the entrance to the Crafts Bazaar. It feels good to stick my head completely under the cold, cold water direct from the spigot to the sounds of the Cactus Cowgirls. They're the kickoff act for tonight's Night Stage. Aren't some of them the gals from the Out Band? Didn't I see 'em on the six-hour C-SPAN coverage of last

onions and 975 lbs. tomatoes; grate 515 lbs. cheese; use 134 lbs. sprouts and 260 lbs. sour cream...Make the salsa with 200 lbs. chopped tomatoes, 180 gal. canned tomatoes, 11 lbs. minced garlic, 22 gal. tomato paste, 45 lbs. onions, 2.5 gal. vinegar, 80 bunches cilantro, 4 gal. jalapeños...and then wrap in 7,000 tortillas.

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Today is Thursday, and it's been daunting: a day filled with kerosene-y jet smells and engine noise; long, loaded-down sprints from Concourse A to Concourse Z; polymer in-flight meals; flatulent, fussy babies; turbulence; and recycled air. Arising at 4:30 a.m. to board the 7:00 flight from SeaTac International had been no picnic, and I wasn't happy about the prospect of a two-plus hour van ride from the Grand Rapids airport onto the festival grounds. Having endured all this, my demeanor, comportment, and general mood are something other than bubbly when I finally arrive on THE LAND at 6 p.m. I've been here five seconds, and already I know that my childhood in Nebraska hasn't adequately prepared me for this experience. Countless numbers of sky-clad, sun-kissed, mud-bathed, secular angels greet us with an enthusiasm not often seen in these parts.

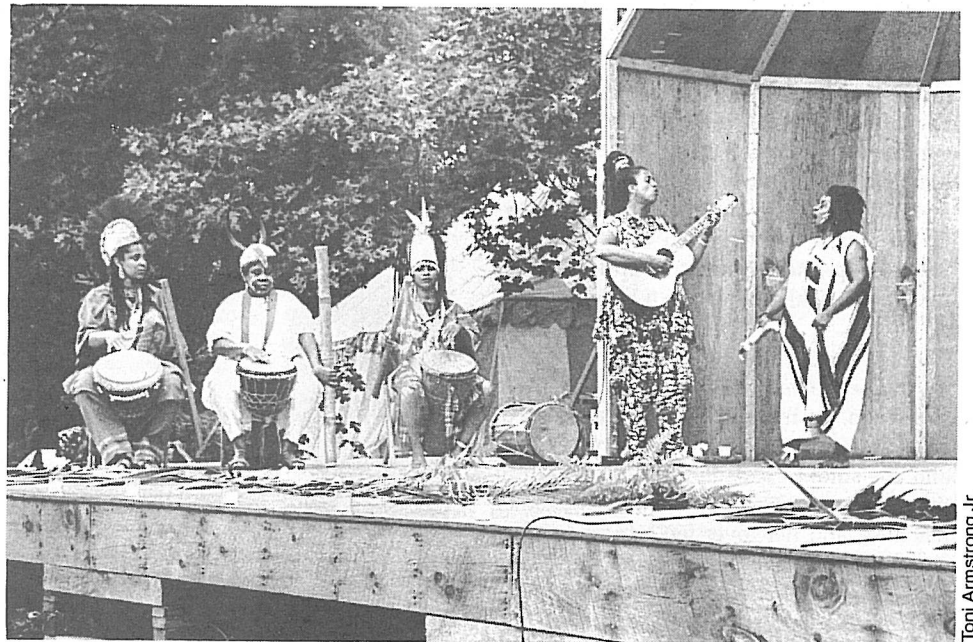
on their arms this year. Earlier today, Melanie DeMore dedicated her haunting song "Woman of Peace" to her mother. One of the high points has to be Bernice Johnson Reagon (of Sweet Honey in the Rock fame) with her sweet rockin' baby girl Toshi Reagon. They solo; their voices intertwine. The crowd is thrilled to hear that Sweet Honey will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in November with a concert, new album, and the release of a Doubleday book entitled *Still on the Journey*. Despite the respectful tone of the set, I have to smile; Toshi, singing Ferron: "Eating with the lonely, and we ate each other raw..." Scream from the audience: "Y'all so baaad!"

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Rashida Oji—with a full band including drummer Bernice Brooks, percussionist Annette Aguilar, and Toshi on bass—has taken the Night Stage by storm. She's running the ramp, rap-howling to the moon. To accompany the song "No More," she tells the tale of a 115-lb. woman coming to the aid of another woman who was being battered by a large man. The point? For the battered one's little girl, who was watching, to see that a woman *can indeed* come to the aid of another woman. I wish I could round up those who love to criticize women's music



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Singer Jaqué DuPreé and dancer/choreographer Roberta Stokes collaborated on the *Home Girls: Goin' Home* extravaganza, which featured dance, singing, martial arts, drumming, and ritual.**

April's March on Washington? I think I'll soak my shirt and go see.

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**BURRITOS FOR 7,000:** Cook 720 lbs. pinto beans and 30 lbs. bulgar. Add 3.5 gal. tamari, 4 lbs. cumin, 10 lbs. raw garlic, 4 lbs. garlic powder, 3.5 lbs. onion powder. While that's cooking, prepare fixings: Chop 325 lbs.

Unable to remember why I purchased *People* magazine in Chicago, I enter the festival.

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This year, we're inundated with public acknowledgement of the many mothers and daughters together at the festival. Even the celebrities: Nydia Mata, Judith Casselberry, and the Washington Sisters all have moms

for being "outdated" and "irrelevant" musically and politically; critics would only need to see Rashida's effect on this crowd. And look at Karen Ashton, the left-handed, Hendrix-esque guitarist—the woman is playing fast electric riffs now with her teeth, now over her shoulder!

.....

I have the solar panel, charge controller, battery, and plugs with me to power the lights, fan, and blender—as a demonstration of solar power, to turn women on to the possibilities. The incongruity of being able to make smoothies and margaritas at the festival was enough to make me bring them. I hope to turn the Goldenrod women on to the idea. (Solar power for their listening booth, not free margaritas for everyone.) I imagine next year we might see more campers and craftswomen getting creative with the sun. (Four this year are utilizing twelve-volt power.) We have a margarita night, the best part of which is cleaning up with women asking, "Is that a *blender*?" (Lest your imagination run away with you, remember that there are limitations to what can be powered on a simple system. Heat-making appliances draw lots of power, so you can just leave your hair dryer behind.)

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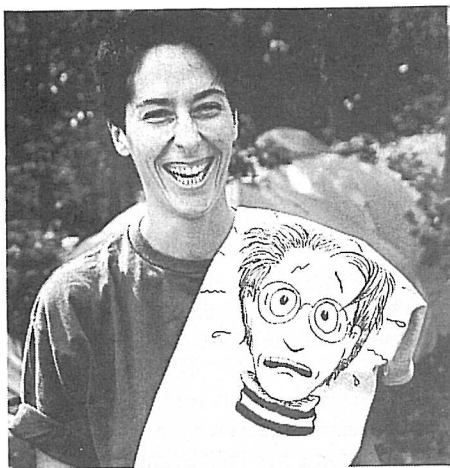
My heart is beating really fast. I am in my black cape, trying to be invisible. I feel like a spy out here in the Twilight Zone where women gather to explore. The sexuality in the air is palpable. So many stories I've heard; I have come to see for myself. There are lots of women milling about—some I recognize, some watching as others take what is offered at each station. Candles burn all around, giving the area a carnival-like air. There are whispers and shouts and laughter. Here women unabashedly bare their bodies and their conditioning and explore the realms of pleasure and pain. I see safety and consideration and caring. I feel the power of women's sexuality, a power we maybe only scratch the surface of. Later, I slip into the night, deep in thought for the long walk home down Easy Street.

.....

The last time we'd seen each other was in my home during her travels nearly three years ago. To my surprise, she appears at breakfast, and as I eat blueberry oatmeal and she smokes Sailems, we talk. I find out that she has changed her name, her mother has died, and her lover left her for another woman in the midst of her grieving. I have moved, transformed my lupus diagnosis into an affirmation of life, gone through two relationships, and am newly in love. We are both living on unemployment.

.....

It's an everyday thing: salsa lessons at 10:30, following the country line dancing. The dance floor is an upside-down carpet, duct-taped together, extending to the wooden basketball court. Teachers Maria Sanchez and Maria Perez coordinate clothes (black knee-length leggings, orange tank tops) and dance steps, showing the moves on the



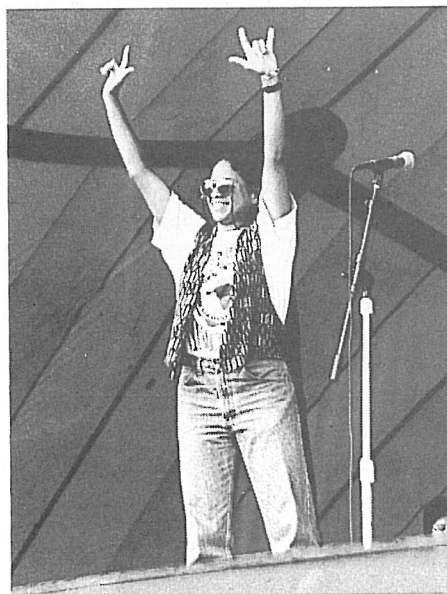
Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Alison Bechdel, who always has a booth in the crafts area at Michigan.**



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Sherry Glaser portrays the various members of her family in her one-woman show *Family Secrets*.**



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**The opening ceremony features greetings in many languages. (Pictured: Asa says "I love you" in sign language.)**

August Night Cafe's stage. Braving the mid-day sun, couples move in sync and in mismatched attempts to Latin Fever and Celia Cruz. One faithful reveler, a post-modernist punk rocker from New York City, comes to salsa class every morning with blackened feet, long auburn matted hair, creamy pendulous breasts, and a reddish-brown sweat-shirt worn like a diaper—all of her in musical harmony. And just as faithful and timely is Elsa, the Venezuelan goddess of the squirt: using her internal thermometer, she chooses the right moment to stand on a chair, hose in hand, and spray a wide, fine mist of water on the hot salseras gathered around her.

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I'm working in the sound booth, enjoying the salsa rhythms coming from the Day Stage. I look over to my left and see huge figures coming down the road—huge fish, and a moon, and other figures dancing through the audience. And now there are women on stilts—it seems like dozens—all in costumes, all dancing salsa.

.....

In the glaring Day Stage sun, Maria Walsh with her bodhran and Carole Nelson on sax are Zrazy. Billed as "Pagan funk from Ireland," they create a nonsterile techno-pop sound, appealing to those among us who want our politics delivered with a radio-ready funky-rock sound. I realize how truly privileged we are in the U.S., and how much progress our feminist foremothers have accomplished. Though we fight to retain and expand reproductive choices, in Ireland it's illegal even to *give out* the abortion counseling phone number. It hits me how genuinely brave the Zrazys are to sing their song "6794700" at home.

.....

Over at the Acoustic Stage, a tribute to native Hawaiian culture brings music and dance from "the islands" to the dizzy, overheated crowd. The ensemble Kaulana Na Pua ["famous are the flowers"] is made up of six Native Hawaiian women wearing traditional garb and flowers, performing both ancient and modern songs and hulas. Their performance is dedicated to Queen Lili'okalani, Hawaii's last reigning monarch. The loving, graceful dances send fresh cool air to our sweating skins, almost as though real Island breezes had come to Michigan with the Hawaiian performers.

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*Home Girls...Goin' Home* is billed as "a gathering of compelling and widely recognized dancers/choreographers, musicians, and martial artists." Dancer Roberta Stokes and singer/songwriter Jaqué DuPreé have collaborated to provide a moving and excit-

ing tribute to African, Caribbean, and American cultures. Dancing, drumming, singing, movement, tears, laughter, strength, vulnerability, soaring solos, and tight ensemble displays—the set flies by, and gets one of the most enthusiastic standing ovations of any festival performance this year.

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I run into a member of the Sirens Motorcycle Club of New York City. I've never seen her topless before, and she's never seen me in a dress. She tells me of a woman who rode her 250 Honda all the way from Texas to Michigan, and who will be going from Michigan to New York. My friend offers to throw the rider's bike in the back of her truck to give her a lift—if I can find this courageous biker among the more-than-7,000 women present on the land. And I do—but as it turns out, she wants to ride to Canada before going to New York. I hope she'll get there in time to join our monthly meeting of the Sirens—we'll pay homage to her.

.....

At the Womyn of Colors tent, Ubaka Hill offers her drumsong. I *have* to find a drum. I play so hard that my whole hand is swollen and turns purple. Next time, I'll take lessons first.

.....

I'm waiting in the snaking dinner line with hundreds of overheated-but-good-natured Amazons. Clown Sandy Appleby in her traditional white-face make-up and propeller hat teaches the crowd a chant: "*We're here, we're queer, we're hungry!*" We know she's already been in the kitchen serving tent, because they respond: "*We're here, we're queer, we'll feed you!*" Across the road, by the hay bales, the daily dinner drum jam is in full swing. By now there must be 100 women congregated—some drumming, some dancing in their Thelma & Louise T-shirts (or loin cloths and labryses), some just appreciatively watching and eating their watermelon.

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Mango Jam. I recognize some of the players from Altazor, others from Blazing Redheads. They've hooked the crowd with their Latin/Caribbean/Middle Eastern grooves, and when the two band members in their tight, short dresses dance sexy on the ramp with each other, it's pandemonium in the audience. I've heard that these two women are a couple; I find myself hoping it's true. We so rarely get to see talented women couples perform together!

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Between Lynda's quick wit and her sister Jools' charm, New Zealand's famous Topp Twins are wowing the crowd as tonight's emcees. They continue their tradition of switching outfits often, this year appearing in a green sequined jumpsuit ("the butch

look" for Lynda) and a low-cut black cocktail dress and heels ("the femme look" for Jools), as well as in their adorable "bathers" (bathing suits). During the annual fundraising raffle (with hundreds of "oooo...ahhhh... *fabulous prizes*" donated by the craftswomen and the festival organizers), Lynda says, "Next prize, a pair of earrings; everybody's got to have a pair of earrings—everyone here has *something* pierced." They have a great time with the locations written as they read from the winning raffle tickets: "Lexington, VA—is that Lexington, *Vagina?*"

.....

Last year's festival was marred by two women being hit (by a vehicle driven by men) and seriously injured on the road outside of the festival main gate. This year, they're brought onto the stage and introduced to the roaring crowd. They're looking well, though the prognosis last summer seemed dire. They tell us how much strength they got from the outpouring of cards, letters, and gifts that they received from last year's festie-goers, strangers and yet sisters. The two women perform "Hold On," a moving piece they created about sisterhood, hope, and recovery.

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I'm aware I'm experiencing a historic moment: the Alive! reunion. I remember seeing the group in the mid '70s, when the National Women's Music Festival was still at the University of Illinois (in Champaign), and when Alive! was just a trio—back in those infant days of women's music.

This festival is the first time it's hit me that I'm experiencing what it's actually like to be living—as a community—in a cross-generational extended family. Over the last two decades, we've been watching women performers move from being "hot babes" toward becoming "respected crones." I saw Rhiannon and Ginni Clemmens together yesterday, and recalled the days when they were as exciting to the then-young women of the '70s as Ani DiFranco, Rashida Oji, and Suzanne Westenhoefer are to the now-young women of the '90s.

It strikes me how much I appreciate living in an international community of women who have embraced feminist views about aging, who respect the polished talents of elders as well as the hot glow of youthful ability. I watch our celebrities as they pass fifty to see how they'll role model for us what it means to get older—and I watch the women in their twenties to see what's coming for the next generation. I see that this festival is drawing together females of all ages: from infants to the magnificent ninety-four-year-old Ruth Ellis. With almost a century between the oldest and youngest

members of our gathering, I know that as a community and a subculture, we are doing something right.

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Alive! drives the late night crowd into a frenzy with Ida Cox's "Wild Women Don't Get the Blues," a song that's been kept alive for decades by spirited women. Before they launch into their classic "Spirit Healer," Rhiannon says, "No matter how many battles we fight with our brothers, toe to toe on the line—there *always* has to be a place for women." My heart fills with gratitude for those simple words of affirmation for women's space in a world that mocks separatism, women, feminism, and all lesbians who don't wear lipstick and sleep with men.

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One culture gives way to the next in non-stop inspiration; today I have rushed from the radical feminist Irish duo Zrazy, to the Hawaiian performance, to the *Home Girls* extravaganza, to the Friday night Jewish Shabbat service, to the Afro-Latin Mango Jam show. But at Michigan there's no jet lag, only the immediacy of shared culture and rhythm and motion and gesture. I give up eating and sleeping; I live inside other women's *yes*.

.....

Most mornings at the Belly Bowl [backstage food tent], there's a table of African-American women having breakfast and sharing stories. It often seems like church—someone will say something that rings the bell of truth, and our voices go up in agreement. This morning, there's silence from our table, and it's suddenly filled with the voice of Aretha Franklin singing, "You make me feel, you make me feel like a natural woman." What could have been more perfect?

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Saturday afternoon is the traditional time for Michigan's Barter Market. Woman-identified and woman-made items are the preferred currency here. Over the years I've made many a good trade here, collecting handmade jewelry, clothes, sketches, and once a numerology reading (which predicted I would smooth things out with an ex-lover). This year I trade coral necklaces and wooden fish earrings for a brass labrys, rainbow-striped anklets, and *Barbie at Michigan* postcards. Later, it continues: young women have set up an impromptu trading stand along the path in the Over-50s' area, offering woven bracelets to the passersby.

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Ohmygod, I'm going to die. I'm baking to death in this Day Stage sun. But ohmygod, Laura Love is on next—I can't leave. It gets hotter: the dancing, funkabilly, bass-

*continued on page 52*

# JESS HAWK OAKENSTAR

## ON BEING A GLOBAL CITIZEN AND WORLD TROUBADOR

A few months ago, I received through the mail my world passport, world citizen ID card, and other documentation. Gee, was I excited!

I was born and brought up in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) in southern Africa, of a South African mother and New Zealander father. It was there I began playing guitar when I was ten, and have always had a guitar with me since. Growing up, I wasn't exposed to a lot of local African music; I was part of a white minority living in a segregated society, similar to South Africa's apartheid system, so my influences were mainly people like Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, and Des Dawn Lindberg, a South African folksinging duo who were extremely popular at the time. (In fact, they toured southern Africa in a horsetruck, a very similar lifestyle to the one I'm living today.)

Africa gets into your blood. Although I lived in the city, I had frequent opportunities to visit the bush, especially in my late teens when I took trips into the province of Zululand (now called KwaZulu) on the east coast of South Africa to game reserves with such dreamlike names as Hluhluwe, Umfolozi, and Ndumu. Once, walking in a clearing with a game guard, I encountered a rhino—only meters away from us—who sniffed the wind for a moment, and then lumbered off in the opposite direction. I walked with a group of others through a river and then, a few minutes later, spotted a group of crocodiles sunning themselves on a sandbank. I rode a small boat up a river full of hippos, heard the cries of fish eagles in the morning and the guttural growls of lions at night, and went to sleep on the ground with bright coals glowing nearby and the sound of distant drumming drifting across the bushveld.

Regarding what it was like being white and living in Africa, I don't want to lapse into racial platitudes and become preachy about how wrong it all was—which would be easy to do. It's such an artificial situation, whites occupying the position of privilege and being such a minority. (At the time I lived in Rhodesia, the black population was approximately six million and whites numbered under

half a million.) In addition to interracial struggle, there have been many complicating factors operating in Africa, such as intertribal hatred. All of it has contributed to the continuing unrest. Like Rodney King said, "Can't we all just get along?"

I also observed the paternalistic form of white racism in Africa when I lived there—"We have to look after them because they're like children." Because so much of the black population lived in huts and held beliefs that whites thought to be "primitive," there was the feeling of "they can't govern, so we have to be responsible for them." My dad worked with what was called "tribal agriculture," and his work life involved teaching productive farming methods to African farmers. (Of course all the richest land was owned by white farmers.) He got along well with the farmers, and he genuinely cared about them. In my family, we weren't allowed to say any derogatory names for black people, and we hated to hear them spoken by anyone.

Although my family had banned the nasty, hating kind of racism that is so associated with interracial relations in Africa, we still had the paternalistic kind. That began changing for me in my late teens when I met a black girl my age. (Understand, this type of meeting was rare; I never saw black people my own age.) We began corresponding, and I realized she was just like me—studying the same things in school, and so on. It seemed crazy that we weren't allowed to attend the same schools.

There were other incidents like that, and when I spent a year at the university in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa, my eyes were opened to the anti-racist movement. Since there were no black students at our university, the anti-racist work I encountered was all initiated by white students. This was in 1976, the year of major rioting in Soweto—it was a big learning year for people everywhere regarding the political conditions of the region.

All of this in turn was reflected in my songwriting. I began playing guitar and singing in hotels, and decided to try to live as a musician in South Africa.

No luck. Despite the fact that one hotel helped me apply for residency, de-

spite the fact that my mother was born and brought up there, I was turned down by the immigration authorities.

I had long yearned to travel to Britain, with its castles and gabled inns (of which I had collected pictures since childhood), so I used all of my savings and flew to London. I was there for about a year, living in "squats"—old abandoned buildings people had taken over. In the first one I lived in, I was up in the attic—most appropriate for a starving artist, I thought! There was no toilet or bathroom in the place, and an extremely vicious Alsatian dog lived two floors down, making stair descent hazardous if he was out on the landing. When I was out of work, I sometimes didn't eat for days.

Before leaving South Africa, I had come out as a lesbian and was excited to discover the "gay life" of London. I spent 1977-78 in London and 1978-79 in Gloucestershire, in the countryside. Gay life in Great Britain for me consisted mainly of visiting women's bars and discos, which were often located above straight bars. (There was feminist activity in London, but I didn't join in with that at the time—I didn't know much about feminism yet.)

I got to visit the club in Chelsea where *The Killing of Sister George* was filmed, though I believe it's closed now. The bars often seemed to operate on much of a class system—the "hacking jacket and cigarette holder" women (i.e., snooty types!) went to the Gateways, and a more "average middle class" set went to my usual disco.

I was still writing songs, and working odd jobs, but I was encountering a similar problem to the one I had had in South Africa—I wasn't eligible for a work permit.

Eventually I began work as a volunteer (which was legal because it wasn't a paid job) at a social welfare home for girls in the Gloucestershire countryside for £5 a week plus room and board. The setting was a wonderful old stately home on large grounds. Our neighbor Princess Anne's Gatcombe estate bordered us. In the early mornings, she and her entourage would clomp up the lane on horseback.

Eventually the home, which was continually short-staffed, gave me a paid





Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Jess Hawk Oakenstar: "I have always felt myself to be a global citizen, with the whole world as my home, and all the world's people as my family."**

job and applied to immigration for a work permit on my behalf. But still no go. The job did not meet eligibility requirements, and I had no close British relatives.

So, partly because of that, and partly because I was ready to move on anyway, towards the end of 1979 I flew to New York City. (No, I didn't even try living there then!) I spent five weeks visiting friends and traveling cross-country by Greyhound before flying out of LAX to Auckland, New Zealand (Aotearoa\*).

I needed a job! I landed in the country with only \$5 in my pocket, but at least I knew I could stay—I was a New Zealand citizen, courtesy of my father. I wound up staying for more than ten years.

In Aotearoa I came face to face with feminism, which I embraced, and I encountered women's music for the first time. I met and worked with some tremendous musicians, including the Topp Twins, Mahina Tocker, and my close pal and singing partner Hilary King.

In late 1982, ten of us released a compilation album of all-acoustic original material by women. Called *Out of the Corners*, it was the first of its type in New Zealand, and was distributed in the U.S. by Ladyslipper. Unfortunately, the album is out of print now. There was no overall theme to the *Out of the Corners* project, but we called ourselves the Web Collective,

\* "Aotearoa" is the native Maori name for New Zealand. I believe it means "Land of the Long White Cloud."

"because women weave the world."

I also worked there with a widely respected lesbian feminist playwright, Renée (whose works included *Setting the Table*, *Secrets*, and *Groundwork*). She wrote a series of revues, too, some of which toured the country. I was in *What Did You Do in the War*, *Mummy?*, *Asking For It*, and *Born to Clean* (which had a successful season in Sydney, Australia).

During that period, people would ask me, "So, do you regard New Zealand as home now?" I found it an odd question. I have always felt myself to be a global citizen, with the whole world as my home, and all the world's people as my family.

Eventually, I felt a strong need to move on again, and the U.S. felt like an obvious choice. There is so much happening musically here, and I felt I wanted to be a part of it.

I discovered I could work my passage over on a ship, so on 20 June 1990, I steamed out of Auckland Harbour on the Columbus Victoria, a German container vessel.

There was another young woman "workaway" aboard—Lisa, from England—and for two weeks we swept and polished corridors; scrubbed an incredibly greasy, hot, noisy engine room area; and painted decks and storerooms. Between times, I sat up at the front of the ship watching flying fish; marveling at tiny Palmyra Island all alone in the vast Pacific; ate hearty German meals, and visited Honolulu and Wai-kiki with Lisa when we docked there for a day and a half. (As we sailed up the chan-

nel past filthy brown freighters, we were so proud of the gleaming red and white vessel we had helped paint!)

Eventually we sailed through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, down the Puget Sound, and into Tacoma Harbor (Washington). I had arrived.

So much has happened since, and I feel so lucky to be touring full-time as a musician/singer/songwriter. My partner Dianne, who books me, is just a gift from the goddess! Without her I would not be playing all these fairs, festivals, concerts, coffeehouses, and bars. Without her help, I couldn't have put out my first album [*Leave a Little Light Behind*], nor would I have a second in the works.

And still the ongoing hassle—immigration! Right now I have a temporary work permit, and am going through the costly and convoluted process of applying for permanent residency. If Dianne and I were heterosexual and got married, there'd be no problem! (And actually, if we wanted to live in Aotearoa, Dianne could at this time apply for residency on the basis of our same-sex relationship.) I believe I have something to contribute here in the United States; I would like to be able to stay and make that contribution.

At this point, I spend eight or nine months a year on the road, touring and playing music. During 1993, I traveled for six months (from the end of May to the end of November) without going back home to Phoenix.

I learned last year about the World Government of World Citizens, which was founded in 1953. Approximately one million people have registered as world citizens so far, and about 350,000 of them have world passports issued by this group. The organization uses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its mandate, and more than 130 countries now recognize the passport on at least a limited basis. Countries that have honored the passports on a case-by-case basis include Austria, Australia, the United States (yes! true!), South Africa, Somalia, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Germany, Greece, Italy, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Costa Rica, and Taiwan.

*continued on page 50*

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Jess Hawk Oakenstar's song "Gold in the Tapestry" (from the album *Leave a Little Light Behind*) can be heard on the soundsheet in this issue. She hopes for an April 1994 release date for her second album. To contact her, write c/o Hallows Records, 1826 E. Willetta, Phoenix, AZ 85006.

# A FAMILY OF FRIENDS

By Sue Fink, Jamie Anderson, and Dakota

A *Family of Friends*, the brisk-selling sampler album of women's music that was released last April, proves a basic tenet of feminism: Much can be accomplished through cooperation. Producers Jamie Anderson, Dakota, and Sue Fink set out to make an album of music that would be made in the best spirit of the woman-identified culture: with joy and without competition.

As Sue recalls: "I was lying on my little bunk at the 1992 Gulf Coast Women's Festival with my girlfriend Jane [Emmer], when Jamie plopped herself down and said, 'Do you want to hear my new idea?' We were a captive audience. She was sitting on us. 'Sure,' we said.

"Dakota and I want to put out a sampler album of different women's music artists. Would you want to put a cut on it?"

"Jamie says I got that crazy look in my eye," says Sue. "The next thing I knew, I wasn't just putting a cut on the CD, I was co-producing the project. I was excited to work with Jamie and Dakota because I knew that they shared my views on building the two C's—cooperation and community—and that they brought with them a gift I sorely lack: organizational skills."

They hoped the idea would be good for everyone involved in the project. It was a great way for each artist to expose her music to a wider audience. Suppose fans of the Millingtons bought a copy of *Family* to hear June and Jean's new song, and then got to hear and like the music of Pam Hall? If a listener liked the cut by Venus Envy, might she not then want to hear their *Homo* Christmas album, or any of the group members' individual projects? [Laura Love and Lisa Koch have each made solo albums.] And on and on; it was hoped that the project would increase album sales and concert attendance for everyone on the sampler.

The project organizers say they didn't need to advertise for artists—word spread like wildfire. They knew they couldn't possibly include everyone. "Jokingly, we talked about putting out a set of CDs: *The Complete Works of Women's Music, Volumes 1-100*, but we realized that we had to narrow it down to just a few artists," says Jamie. "We did our best to

## A FAMILY OF FRIENDS Women's Music Sampler

- Jamie Anderson: "At Karen's House"
- Mimi Baczewska: "Carry Me"
- Laura Berkson: "Heartland"
- Alix Dobkin: "My Kind of Girl"
- Venus Envy: "Myth in Genesis"
- Sue Fink: "The Kind of Woman I Am"
- Mimi Fox: "On My Way"
- Pam Hall: "Linda"
- Diane Lindsay: "All Over Me"
- June and Jean Millington: "Family (World of Love)"
- OneSpirit: "Happy Life" (Kay Gardner/Nurudafina Pili Abena)
- Yer Girlfriend: "The Lez-B-Bop"
- 18 Voices: "A Family of Friends"

make choices that represent the diversity and quality of today's women's music."

During one of their earliest brainstorming phone conversations, Sue suggested that a group song be recorded, one that would include many women's music artists and serve as a "We Are The World"-type song for women's music. Jamie and Dakota liked the idea.

They decided to have a meeting at Sue and Jane's cabin, so in August the four went to the Russian River area in northern California. They went canoeing, enjoyed dinner out, drank good coffee, reviewed the tapes that artists had submitted, and talked, talked, talked about the project.

"One night, our dinner plans took us to the Institute for the Musical Arts (IMA), run by June Millington and Ann Hackler," says Jamie. "After the meal, Sue was determined to get this little party to co-write 'A Family of Friends,' a song she thought would be a great title cut for the compilation. Seated around the big kitchen table, Sue whipped out a pad of paper and we started the song." (No one seemed interested in writing a serious song at first, so Jamie and Sue warmed up the group by writing the lyrics for a tragic breakup number: "Keep the frame, toss the photo/ You keep Fluffy, I'll take Toto....")

From there, Sue moved to the piano and started playing the melody and lyrics that had been floating around in her head for a week:

*Let us be your family,  
Let us take you in  
Let us be your family,  
A family of friends*

Hearing those words reminded Jamie of meeting a woman a couple of weeks previously who had been disowned by her family when she came out to them. Jamie became inspired. "How about starting the verse with 'You always thought your mother knew...?'"

June recalled an article she'd just read about a gay couple in San Francisco who thought they'd achieved their version of the American Dream: owning and restoring their own Victorian. Then one was taken by AIDS, and the other was left alone, sick and waiting his turn. The image worked its way into the second verse.

Sue was right there with the melody, and soon they were all finishing sentences for each other. "Our ideas intertwined in a way that made it difficult to distinguish who wrote what line," recalls Jamie. "We worked late into the night. June was just waking up and was ready to record the song. The rest of us, however, were not on her nocturnal schedule. We all agreed to come back at Thanksgiving and have a great celebration together. We wanted to invite other artists and record the song at IMA over the long weekend."

Back home, Dakota and Jamie worked on the contractual and organizational side of the project. Jamie and Sue contacted the artists, talked about the details of the project, and made sure deadlines were met. Dakota talked with the studio that would sequence the songs, and to the manufacturer that would actually make the CDs and tapes. Jamie and Dakota found an artist in Tucson [Georgie Quinn] to paint the cover. They made plans with the graphic designers.

Sue took over the production of the title song, contacting artists and scheduling time with June to engineer the project. It was decided that the performer and songwriter royalties of the title song should be donated to organizations that



Jorjet Harper

**"This," says Sue Fink, "was the women's music community I had always wanted to be a part of creating."**

build community and help to fight the so-called "family values" coalition. The producers were delighted at the overwhelming response, and impressed by the generosity displayed by women's music performers as they donated time and talent.

Thanksgiving weekend came. "We had a food orgy on Thanksgiving day at IMA with June and Jean's family," Sue says. "We had a great time, but were all anticipating the big job ahead of us. We recorded the instrumental tracks the next day. We wanted a live-but-simple quality to the arrangement. We decided against stops and starts and extensive overdubs." Against tradition, they recorded bass [Jean Millington] and piano [Mary Watkins and Sue] at the same time.

"We picked our favorite run-through of the four times we played it, and then overdubbed Barbara Borden's drums. This way, we avoided leakage and allowed for freedom of melodic rubato. This decision made Barbara's job much more of a challenge, though, since she had to play to a fluctuating tempo. Finally, Mary added a stirring string synthesizer part over the top of everything."

June adds, "Although I was skeptical about Sue and Mary playing simultaneously, we needed to save tracks, so I agreed it should be tried. To my surprise, it worked beautifully. Talk about kindred spirits at work. I'd always insisted Sue should play the main part—much to her distress and my amusement, as she doesn't consider herself a 'real' keyboardist—since it was her 'feel' that had created the song."

After a day off, they were ready for the vocals. The mood in the room was festive as it filled with performers who usually only see each other at festivals. Hugs, laughter, and excitement charged the air.

"When I woke up in the morning—

well, okay, it was around noon—all the vocalists had arrived," says June. "There was great merriment around the piano. What luck to have those wonderful sounds lift me from sleep! There were so many singers that chairs were set up, almost like an IMA workshop, and the video cameras were rolling, as usual. The joy had a Christmas-morning quality to it. It was the happiness of a family gathering."

"Looking at everyone's faces, I wondered if it was a dream," Jamie recalls. "Margie Adam, Deidre McCalla, Sue, Robin Flower, and several others whom I'd been seeing in concert for several years were all in the same room with me. And I was going to work with them! 'Thrilled' doesn't even begin to describe it. The singers gathered choir-like around the piano while Sue taught the song. We worked on the choral parts, and many of



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**"Looking at everyone's faces, I wondered if it was a dream," recalls Jamie Anderson.**

the singers added creative ideas, especially Libby McLaren, June, and Margie. Sharon Washington was adamant about ending the song with the word 'family.'"

The group recorded the choral parts first, with Sue as conductor. "I was conducting the ultimate choir," says Sue, who was a founder and conductor of the Los Angeles Women's Community Chorus for ten years. "What ecstasy to have Margie, June and Jean, Helen Hooke, Deidre, Jamie, Sharon, Robin, Libby, Monica Grant, Jane, Dakota, and Teresa Chandler in the same room, standing in a circle around the microphone. Each woman brought a sense of integrity and sincerity to the music that can still make me cry. It was our voices combining together that said we are family—more so than any lyrics could describe. This," Sue says, "was the women's music community I had always wanted to be a part of creating."

They worked for hours, reminding each other of their motto: "We can do that better." Their sound tightened and warmed. The voices were ultimately triple-tracked; what is heard on the final recording is actually three different recordings of the same choir. (This gave the small ensemble a fuller sound.) June ran back and forth, engineering and singing. Dakota took over the board when June found she couldn't be in two places at once.

"Gradually all of us became a cohesive unit, singing as one," says June. "It was as if angels floated all around, circling, encouraging, and even singing along. Even discussing changing words—a point of potential conflict and ego flare-up—was resolved by good-natured consensus. If I didn't have a video to prove it, I'd think I was dreaming." A figure of a goddess from Bali, whose job it is to bring blessings to one's house, was brought to hang above the mic at IMA in the middle of the circle where everyone was to sing; the little icon is there to this day.

"After a great dinner, we each took turns singing our solo lines," says Sue. "The pressure of having our peers listening and watching while we recorded was diminished by the supportive atmosphere. Our last job was to add the solo overdubs at the end of the song. We improvised as a group, and by that time our ideas flowed like we had been working together for months."

After that amazing day, other artists were added. Cris Williamson and Tret Fure recorded their parts to a tape that June sent them. Lyn Vidal and Susan Herick came up to IMA and recorded their parts later.

Sue and Jane went up to IMA over New Year's to mix the song. "June was at her finest," Sue remembers. "Her studio at  
*continued on page 50*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**"It was as if angels floated all around, circling, encouraging, and even singing along," says June Millington.**

# HELLO, WORLD MEDIA, IT'S DR. ALLEN CALLING

**FROM MIMEO TO SATELLITE TELECOMMUNICATIONS: DONNA ALLEN TAKES HER MESSAGE TO THE GLOBAL WOMEN'S COMMUNITY**

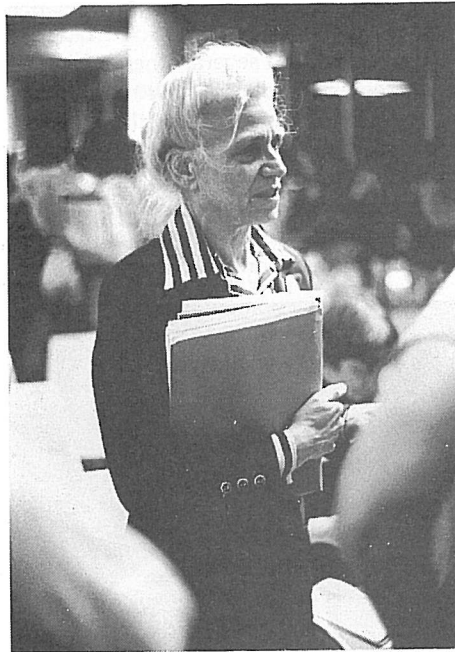
By Toni Armstrong Jr.

*Dr. Donna Allen is a labor economist, historian, publisher, editor, theorist, and activist (civil rights, civil liberties, new politics, peace, and women's movements). She has been involved with radical feminist media action since the 1960s, when she participated in the first televised feminist street action: the 1968 protest against the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City. She founded the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press in 1972, and immediately launched the monthly 'Media Report to Women,' editing and indexing it for fifteen years. Her books include 'Fringe Benefits: Wages or Social Obligation?' (1969), 'Communication at the Crossroads: The Gender Gap Connection' (1989), and 'Media and Democracy: Why We Don't Have National Health Insurance' (1992).*

*Never one to rest on her laurels, the seventy-three-year-old skipper of the S.S. Women's Media is busy preparing for the United Nations Fourth World Conference for Women (which is scheduled to be held in Beijing, China, in September 1995) and the Non-Governmental Organizations Women's Forum '95, which will be held simultaneously. She is scheming about broadcasting a live women's music concert to the world via satellite as part of the festivities.*

*The first installment of this two-part article appeared in the January 1993 issue; it looked at the early life and times of this remarkable heroine—up to the important shift that occurred in her thinking in 1968. Those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it; it behooves the many young activists of today to hear about the herstory of the last fifty years from someone who helped to influence it in our favor.*

Donna's first introduction to blatant sexism came when she became aware of discrimination after college in the 1940s. "In college and graduate school things weren't so bad," she recalls, although even there she experienced one glaring episode.



**"While we may have frightened white male media with our progress these past two decades, their sensitivity to our progress (and their backlash) tell us we were on the right track in our recognition of media as key to women's progress," says Donna Allen.**

"I completed my graduate class work and passed the comprehensives, but I had to take them twice due to discrimination," she recalls. "I was told they failed me the first time not on merit but because 'you have so many domestic responsibilities with a husband and several children.' When I protested that was totally irrelevant, I was told to take the comprehensives again." (She did, without doing any further studying, and passed.)

Over the years as an activist, she encountered sexism in the civil rights and anti-war movements as well. "The women in the peace movement really did outnumber the men in the '60s, but men, of course, held all the top positions, and were always the speakers," she says. "The women had to form their own women's organizations, such as Women's Strike for Peace."

With each passing decade, she ob-

served increasing evidence that part of the problem was the media feeding the public a steady diet of misinformation about women, as well as about the Vietnam War. "It became clear that if we were to change anything, we would have to do something about the media," she says. "People don't realize the extent to which they can communicate is the extent to which they participate, and therefore influence decisions. When I began to realize that the media was playing this awful pro-war role, I realized the only answer was for us to communicate."

"Since we don't own mass media, and we don't have very many ways of communicating [to the masses], we had to use every possible way that we did have—whether it was demonstrations, mimeograph machines, or whatever."

Donna—in the early stages of becoming the mediamaniac she is today—helped organize the women's liberation movement in the Washington, D.C., area in the '60s. She participated in that era's first major women's movement public demonstration to make it onto national TV: the Miss American Pageant protest in Atlantic City on September 7, 1968. During that time, she also wrote several major pieces on the media and the women's movement, some of which were published in radical women's journals (such as *No More Fun and Games*).

"By the end of the '60s, I was pretty well convinced that it was through the media that we were being oppressed, repressed, suppressed, and otherwise held down by men—because they owned the only means of reaching the majority of the public. And what they said about us—well, people didn't know it wasn't true, since we couldn't reach those people to tell them anything different," says Donna. "We needed to do something to increase the communication among women."

Donna feels the whole women's movement itself was the beginning of communication among women. She recalls that when the first consciousness-raising groups got together in the mid 1960s, "What? You feel that way, too? I thought I

was the only one!" was a commonly expressed sentiment.

"We got together and began to raise Cain through demonstrations like the one at Atlantic City against the Miss America contest. I was there in my high heels and my hair on the top of my head, parading back and forth. We didn't burn any bras, but we did throw false eyelashes and such things in the trash can," she says with a smile.

"We gradually started newspapers and every form of communication we could, and eventually it *had* to be recognized by the mass media. Atlantic City was the first time they recognized it; people were doing things before, but it didn't reach everybody because the mass media just ignored it. But in Atlantic City we *went where the cameras were*. We knew that with all that female flesh, the men's cameras would be there. So we went there to let the world know that there was a women's movement. It was an important step."

## I AM WOMAN, HEAR ME ROAR

Donna, who today travels regularly to various countries to speak on women and media topics, has decades of public speaking behind her. She testified in September 1972 before the U.S. Senate Committee to get more women members on the council to make decisions about the then-new cable system. "I organized support among some thirty D.C. women's organizations and led a delegation to the White House asking that more women be appointed, and explaining why they should be," she recalls. "We did succeed in getting two more women in the next vacancies [in 1973], and I testified again in the Senate in June of that year."

Donna found other women with similar feelings in 1972, and together they founded the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFPP). "First we started *Media Report to Women*. It was monthly magazine to women—not for or about—because we wanted the communication started among women," she says.

From the home-printed abolitionist handbills of the 1800s to the radical 'zines of today, women in every decade have been familiar with the do-it-yourself method of getting the feminist word out. *Media Report* was cast in this mold. "The first two years were just mimeographed," says Donna. "We had a good enough response to print it, but then we had to charge for it. We had no money, so we just put it out for whatever money people would give us through subscriptions. In

fact, in all of the fifteen or twenty years we've been working in the Women's Institute, nobody has ever gotten a penny of pay for anything. The subscription money did, however, cover the rent on the house where I had an office, and paid for the printing and postage. We always did the paste-up and typesetting ourselves."

Donna's daughter, Martha Leslie Allen, moved to D.C. from Memphis to help her mom put out an index and a directory. The annual *Index/Directory of Women's Media* ultimately included 150 categories (the most abundant of which was film). Individual recordings made by women were listed in the early directories.

"Of course, pretty soon there were so many recordings that we couldn't do that, so we started only listing groups," Donna says. "We were so delighted that there were records being made by women—some being made by all women. In fact, my daughter Indra made a record called *Loner*, and my other daughter Dana helped her get it recorded. That was a good example of a women's activity, so we had a story on it when it came out."

They did the *Index* for fifteen years, until Sheila Gibbons and her husband took over publishing *Media Report to Women* in September 1987. "I indexed all of 1987, including their last two 1987 issues, but they weren't interested in continuing with the index. The National Council for Research on Women finally took the project over."

Donna was one of the few people who took seriously the early careers of women who gave birth to what we now know as the women's music and culture industry. "I didn't know any 'women's music' except Ronnie Gilbert from the Weavers—and Indy, of course!—because women's music as we know it today hadn't yet gotten off the ground. But I remember I couldn't quit listening to [the anthology record] *Virgo Rising* when it came out," Donna recalls. "Eventually, as we all know, there was a lot of groundbreaking work done by musical women in the 1970s. To this day, I remember Malvina Reynolds' song 'We Don't Need The Men,' as well as the early work of Holly Near, Willie Tyson, Casse Culver, Kristin Lems, and Margie Adam. Meg Christian lived in D.C. in the mid '70s, and she and Indy got together a few times. I can't forget Amy Horowitz and [the organization] Roadwork when it first began—what a piece of history *that* made. Later, I was enchanted with Sweet Honey in the Rock. But," she says with a laugh, "I confess I probably listened to Indra's *Loner* album most of all."

Donna feels music is an especially

good tool to facilitate communication. "It's a language for women who don't even share the same written language," she says. "Even those who can't read and write at all can communicate by music. It's universal; it's probably the best means of communication there can be between women. Sure, women can shoot films with a porta-pac nowadays, but that is such a complicated thing. Music just goes wherever women can get together. Of course, *that* raises questions of how the women are going to get together to hear it," she stresses.

"The distribution issue is the main problem that hurts communication among any people—but especially among women—because it's so costly to have a distribution system. That's one of the things we were most concerned about, and we always looked for ways to bring it up in the *Media Report*. First you have to make a recording, then you've got to distribute it—you have to advertise, organize groups to tell people it exists, get the word out. This is one of the things that *Paid My Dues* and now *HOT WIRE* have been so good at."

Donna encourages each of us to support distribution systems controlled by women—record distributors such as Goldenrod and Ladyslipper; publishers such as Naiad, Kitchen Table, Spinsters Ink, and Firebrand; and all of the publications that are specifically by, for, and about women.

"*HOT WIRE* is absolutely essential to solving this problem of the distribution system," says Donna. "If people don't know there's all this great music, all these ideas being communicated, and all this solidarity and love and support, then what good is it? Magazines and newsletters are effective because they can go through the mail, and from hand to hand. People can send for things. Women can communicate, and it's very important for men and women—the whole world—to hear us. I don't object to men saying what they want, but they should not have a monopoly on the *means of distributing* what they say. They should not be the only ones to own all the networks and other ways of distributing information. We should be as much entitled as they are under the First Amendment. What good does freedom of the press do you if nobody can hear you?"

Of course, since the 1970s, women *have* been making themselves heard—especially about issues that relate to women's roles in society. We've been so effective, in fact, that there's been an organized, sustained backlash against feminism and feminists.

Donna finished reading Susan Faludi's book *Backlash: the Undeclared War*

*Against American Women* at about the same time she finished sorting and labeling the first twenty years of material collected by WIFP. (The material—which includes priceless correspondence from women who have passed on, such as Barbara Deming and Eleanor Perry—is now archived at the National Women and Media Collection, University of Missouri School of Journalism, Western Historical Manuscript Collection, 23 Ellis Library, Columbia, MO 65201.)

Donna is aware of—and undaunted by—the backlash documented by Susan Faludi. After sifting through twenty years' worth of accumulated material, she felt moved to write to her associates at WIFP. "As I read through the letters telling about the [media] work you did during these last two decades, I realized that *you* were the ones who had caused the media such a terrible fight that they had to backlash!" she wrote. "Of course, it wasn't you alone, but you were clearly leaders in the movement to use media—both theirs and our own—to advance women...While we may have frightened white male media with our progress these past two decades, their sensitivity to our progress (and their backlash) tell us we were on the right track in our recognition of media as key to women's movement progress."

## SO MANY YEARS, SO LITTLE MONEY

Why has Donna chosen to dedicate so many years and so much effort and money to this work in exchange for so little tangible reward? "I certainly don't do it for the compensation, because there is none," she says. "Fame...well, there's a little of that. And there is sometimes—though never enough—praise for what you've put into it. Every little five words you get are worth their weight in gold. The main reason I did all this so-called work—though it's not really *work*, because when you're doing something you want to do it's not work—is because I wanted to do the right thing. I could have been out earning a lot of money, but what do I want with money? I'd probably just have given it away to the people doing this work. I thought doing the work could be worth more than money because I might be able to do something that someone else couldn't do," Donna says.

"I always had enough money. I mean, I grew up in the Depression and wore one dress all winter in '33 or '34, but that was no special thing. Overall, I've had enough to eat and all the things that are necessary,

as well as many things that aren't necessary," she says. "Just like with many women's groups today, even though I didn't have any money to start out with, it didn't matter; I went ahead and did it anyway, because the work had to be done. I figured whatever came could go into this work, and we would do as much as we had money for."

Despite the important groundbreaking work that WIFP was doing, financing was always hard to come by. The only grant money that came its way was from two donations given by the Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs. "They gave us \$3,000 one year to expand the circulation of the *Media Report* and the *Index/Directory*, and \$2,000 the next year," says Donna. "Both times it was volunteered by them. I asked a few people for grants but had no luck, so I decided I'd rather do the work and just let people decide to give money on the basis of believing it should be done. I think you [at *HOT WIRE*] know what I mean, or you would not be doing what you're doing. You're going ahead with *HOT WIRE* because you can't *not* go ahead. It's the same thing—I couldn't have done anything different from what I did."



Donna with daughter/coworker/conspirator Martha Leslie Allen in 1983.

## THE '90s: ON TO BEIJING

Donna has continued to be a feminist powerhouse this decade. She writes articles, works on books for future publication, and has been doing public speaking engagements in various countries around the world.

She was a media panel speaker in Montreal at the First World Summit in

1990 called *Women and the Many Dimensions of Power*, attended by people from forty countries. She spoke on censorship and women/media topics in France and Spain in April 1991. Then it was on to the Philippines in May for the International Conference on Women, Media, and Advertising—a gathering attended by eighty media women delegates.

In July 1992, she was a media panelist at the dedication of the National Civil Rights Museum on the site of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis [where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated]. In August 1992, she was a citizen-ambassador delegate to Russia and Eastern European countries as part of a People to People International special media delegation.

Her opinions are also prized by the arts community. She was a judge last year for the National Association of Broadcasters' Crystal Radio Awards [given to stations in the U.S. who serve their local communities]. And she is a regular columnist for the still-going *Media Report to Women*, now published quarterly by Communications Research Associates, Inc.

Donna's latest WIFP project has global implications. The Women's Media Project for Beijing '95 will connect women's organizations interested in multimedia reporting of the United Nations Fourth World Conference for Women: Action for Equality, Development, and Peace. This gathering is scheduled to be held in Beijing, China, September 4-15, 1995. The Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Women's Forum '95 will be held simultaneously. The aim of the NGO forum is to focus on the implementation of the "Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" adopted by the 1985 UN Conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

The Women's Media Project for Beijing '95 envisions a global network consisting of both individual media women and women's media organizations.

*continued on page 62*

**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Toni Armstrong Jr. keeps a quote from Donna Allen on the wall near her desk: "I could have been out earning a lot of money, but what do I want with money? I'd probably just have given it away to the people doing this work." She likes to imagine her life and Donna's as one continuous piece of work, beginning with Donna's birth in 1920 and going through at least 2020. She vows to Donna she'll keep an eye out for the young women, as yet unborn, who will carry on our work to the end of the twenty-first century.

## FEMINIST ROCK from 19

to the "new" movement of women who rock hard, predictably there is one element that's consistently overlooked: the lesbian rock bands. Tribe 8, Girls in the Nose, Cunts With Attitude, and Fifth Column, although they're all skilled bands, all have recordings, and all tour regularly, are never mentioned. Is it lesbian invisibility? Or perhaps a group of strong, hard-rocking women singing open and explicit songs about lesbian life is just too much of a challenge to the order of things, even when contemplating "alternative" music?

Dyke-core may be the most revolutionary thing happening in women's music and rock music today. Rock has the consciousness-raising potential that folk music had in the '60s and early '70s. In these strange times of "lesbian chic," there is no reason for the music media to continue to ignore dyke-core.

In the three years Tribe 8 has been together, they've gained notoriety both for the throngs of topless dykes slam dancing at their shows and their "take no shit" attitude when dealing with the occasional homophobic heckler.

How does Tribe 8 fit into the women's music subculture?

"Actually, I don't think there's anything like us," says bassist Mahia Kobayashi. "The lesbian music I know of is kinda folksy—I think we're totally different."

Guitarist Leslie Mah says, "My feelings are that we're not exactly embraced by the existing lesbian musical culture. I think that in the history of women in rock, most of the women involved have been bisexual or dykes, but not necessarily out. We're just being ourselves instead of pandering to a heterosexual audience. There are a lot of rock bands that are all dykes but don't particularly want to become spokespeople."

The band members identify with the word "feminist," though they acknowledge it's difficult to get a definitive explanation of what the term means today.

"There's a big backlash against the word *feminism*," says Tribe 8 singer Lynn Breedlove. "A lot of people don't like the last generation of feminists—their tactics, like bra burning or whatever it was in the '60s. But feminism has been an ongoing revolution for hundreds of years, and every generation has a new brand and new way to fight the fight. I don't think feminism is ever going to die out. It might get a different name, but until we get equality, until we get some power, feminism is not a bad thing."

Tribe 8 is reaching a wide variety of audiences. About their summer 1993 tour, Leslie said, "We've played rocker dude clubs; we've played parks with all these twelve-year-old kids; we've played shows where there was a surprising handful of middle-aged hippie

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Northampton, MA • Womancrafts Inc, Provincetown, RI • Mother Kail's, Eugene, OR • The Dwelling Place, Lewisburg, PA • Giovanni's, Philadelphia, PA

lesbians. It's cool because we're one of the few bands that can play the punk venues, the clubs, and the queer scene. It's great to be able to play a punk show and fill it with all this queer energy, then go to a disco queer club and make a lot of live musical noisy mush."

•••••

It's not so much that these women rock musicians are playing loud, crass, decidedly "unfeminine" music that has such social import—after all, women have been playing rock music since its origins. Rather, it's the clear and distinct *feminist mentality* that pervades the music these women are creating. From 7 Year Bitch's anti-violence anthem "Dead Men Don't Rape" to Girls in the Nose's "More Madonna, Less Jesus," women are not only treading the waters of male domain, they are changing it—changing rock music and all it's stood for, and using it to empower themselves.

Now rock music, with its unquestion-

able influence on popular culture and mores, is being injected with heavy doses of estrogen, thanks to all the women claiming control of this medium.

"One can hardly blame female rock stars for feeling vexed with a movement that apparently seeks to alienate," says Kim France. "Women outside the Riot Grrrl camp have complained of a with-us-or-against-us attitude that they find off-putting and sanctimonious. But no one disagrees that, at a time when such strong female musicians as Polly Harvey and Juliana Hatfield vehemently *deny* that they are feminists, it is important that there are young women who will just as vehemently assert that they are."

As women's music enters its third generation, it continues to be firmly rooted in the "revolution womon-style now" sentiment. For the next decade, we'll be watching this coexist side-by-side with "revolution grrrl-style now."

This is the new wave of the revolution. •

## OLIVIA from page 26

twisted rope of rainbow balloons hung over the staircase, and the main floor was devoted to the stage and a large dance floor. I met up with Lin Daniels and our artist-manager/sound-tech pal Haley, and I thoroughly enjoyed the evening of fabulous fun, meeting friends and reminiscing. (I even ran into Shelley, an ex-girlfriend from college.)

The evening's entertainment was none other than Linda Tillery and Her Skin Tight Band. Crack musicians, all: Ellen Seeling (horns), Jean Fineberg (sax), Joy Julks (bass), Nancy Wenstrom (electric guitar), and Maria Martinez (drums). That night, Bonnie Hayes played keyboards, instead of Julie Homi, who usually tickles the electronic ivories in this ensemble. The almighty trio Linda Tillery, Vicki Randle, and Teresa Trull provided the vocals.

The band's specialty is Motown classics, Aretha Franklin hits, and other well-known R&B cover tunes, spiced with ample measures of humor. (During "My Girl," Teresa fell to floor in adoration at Linda's feet, and Vicki had to "help her up.") During the Phoebe Snow song "Shaky Ground," the crowd did the Electric Slide line dance, and Nancy played a particularly hot guitar solo during "Old Time Rock and Roll." I see more

Westenhofer also made brief appearances. ("It's my first time to San Francisco. What are the straight people doing here?" whined Suzanne. "I thought it would just be us!")

The slide show from Friday night's concert was projected continuously throughout the evening. The images were a combination of old and contemporary photos from the Olivia music and travel archives. Some of the photos dated back two decades—'70s hairstyles, groovy clothing. More recent ones showed women smiling and basking on the decks of Olivia cruise ships.

Lin and I lounged at a small table near the elevator, leafed through the most recent issue of the local gay newspaper, the *Bay Times*, and watched the slides play through a few times. As we watched the images, we reminisced about our own last twenty years—a long, hard, exuberant journey—of commitment to the advancement of lesbian feminist culture. Just as Vicki Randle was singing "Chain of Fools" on the stage, a slide of a very young Vicki flashed on the wall. We pondered how special this weekend must be for Linda, Teresa, and Vicki, who have been working together with Olivia and with each other for the last twenty years of their lives. What mix of emotions must they be feeling on this milestone anniversary?

out the Olivia travel table in the lobby and browse through the cruise videos, brochures, catalogs, and flyers. BACW had a membership table, and a flower booth where they were selling boutonnières. Catered food tables lined the second floor, and photographers set up shop on the third floor, taking portraits of lesbians resplendent in their finery.

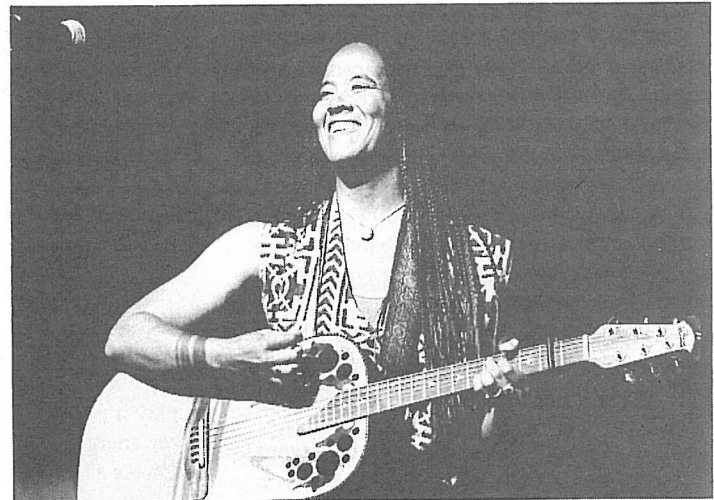
At midnight, as the band played "Respect," a huge bag of rainbow-colored balloons was opened from the ceiling, showering us all New Year's Eve-style. This (appropriately) marked the official beginning of Gay Pride Day—for many, the emotional beginning of a new year.

## SUNDAY GAY PRIDE, THE OLIVIA WAY

On Sunday morning, my old pal, musician Gayle Marie, met me at Jan Martinelli's house (where I was staying for the week) and helped me figure out how to take the BART train from Oakland to San Francisco for the Gay Pride Parade. During the pleasant ride (with the hundreds of other people on their way to the parade), we caught up on each other's lives and loves, discussing her musical career and my work



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Teresa Trull (left), who performed with Bonnie Hayes at the concert and with Linda Tillery's Skin Tight Motown revue band, is currently recording another album of upbeat songs. She (and the U Bet U Dancers) concluded her concert set with a rowdy rendition of "Could It Hurt," which she wrote for the film *Claire of the Moon*. Deidre McCalla (right) sang from her album *Everyday Heroes and Heroines*, and had Linda Tillery and Dianne Davidson join her for "Girl You Don't Know."

than 100 performances a year, and nobody can tear down the house like Linda Tillery and Her Skin Tight Band.

Speaking of skin tight...Vicki Randle looked spectacular, as always, in her short, tight skirt. With her gorgeous hair and muscular arms, Vicki proves that women can look physically strong and super sexy without having to resort to objectification.

Comics Karen Williams and Suzanne

Throughout the evening, when the band wasn't playing, DJ Denise Dunné provided taped music, including danceable cuts by Madonna, the Pointer Sisters, Michael Jackson, and Annie Lennox. And what a beautiful sight: a sea of lesbian couples two-stepping to k.d. lang. (Dance instructors Donna E and Maile & Marina would have been proud.)

Between sets, guests could also check

with *HOT WIRE*. We arrived in San Francisco with the throngs of other revelers and went our separate ways to meet friends.

I was supposed to meet up with Lin, but was running late and couldn't find her—or the Olivia float—in the mass of people. The streets were packed; the local mainstream media estimated a crowd of 400,000 that day (twenty-five percent more than the national media's March on Washington esti-



## JUDY'S SPEECH *continued from page 26*

Tillery, Lucie Blue, Deidre McCalla, Dianne Davidson, Tret Fure, Nancy Vogl, Kate Clinton, Karen Williams, Marga Gomez, Suzanne Westenhoefer, JoAnn Loulan, and all the other women and gay men who came out of the closet to help create visibility so that our lives could change through our own liberation movement.

Now Bill and Hillary and Martina have done more than any leaders in history to help create visibility for lesbians and gays.

*Newsweek*, *New York* magazine, *20/20*, and major TV sitcoms have all begun to portray lesbians in an entirely new way. And the most important factor is that we are coming out in record numbers. One million in D.C. marched with great strength and pride for civil rights. And the word "lesbian" has crossed the lips of every United States senator as they confirmed Roberta Achtenberg. Amazing times, don't you think?

Do not for one minute underestimate the part we all have played in changing the world. For we are the ones who first opened the closet doors as lesbians and feminists. We are the ones who created the bridge—by seeing the immense possibility of our own lives. And so, when we applaud this past year's accomplishments, we must applaud the immense task we all took on—and the extraordinary results created by the first generation to rise up en masse and change the world forever for women and lesbians and gays.

So, as we celebrate Olivia's twentieth anniversary tonight, we on stage do so to honor you as well as this little record company and her incredible artists, who stood way out there on the limb creating the path for those who are coming out today.

We are a family that has come of age, and through our strength and determination we have begun to change the consciousness of this world.

In closing, I want to thank you for making the last twenty years one hell of an amazing experience for all of us. And thank you for supporting this institution as we look forward to the next twenty years. •

Olivia celebrities, executives, and office staff. The upbeat music blaring from the float elicited enthusiastic responses all along the mile-and-a-half parade route. Occasionally, one of the performers would grab a mic, climb to the top deck, and sing along with the recorded music for the crowds lined up eight people deep on both sides of the street. Musical selections included "Sailing Away," "Keep On," "Everyday Heroes and Heroines," "Built for Comfort," "Every Woman," and "Come Go With Me." As the blue and white float-boat passed, I hopped up to join the dozens of women trailing in its "wake."

At the end of the parade route, there was a rally that lasted several hours. Similar to women's festivals, the rally stage had many entertainers from a variety of musical genres. (I especially got a kick out of Elvis Herselvis.) The Olivia artists shared the stage for an hour.

The large field in front of the stage was filled with people, all milling, lounging, and dancing (among other things). It was San Francisco, after all, so there was more nudity than you find in most other towns—but for the most part, this crowd could have been transplanted from any other Pride celebration in the U.S.

The perimeter of the audience area was lined with crafts booths, where the traditional array of jewelry, clothing, flags, and pride merchandise was for sale. (By the way, SF Gay Pride has the best-ever market of rainbow merchandise.) Writer Laura Post took me to the Olivia booths, where many of the Olivia artists were congregated—one final exciting photo op, for those of us so inclined, before we headed home.

"The weekend was so much more than a concert or even a celebration—it was about remembering," says Judy. "Remembering these past twenty years in a special way—hearing and seeing in my mind all the wonderful concerts big and small; being in the recording studio with different artists; thinking of the really tough times, when being involved in the women's music business—from any normal business perspective—was crazy at best. Feeling again the sense of love and family...Our family has grown—and part of what was special for me was the profound sense of love and support that emanated from the audience and from the crowds at the parade."

Judy says she was deeply touched to have Linda Tillery and Mary Watkins perform together again, and having Linda and her band at the dance was a special treat. "I really missed Meg, though," she says. "Having the artists all sing 'The Road I Took to You' brought me right back to twenty years

*continued on page 62*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

mate of 300,000). I elbowed my way ("excuse me, excuse me, excuse me") to the curb—no easy feat—and settled in to take pictures.

For those familiar with San Francisco, the parade started (after assembling around the Civic Center) at Eighth and Market Streets, and went down Market Street to the Embarcadero. (The route was reversed this year due to construction.) The parade started, as is traditional, with hundreds of Dykes on Bikes, leading 255 other contin-

gents and more than two dozen major floats.

The Olivia entry (number fifty-one in the line-up), was designed by Laura Parker and resembled a cruise ship. "Laura does a lot of Olivia's design work," says Joelle, "from advertising to brochures to signage to T-shirts. The fabulous Mexico T-shirt is one of her original designs." The float was constructed in pieces so it can be taken apart, stored, and reassembled for the next event.

The ship had three "decks," filled with

# RE:INKING

## ON THE CASE WITH V.I. AND KINSEY

By Kate Brandt and Paula Lichtenberg

Chicago private investigator V.I. Warshawski has been kidnapped at gunpoint and beaten up by criminals several times. She was unconscious for six hours after her car crashed (the brake fluid had been drained); her back was burned when acid was thrown at her. Her face has been slashed with a knife; she's been shot at. She's been tied up and thrown into a polluted swamp, chased into icy Lake Michigan, and trapped in a burning building.

Kinsey Millhone, a private eye in Southern California, has been shot twice and abducted at gunpoint; injected with barbiturates; had her nose broken twice. She's been run off the road, totaling her car and ending up with a banged-up leg, whiplash, bruised ribs, and a head injury. Oh, yes, and then there was the time a package bomb exploded, resulting in temporary deafness, a mild concussion, bruises, burns, and shock.

Is this any way to earn a living?

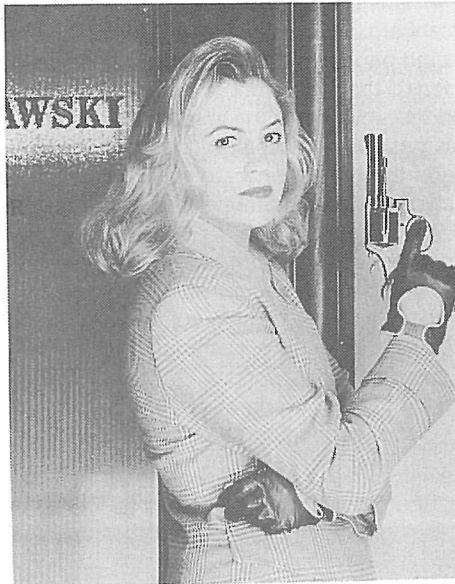
It is, if you ask the numerous fans of these two fictional detectives. Feminist readers have always been attracted to strong, independent, athletic characters in literature, so it's no surprise that V.I. and Kinsey—the creations of award-winning novelists Sara Paretsky and Sue Grafton, respectively—are so popular with women mystery lovers.

But are these two literary shamuses people you would actually want to *know*?

Even Lotty Herschel, V.I.'s close friend and doctor (and if V.I. doesn't have good medical insurance, she had better be on good terms with a physician!), admonishes her (in *Blood Shot*), "You seem to be in love with danger and death. You make life very hard for those who love you."

But that may be one of the things that readers like about V.I. and Kinsey: while we battle daily with the inequities and indignities of being women in a sexist society and a crumbling economy, we can't

**RE:INKING** articles deal with women's publishing and writing, including individual women, book projects, and related issues.



Kathleen Turner brought Sara Paretsky's detective to life in the 1991 movie *V.I. Warshawski*.

### V.I. WARSHAWSKI

Indemnity Only (1982)  
Deadlock (1984)  
Killing Orders (1985)  
Bitter Medicine (1987)  
Blood Shot (1988)  
Burn Marks (1990)  
Guardian Angel (1992)

*Sara Paretsky, Bantam Doubleday Dell Books,  
666 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10103.*

### KINSEY MILLHONE

A is for Alibi (1982)  
B is for Burglar (1985)  
C is for Corpse (1986)  
D is for Deadbeat (1987)  
E is for Evidence (1988)  
F is for Fugitive (1989)  
G is for Gumshoe (1990)  
H is for Homicide (1991)  
I is for Innocent (1992)  
J is for Judgment (1993)

*Sue Grafton, Fawcett Crest Books, 201 E. 50th  
St., New York, NY 10022.*

help but applaud these two feisty detectives for always putting the bad guy in his place. Sara Paretsky, who was in corporate management when she wrote the first three Warshawski books, points out in *The Armchair Detective* (summer 1991) that a private investigator can thumb her nose at authority—"V.I. was able to do things that I, of course, as a middle manager would be fired for saying or doing."

In many other ways, however, V.I. and Kinsey are just ordinary working girls like the rest of us. Their jobs keep them so busy that there's little time for housecleaning or cooking—not to mention relationships (both are divorced). They struggle to make ends meet on a modest income. They jog to keep in shape, unwind from the stresses of work, and avoid dieting. They have trouble fitting strictly social dates into their schedules—and usually resist doing so in any event, because they are so focused on work.

They are feminists, having had their independent sensibilities passed along to them in childhood. In *Indemnity Only*, V.I.'s mother tells her, "Any girl can be pretty—but to take care of yourself you must have brains. And you must have a job, a profession. You must work." And in *D is for Deadbeat*, the aunt who raised Kinsey advises her, "A woman should never, never, never be financially dependent on anyone, especially a man, because the minute you are dependent, you could be abused."

Although both characters are heterosexual, lesbians in particular can relate to V.I. and Kinsey, since they both find solace and roots in chosen families rather than biological ones. While many lesbians find themselves estranged from (or even disowned by) their birth families because of their homosexuality, V.I. and Kinsey are orphans, without brothers or sisters. V.I.'s mother died of cancer when she was a teenager; her father, a policeman, died from emphysema ten years later. Kinsey lost her parents in an automobile crash when she was five years old, and the aunt who raised her is also now dead.

So V.I. and Kinsey create their own families. For V.I., the older Dr. Lotty serves

as mother and comrade, patching up her confidence and her psyche as well as her injuries. She has two protective father figures: her late father's police protégé, Lt. Bobby Mallory, as well as her elderly neighbor Mr. Contreras. The lieutenant takes on the sterner aspects of the job, castigating V.I. for the risks she takes, and her neighbor assumes the nurturing ones—cooking meals and noting what time she comes in at night (and with whom).

For Kinsey, it is her landlord, the eighty-three-year-old crossword puzzle creator Henry Pitts, who acts as parent. Henry worries about Kinsey, gives her advice, and feeds her (he is a former commercial baker), as does local restaurant owner Rosie, who often decides what Kinsey is going to eat, whether she likes it or not (such as a green pepper salad in *B is for Burglar*: "I bet you been eating junk, right?...Here's what you gonna get.")

## IF THEY MET, COULD V.I. AND KINSEY BE FRIENDS?

V.I. and Kinsey have so much in common that one could see them being best friends and partners: going out for a morning jog together, solving cases as a team, unwinding with a big meal and a drink at Rosie's (or at the Belmont Diner or the Golden Glow Bar in Chicago). It's a scenario that makes fans of the two detectives swoon—but could it ever happen?

For starters, there's the problem of location. V.I. is Chicago born and bred, a diehard Cubs fan, as gritty as her Midwestern city, while Kinsey works out of Santa Teresa, a Southern California beach town. And although one would never describe Kinsey as "laid-back," she definitely has the personality of a woman who has never had to dig her car out of knee-high snow drifts.

It's as difficult to imagine Kinsey in Chicago with the Wabash el shaking her office window as it is to visualize the intense and urban V.I. jogging on the beach under palm trees. So where would they live?

And who would rent to them? Both have had their apartments destroyed as a result of their work. After her place was set afire, V.I. moved into a new building, where she met Mr. Contreras, who turned out to be the only neighbor who didn't want to have her evicted after her new apartment was broken into. And Henry, bless his heart, completely redesigned and rebuilt the converted garage in which

Kinsey lives after her enemies blew it up; would you move away from a landlord like that?

Even if they found a mutually compatible city, their approaches to their jobs differ. Kinsey, an ex-cop, is accustomed to dropping by the police station for help from her former colleagues. V.I., who was a lawyer before becoming a private eye, has an antagonistic relationship with the local police; this is due in no small part to her surrogate father Bobby, who works there and often expresses his opinion that she should leave her unladylike line of work and do something more feminine (like marry and have children).

Still, the ties between V.I. and Bobby are strong, almost blood ties, and that's another reason why V.I. and Kinsey might be at odds if they tried to work together. V.I. has a strong sense of family. She adored her mother, Gabriella, an Italian opera lover and singer in her native country, and her Polish-American father, police sergeant Tony; she speaks of them often. V.I. also has relatives in the Chicago area, and while she has little in common with them, and they share Bobby's disdain for her work (although it doesn't stop them from involving her in cases to solve their problems), V.I. still recognizes and respects their relationship to her.

Kinsey, on the other hand, is an orphan by temperament as well as by circumstance. Having lost her parents at such a young age, she admits to little connection with them. However, in *D is for Deadbeat* she acknowledges having been influenced by the unconventional aunt who raised her: "She'd taught me to shoot when I was eight. She'd refused to teach me to cook, as she felt it was boring and would only make me fat." And when Kinsey discovers in *J is for Judgment* that she in fact has aunts, uncles, and cousins living nearby who want to re-establish contact with her, she is more horrified than excited: "I could see in a flash what a strange pleasure I'd taken in being related to no one. I'd actually managed to feel superior about my isolation."

For Kinsey, this isolation frequently extends to her relationships with other women. With the exception of Vera Lipton (an insurance adjuster at the company where Kinsey used to be employed) and gruff restaurateur Rosie, Kinsey has no female friends, and even Vera and Rosie can hardly be classified as close confidantes—certainly not call-in-the-middle-of-the-night-and-cry buddies.

V.I.'s relationship with Lotty, on the other hand, is more intimate. The two

have been friends for twenty years, and V.I. definitely has shown up on Lotty's doorstep at all hours, even if it's usually to have a wound stitched up. Still, they know all aspects of each other's lives and feelings, and when their friendship is jeopardized in *Guardian Angel*, it is a potential loss that V.I. takes quite seriously.

Faithful readers would have a difficult time envisioning our two tough investigators sitting at the kitchen table together, schmoozing over a cup of coffee. (What, and take time away from a case?) And we certainly couldn't picture them chatting about their boyfriends. When it comes to romantic relationships, the word "commitment" is not in the vocabularies of these women. Whether because of a fear of abandonment caused by their parents' deaths, an aversion to having their independent lifestyles curtailed, or a lack of eligible men (who aren't threatened by strong women), neither V.I. nor Kinsey has had a sustained relationship throughout their respective series of books.

But both have "fallback" boyfriends—ex-lovers they can call for conversation or companionship or, more likely, contacts. Not surprisingly for these single-minded workaholics, their exes are men with whom they have professional as well as personal relationships. V.I. frequently calls newspaper reporter Murray Ryerson when she needs to know what his sources say about a case in which she is involved. But, as V.I. acknowledges in *Burn Marks*, "At times we've been friendly enough to be lovers, but both of us covering the same scene and having strong personalities makes it hard to avoid conflict."

Kinsey has a police contact in Jonah Robb, a Missing Persons lieutenant who was her lover during the "off" phases of his on-again, off-again marriage (until she finally decided in *J is for Judgment* that she had troubles enough, and removed herself from "the situation").

These two women—self-reliant loners with empty refrigerators, perfunctory love lives, and dangerous jobs—have become favorites of readers, especially women readers. Their exploits routinely make it to the best-seller lists. Maybe that's because when those lists are otherwise filled with

*continued on next page*

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**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** *Kate Brandt and Paula Lichtenberg met in 1988, whereupon Paula introduced Kate to mysteries by women. They have been together ever since, living in San Francisco and reading their favorites.*

## FAMILY OF FRIENDS *from 41*

that time was not computerized, but her mind was. We had sixteen tracks of complicated lines, overdubs, and solo and choral parts. Every inch of tape space had been filled; June records every possible idea to be edited later. While we mixed in the main room, Ann Hackler and her crew of volunteers (performers) were busy setting the table for the big New Year's Eve gala to be held that night." [IMA hosts an annual nonalcoholic dinner, dance, and show to ring in the New Year.]

For the finished product, they had to select the best versions, smooth the transitions, and mute unwanted parts. June, Sue, Jean, and Jane were all pushing sliders simultaneously until they hit the magic mix at around 4 a.m.

"As we drove home that morning and I held that tiny DAT in my hand," Sue says, "I knew I was holding one of the most important and loving statements that has come out of our women's community. If you listen closely, I hope you will hear and carry with you the spirit of community building, the fire of mutual respect, and the grounding sense of family that has been so much a part of the creation of this project. This is a sample of the possibilities our combined strength can create. To a world slow in recognizing the blessing of our lives together, we answer: 'None of us is alone, we are a family of friends.'"

For more information about 'A Family of Friends' or to request a free catalog: *Tsunami Records*, P.O. Box 42282, Tucson, AZ, 85733. (602) 325-7828. For more info about IMA: P.O. Box 374, Bodega, CA 94922. (707) 876-3004. •

**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** *Tsunami Records* is a lesbian-owned and operated recording company. In addition to 'A Family of Friends,' their catalog includes three solo albums by Jamie Anderson, as well as related merchandise. Besides running the company, Dakota repairs computers and Jamie twirls the baton. Sue Fink is a long-time contributor to women's music; she has two solo albums and performed the original version of 'Leaping (Lesbians)' on the historic late '70s 'Lesbian Concentrate' (*Olivia Records*) album. She often gets a wild look in her eye.

## JESS HAWK *from page 39*

The World Government International Residency Permit, which I have in my world passport, basically means that I can live anywhere in the world. They base this on Article 13(1) in the Universal Declara-

tion of Human Rights which says, "Everyone has the right of freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state." The World Government of World Citizens folks interpret this literally to mean that anyone can live anywhere because national boundaries are arbitrary barriers.

This discovery was fairly emotional for me—I'm thrilled to be a registered world citizen! I await developments in my U.S. residency application, but meanwhile I'm proudly carrying my world passport, on page eleven of which is my International Residence Permit.

Ah, home at last!

For further information about world citizenship, contact World Service Authority, 1012 14th NW, Continental Building #1106, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 638-2662, fax (202) 638-0638. •

## NEDRA JOHNSON *from 17*

Alice Walker, for example. The first time I saw her in person was at a book signing. She was sitting behind a desk, this big, strong woman. Beautiful. Peaceful. Powerful. The next time I saw her was also at a reading, and I got there before her. In walks this little woman—Alice Walker. I was in shock. She sat down and proceeded to fill the room the way she had the first time I saw her. I'd love to have that kind of presence.

Ntozake Shange's *Riding the Moon Over Texas* is a book of stories and poetry that she wrote with either a painting or a photograph as the inspiration. It's incredible what she came up with. My work is similar, in that it's very much a response to my inspiration. I don't go looking for poems to work with; the poems I choose are the ones that make me want to sing. And I think that learning about Ntozake Shange is as important as learning about Big Mama Thornton. I come from somewhere. It's important to me to know my roots. My song "Get It and Feel Good" is word-for-word Ntozake Shange's poem.

So in my gospel-tradition style, I have the gospel of Audre Lorde, the gospel of Pat Parker, of Ntozake Shange, of Alice Walker. Their works have been my Holy Scriptures.

I've been coming to terms with the idea that music is not a luxury, and I cannot imagine where I'd be without the work of Audre Lorde. And I cannot imagine where I'd be if I had chosen to remain silent myself. •

give the gift of HOT WIRE

## DETECTIVES *from page 49*

advice books on how to communicate with men or how to increase our efficiency so that we can "do it all"—not to mention the thrillers where the only female characters are corpses—we prefer to identify with the quick-witted Kinsey Millhone, who admits that her notion of setting an elegant table is to not leave the knife sticking out of the mayonnaise jar (*D is for Deadbeat*), or the determined V.I. Warshawski, who breaks into buildings but also leaves the breakfast dishes in the sink with last night's supper plates and those from a few other meals (*Killing Orders*).

And really, what are a few gunshots between friends? •

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in Bellingham

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# DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR

By Alison Bechdel

**171**

**WHAT REPLAY?**

© 1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

MALIKA, I'M GOING TO SMASH THAT FUCKING CAMCORDER! SHE'S GETTING REALLY CLOSE NOW!

YEAH, THIS IS RIGHT BEFORE THE BABY CROWNS.

OH MY GOD! WHAT AN INCREDIBLE SHOT!

OH, MAN! IT FEELS WEIRD! I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS IS REALLY GONNA WORK... AY!

MEANWHILE, OVER AT NATUREBORN...

MAKE SURE YOU'RE DEEP IN. HE NEEDS TO LATCH ONTO YOUR BREAST, NOT JUST THE NIPPLE. THERE HE'S SUCKING!

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

**172**

**revelations**

© 1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

IT'S WORKING! IT'S WORKING! MY BREASTS ARE BUZZING!

AMAZING, ISN'T IT? SEE THE JAW MOVIE, BY HIS EAR? HE'S SWALLOWING.

WELL, YOU CAN GO HOME IN A COUPLE HOURS IF YOU LIKE. YOU'RE COMING ALONG JUST GREAT--MUST BE DUE TO THAT MAMMOGRAPHY-SUPPORT TEAM. WE DON'T OFTEN SEE THAT MANY PEOPLE AT A BIRTH!

YEAH... I'M GLAD EVERYONE COULD BE HERE. BUT IT WAS A LITTLE HECTIC. IT'LL BE NICE TO GET HOME AND SETTLE IN, JUST THE THREE OF US.

SPARROW, I COULDN'T FIND ANY BUBBLEGUM CIGARS, SO I JUST GOT REAL ONES, OKAY?

I WONDER WHERE CLARICE AND TONI KEEP THEIR STAPLE GUN.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, RAFAEL!

TAVYA WANTS TO KNOW IF SHE CAN BRING SOME FRIENDS. THEY'RE DOING A LESBIAN AVENGERS ACTION IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD LATER.

NOW REMIND IT! I WANNA SEE HIM GET SUCKED BACK IN!

**173**

**revelations**

© 1993 BY ALISON BECHDEL

ONE RAINY MORNING AT MADAMAMIN BOOKS...

THEA, YOU SHOULDN'T DRINK COFFEE WHILE YOU'RE ON THE COMPUTER. WHAT IF IT SPILLS?

RELAX, MO. I'M VERY CAREFUL.

SHEESH! WHAT'S UP HER BUTT? SHE'S BEEN ACTING REALLY WEIRD TOWARD ME LATELY.

OKAY, YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW. THE OTHER DAY, SHE OVERHEARD YOU TALKING ABOUT PUPPYLIKE HER CRUSH ON YOU.

SHIT! SHE MUST FEEL ANGRY! I'D BETTER TALK TO HER. OFFICE

OH, JEEZ. I HATE LESBIAN HONESTY. LOOK, JUST DON'T TELL HER I TOLD YOU SHE HEARD WHAT YOU TOLD ME.

OH, JEEZ. I HATE LESBIAN HONESTY. LOOK, JUST DON'T TELL HER I TOLD YOU SHE HEARD WHAT YOU TOLD ME.

CLARICE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE WITH A TWO-DAY-OLD KID AT HOME? STIR-CRAZY ALREADY?

I NEED SOME BOOKS ABOUT BABIES, FAST.

WHAT'S WRONG, CLARICE?

**174**

**revelations**

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I DON'T KNOW! HE'S CRYING A LOT AND NOT NURSING. TONI'S NO HELP AT ALL-- SHE KEEPS TELLING ME IT'S NORMAL. GOD, I SHOULD HAVE DONE MORE RESEARCH ON THIS!

CHILDREN'S COUNSELING AND PARENTING

AND AS IF I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH, HOW ABOUT THAT JUDGE IN VIRGINIA? HE SAYS A WOMAN IS UNFIT TO RAISE HER SON BECAUSE SHE'S A LESBIAN. THEN SHE GIVES CUSTODY TO THE GRANDMOTHER!

WHAT IF TONI'S HOMOPHOBIC PARENTS TRIED SOMETHING LIKE THAT? DO YOU REALIZE HOW VULNERABLE WE ALL ARE TO THE LEGAL DECISIONS OF STUNTED, HATEFUL, PALEOZOIC DICKHEADS LIKE THIS GUY???

PARENTS IS CHILDING

YEAH, IT'S REALLY BAD NEWS, BUT WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU GOT ANY SLEEP?

SLEEP? LIKE, LYING DOWN?

MAYBE YOU COULD TAKE HER HOME.

I'LL GET MY JACKET.

JUST GO EASY WHEN YOU TALK TO MO. YOU WOULDN'T THINK IT TO LOOK AT HER. BUT THERE'S A PASSIONATE BABE LURKING BENEATH THAT NEUROTIC EXTERIOR.

A TON OF THE NIB TO ANY RUBIN?

OH, BELIEVE ME, I'VE THOUGHT IT. OFFICE

## MICHIGAN from page 37

wielding singer urges us to "get wild here on Planet Estrogena." (How can she possibly play bass that way and dance at the same time?) We're cooking out here in the dry, weedy field and in the few shady areas provided by the trees, but we can't stand to miss a minute of her set.

.....

ani difranco, the sweetheart of the under twenty-five set...the Day Stage area is a virtual sea of shaved heads and nose rings aquiver. Songs (with brilliantly crafted lyrics) of righteousness, anarchy, humor—has the Meg for the '90s arrived? "Night Stage! Night Stage!" they shriek.

.....

The Topp Twins are dedicating their next song to couples who met at this festival years ago and are still together. "How many are still together after three...?" (Stage manager Retts shouts out, "Days?") Amid the good-natured laughter, the count goes up. Sixteen years is the longest. The Topps bring up Alix, proclaiming her to be their "favorite mother." The rich mom-daughter feeling of this festival continues, as the sis-

drums, violin, oud, accordion, bass, ukelele, guitar, and any number of hand-held percussion instruments. From soloists extraordinaire (Mimi Fox, Nydia Mata, Ellen Uryevick) to tight ensembles (Francesca Tanksley with Susanne Vincenza and Barbara Borden, the Billy Tipton Memorial Quartet), it's been a treat.

.....

Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Chorus—with Elizabeth Min, Rachel Bagby, Vicki Randle, and so many others—taking it to the roots with this throw-down jam of African-American folk music from slave times. "Whether it's dealing with the boll weevil, working on the chain gang, discussing childhood diseases/cures and ointments, or doing the ranky tank—this music is one long groove from start to finish."

.....

I'm Taking the Ramp; people are being so supportive. I have placed an ad in the festival program to say that this year will be my last one for doing the backstage voice-over announcements—a difficult decision, until I made it. Betsy Lippitt has pushed my wheelchair down the ramp, so we're there together. It feels like another change we'll be

has gone from being a small annoyance to making guitar playing, walking, and singing all be things of the past. Planning my farewell, we sat in the wagon, letting the tears fall—just quietly fall—until Shelley and Myrna played "O My Friends" and "For Therese" over the PA, and then we both bawled. As I say hello to everyone tonight ("Don't say goodbye, say hello," Teresa had advised me), it's so fitting that Betsy is sharing this moment on the ramp with me.

.....

At the last Night Stage concert, Therese "The Voice of Michigan" Edell comes out and parks at the very tip of the runway to make an emotional farewell speech. It's her last year as the Voice of assorted Night Stage announcements. Therese served as emcee at the very first Michigan festival I attended (1981); her announcements then were always something along these lines: "We need 100 women to do security *right now*." Tonight, not a sound disturbs Therese's words as she tells the rapt audience how much she loves us. I'll always remember this strong silence of 7,000 women paying attention to a speaker that they love.

.....



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

**Bernice Johnson Reagon in a rare appearance with daughter and musical collaborator Toshi Reagon. Rhiannon: "No matter how many battles we fight with our brothers, toe to toe on the line—there *always* has to be a place for women."**

ters present an as-yet-unrecorded song they've recently created in honor of their own mother.

.....

Grooving to the sounds of Mary Watkins—her piano playing bypasses my left brain completely. Acoustic Stage has provided a musical buffet for those of us who appreciate tunes instrumental: Over the course of the week we've heard harp, sax, piano,

going through together. She was with me in music school in the late '60s; was a sister actor in *Godspell* in the early '70s; sang at my wedding in 1973 (for a relationship that lasted more than five years); did all those bar and restaurant gigs with me; recorded *From Women's Faces* with me; and toured in the little blue Datsun pickup and then the red Ford van with Teresa and me until 1983. She's stayed right with me as this disability

So far so good—no upsetting controversies this year. I heard that a handful of transgender folk were asked to leave, but it hasn't been a big issue here. Susan tells us she overheard some women expressing dismay that people would be ejected from the festival for this reason. Lynn says, "If they want to come like everyone else and simply *be women* here, nobody would even know. But it becomes a problem when they insist

on coming to this women-only space and forcing everyone to focus on how they used to *be men*." Susan adds, "When I'm walking without a shirt on and I start thinking that someone next to me lived most of their life as a man, I suddenly want to get dressed. I don't want people who used to be men to see me naked; it just doesn't feel safe."

The only disappointment at the festival this year for me has been the cancellations: Alice Walker, Cheryl Marie Wade, Nona Hendryx, and Virginia Mayhew. Even so, the performances here have been the best in the woman-identified world, as usual. What a pleasure to hear so many full-band ensembles, from so many places on Earth, and in so many musical styles. I wonder: will they ever book a hardcore band like L7, Tribe 8, or Bikini Kill?

.....

The good news: it's finally cooler. The bad news: it's raining. The weather up until today has been roasting hot during the days, but really good for sleeping at night. Despite the drizzle today, the crowd is in full force for the popular Acoustic Stage shows made up of performers who are also festie-goers. I hear that Sandra and Sharon Washington's mom will be singing with one of the choruses this morning. From ten to one we hunker down under our plastic rain ponchos to enjoy Ginni Clemmens' children's concert; Melanie DeMore's Festival Gospel Choir; Sharon Still's Festival Concert Band; and Cathy Roma's Festival Chorus. Everyone goes over the scheduled time a bit, resulting in the Festival Chorus having to end early. Hmmph. I wanted to see more of my friend Ann, who was (to me) the star of that chorus.

.....

It's raining. This leaves the Womyn of Colors poetry salon without a stage. The tent undergoes a transformation: shelves, books, chairs, coolers, tables, and lesbians are moved around and arranged to make an inner circle for performances and a surrounding circle for the audience.

.....

The opening is heralded with Ubaka Hill's Women of Color percussion ensemble. Black lesbians don African prints, shake shekeres, and play drum skins invitingly. The poetry salon follows, including a baby dyke in a blue batiked dress telling stories like an old soul; a Puerto Rican sharing of folk songs with a conga; poetry about love—unrequited and otherwise; political prose; and music made with violin, guitar, and vocals. The rain stops.

.....

Sunday Comedy Day Stage. More ponchos, and a good-sized crowd. Snippets: Over

Our Heads Comedy Troupe: "I Survived A Femme"; Karen Ripley is pretending to pour one beer after another on her hand. Why? She says she's getting her date drunk; Diane Amos tells us how she (true story) won \$14,000 on *Wheel of Fortune* and met Vanna White; Suzanne Westenhoefer: "How do gay people get partners? We set traps!"; Marga Gomez, in denim vest, black and white striped long shorts, and a silver chain. "Do you like how I look? Cindy Crawford shaved my armpits!"

.....

Karen Williams did her "pussy" routine as emcee last night, and Judith Casselberry's mom Bettye Vance let Karen know she didn't like it. "I don't think we should bring mothers, actually," says Karen today from the Day Stage. During the next set, Suzanne Westenhoefer mimes looking up at her lover during oral sex, and tells the crowd that it's a gesture you could do in front of your mother, because she won't know what it means. Bettye comes up to the mic immediately after Suzanne's set (during Karen's emceeing), and demands to know what the gesture means. She won't let up. "They need twenty workers in kitchen *now*," Karen announces. "I volunteer Judith Casselberry and her mother."

.....

I've seen Diane Amos on Mo Gaffney's *Women Aloud* talk show on Comedy Central. I'm impressed today with how effortlessly she adapts her stand-up material for this particular audience (boyfriend Tony in the *Women Aloud* version becomes girlfriend Tania for the Michigan crowd) without compromising either the humor or her integrity. Part of her routine revolves around being a hetero child raised by lesbians ("Black Mom" and "White Mom"). I ponder the future—with all the little girls being raised in the Michigan environment summer after summer, our culture is bound to experience a wave of women like Diane: woman-identified straight feminists who appreciate women's culture because they've been raised in it. We've watched Alix Dobkin's daughter grow up straight, and she's now the love advisor to all her lesbian friends; what will it be like in festival culture when the generation of girls who are now in their preteens and teens hits adulthood?

.....

A sudden drenching squall, the kind only a Midwest summer can produce. It's transformed the entire backstage performer/worker area into a joyous, pulsing, shouting, dancing, shaking, quaking *jam!* In a musician's world, a good jam is like a soul magnet. It breathes life into a dreary day. It

makes a gloomy space a home. It affirms us. Rashida, Linda, Nedra, and Vicki are called upon to contribute, and they do—mightily. In an instant, a space as fragile as a 40'x40' wind-jarred, rain-beaten tent on a portable wooden platform in the middle of Mosquito-Fuck Michigan has become the arena for stage hands and kitchen workers, along with dancers and musicians, from every corner of the world to share a special moment frozen in time and space.

.....

Earlier today I was thrilled to hear the Festival Concert Band play "It's a Blue Moon," which cellist Melissa Robinson and I arranged. Tonight on the Candlelight Concert stage, Melissa is playing "Slow Ocean" from the solo cello *Robinhood Suite* I'm writing for her.

.....

Last night of the festival. There's a sing-along in the workers' kitchen; I sit with Alix, Ruth Simkin, and Suzanne Westenhoefer, belting out showtunes. I stay up until 2:30 a.m. to share a security workshift in the crafts area. Bug spray: essential. Though it's warm, women are bundled up tight in long pants (and even garbage bags) to try to avoid the swarm of hungry little ones. (Is it true that only the female mosquitos draw blood?) I wish for a perfectly clear sky, and more shooting stars. The rustling of the trees...another Michigan almost over...so soon? I mark the passing of each year of my life with contemplations made each summer under these beautiful August skies in the company of thousands of women. I wonder if this feeling of peace and oneness with all womankind will be the last feeling I take to my grave; I hope so. Late at night, I'm especially grateful to festival producers Lisa and Boo for their vision and their gift.

## EPILOGUE

It's Monday morning, and the festival is over. I've packed up the wet tent and tarps, and we've loaded our stuff into Dawn's van; she's volunteered to take all our crafts-women gear back home for us. The land is quickly becoming deserted as festie-goers leave and the amazing work crews begin to disassemble the 1993 global women's village. Signs are coming down; garbage trucks are emptying cans; plenty of hugging and "goodbye-until-next-August"ing. Marina is directing Maile to carry a huge trunk out of the Community Center to the road; how many pounds of costumes are in that thing, anyway? I'm looking forward to the hamburger at Wendy's and the shower at home—no doubt about it—but I still get a pang leaving the land. There's no place like it on this earth.



Toni Armstrong Jr.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

From sea to shining sea: ani difranco (New York) and Zelia (Hawaii) may live 5,000 miles from each other, but their musical paths crossed this summer in the proverbial middle, and they both brought woman-loving sentiments to the Michigan stages.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Sign language interpreter Shirley Childress Johnson.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Dancer Sharon Page Ritchie.

Though we've driven off the land, we can't really complete leaving "Michigan" without one final stop at the little carry-out store. I enter with a warm glow. But it's not really a matriarchal outpost; inside I'm jarred back to reality at the sight of what the locals consume all year: magazines with titles like *Gun and Ammo*, *Modern Firearms*, *The Complete Book of Guns*, and *Country Fever* line the shelves. Still, I stock up on Fritos and Diet Coke to tide me over on the five-hour ride home, and am happy that the last thing I see is the adorable little sign, now wishing us womyn a safe trip home.

.....

With other workers and performers, I ride a shuttle to the Kent County airport in Grand Rapids. This airport should be the location of a psychological study on re-entry. In this airport we slip reluctantly out of our festival ease and into the world of staring men, patriarchal rules, and newsstands blaring witness to the world's racisms. We crowd into the bathroom to enjoy *real toilets*, full-length mirrors, and sinks; then we board a flight to Chicago that is overwhelmingly crammed with Michigan returnees. With so much talent on my flight I know we won't crash, so I relax and read *Glamour* with Mimi Fox. Nydia Mata's mother slaps at the festival mosquito which insists on accompanying her to New York; Judith Casselberry's mother tells me, "At Michigan we're all family—there are no strangers." There's a delay on our flight, and the Bay Area artists

are worried about their connections in Chicago—but over the intercom comes the soothing voice of a flight attendant to distract us all. "I thought some of our passengers might want to know," she teases, "k.d.lang will be on TV tonight." •

**ABOUT THE WRITERS:** Toni Jr. is the managing editor, photo editor, and a founding mother of 'HOT WIRE.' She has been a devotee of festival culture since 1975. Dr. Bonnie Morris zipped off these memoirs prior to embarking on an around-the-world cruise on which she was teaching through December. Singer Zenobia Conkerite was one of the original Weather Girls, and is now an award-winning radio and music producer. Writer tatiana de la tierra is an activist and the editor of the Latina lesbian publication 'esto no tiene nombre.' Therese Edell has been involved with women's music since its early years; these days she focuses on composing music and staying well. Laura Love leads her own band as well as being in the Seattle-based comedy group *Venus Envy*; her solo recordings include 'Menstrual Hut' and 'Z Therapy.' Ruth Simkin—women's music's own "Dr. Ruth"—really is a medical doctor in addition to being a sound tech, concert producer, and holographic artist. "Screamin' Mimi" Baczewska lives in an orange circus wagon on women's land in the Ozarks, where she perfects her crocheting arts and musical talents. She distributes her own recordings, including 'Turning Tide.'



## EDITOR from inside front cover

of the Queen's Rule Poker Club, who conceived and brought forth the Dyke Deck and Queen's Rule playing cards featured in the September 1993 issue of *HOT WIRE*.

Always the most dedicated writer of the bunch, YVONNE ZIPTER has persevered with her creative endeavors over the last decade. Her lesbians-and-softball book *Diamonds Are a Dyke's Best Friend* was published by Firebrand in 1988, and has also been produced as a play. Her book of poetry, *The Patience of Metal* (Hutchinson House, 1990), was runner-up for the Poetry Society of America's Melville Cane Award in 1991 and a Lambda Literary Award finalist in 1990. Her column "Inside Out," wry commentary on lesbian life, has been syndicated since 1985. She is currently working on her MFA in writing at Vermont College. By day, she works at the University of Chicago Press as a senior manuscript editor. In 1992, she helped organize a fundraiser for Senate hopeful Carol Moseley Braun at mystery writer Sara Paretsky's house, and was part of a group at U of C that was instrumental in securing domestic partnership rights for lesbian/gay U of C employees. Yvonne's health has been good over the years, except for surgery in 1993 for severe endometriosis. She lives with her girlfriend Kathy in a house ("the money pit") they bought in 1989, and they're celebrating their six-year anniversary on December 5.

ETAZ—formerly Michele "Go Go" Gautreaux—has been the footloose one. In the past decade, she has lived in Chicago and near Tucson, Arizona (Adobeland) before settling into the countryside ("Little Prairie," she calls it) near Madison, Wisconsin. Identification as a land dyke and commitment to land dyke culture has become her priority with each passing year. "I was on the grant committee for Lesbian Natural Resources (LNR), a member of the board of directors of LNR in 1993," she says. "I was an organizer of the Lesbian Sep Gathering 1991, and have been participating in a program of spiritual development called CELLA through the Reformed Congregation of the Goddess. It was through my participation in this program that I found my new name [Etaz]," she says. "I am very fortunate to be a part of a thriving community of radical dykes and Seps. The details of what I do aren't that important—what is, is the commitment and love in this community, and of course the fights and screaming and yelling and controversies." As with the rest of the menage, Etaz was in good health until 1993, when she underwent a hysterectomy. She and her girlfriend Carol Ann will celebrate their sixth anniversary this August.

I, TONI ARMSTRONG JR., have had an exciting decade, and long-time readers have followed some of my adventures in these pages over the years. In 1987, I bought the building at 5210 Wayne—"HOT WIRE central"—where all of the tenants do (or did) work on

the magazine. I continue working by day in the special education department of a suburban high school. Since getting my masters degree in 1984 in learning disabilities from Northeastern Illinois University, I have accumulated an additional twelve classes in gifted education, special education, educational administration, and sign language. I've continued to play bass, and appeared on Mimi Baczewski's *Turning Tide* album as well as the "Together, Proud and Strong" March on Washington anthem recording. I performed with Alix Dobkin and Kay Gardner at the East Coast Lesbians' Festival and the Michigan festival with their reconstituted Lavender Jane band for their fifteenth anniversary, and was honored to receive the 1991 Jeanine Rae Award for outstanding contributions to women's culture. In addition to keeping *HOT WIRE* and *Women's Music Plus* directory going during this next decade, Empty Closet Enterprises will be collaborating with I.M.A. on producing women's music party albums (in the works now: *Slammin' Amazon Saturday Night*) and instructional sign language videos.

I've enjoyed basically good health except for recurrent back problems. In 1993, a herniated disc was discovered through MRI, so I really have to be more careful now when moving things at festivals and gigs. I've been living with my partner Sara since 1990, and we like to celebrate our March 1 anniversary by going to the Sybaris or to Vegas. I have a half-sister named Melody Kay whom I've never met, but my mother has pledged to help locate her during this next decade.

.....

So, as we begin our tenth year of publication, the report is good. The dreams and goals that gave birth to *HOT WIRE* and related enterprises have served us well and continue to be motivating factors in our lives. •

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## RHYTHMFEST *from page 39*

running, water volleyball and basketball, shirts vs. skins football, four-square, and carnival games and relay races.

Michelle Crone and Ivy Young entertained us with stories from their experiences in the feminist and civil rights movements. Ivy stressed the importance of self-determination for all individuals, allowing each one to name her own identity. Michelle told of her fascinating adventures and experiments in radical utopia. We talked about our visions for community, and I learned how intentionally RhythmFest is planned.

A lot of energy goes into preserving consensus, telling the truth, and keeping rumors under control. Michelle sees an urgent need for community building in the gay community now, as we are forging political coalitions. She is currently looking for people who would be interested in working on a joint music festival with gay men. The vision is of a shared project, one that would include separate spaces for women and men, plus a shared space. A wintertime festival, perhaps in Florida, is being considered. (If you're interested, write to Michelle Crone/RhythmFest, 957 N. Highland Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.)

RhythmFest, like many other women's festivals, is in search of new land. This year's site, a rented Christian boys' camp, came complete with the conveniences of already-built structures and electricity, but also had a stunning lack of privacy. Some of the camping areas and the lake could be seen from the roads, so festie-goers needed to stay dressed much of the time. (Surprisingly, there was very little rebellion against the dress code.) Apparently there were several complaints about noise at night from the performances and drumming, bringing the local police to the gates.

The land itself is less than ideal, but funds are being raised to remedy this. A lifetime pass to RhythmFest was auctioned off for the bargain price of \$1,080. Other items auctioned off during the festival included various treasures donated by the craftswomen, and a date with an erotic-looking woman who had appeared on stage in leather.

Spirits were high. Saturday Night Stage featured the stand-up lawyer Maggie Cassella, the Laura Love Band, and Mrs. Fun. The audience loved Laura's "Nelson" [on the soundsheet in the May 1993 issue of *HOT WIRE*], and I especially enjoyed her slow rendition of "Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye," a song I remember from my high school days. And the crowd didn't really want to let Mrs. Fun

(Kim Zick and Connie Grauer) mellow out.

After-hours denizens of the Hipsway Cafe danced to the salsa, hip-hop, flamenco, and Caribbean music of D.J. Mamie Bell until two a.m.

## SUNDAY

I treated myself to a tour of the crafts area ("the only lesbian mall in North Carolina") on Sunday. In addition to six massage therapists, there was the usual array of jewelry, pottery, woman-made drums, clothing, glasswork, leather creations, books, crystals, and magic items.

Visiting the crafts area at festivals can be thought-provoking for those who take time to chat with the craftswomen. For example, I spent a lot of time looking at pottery created by Salinda. She explained how she found her deep blue green glaze by combining two glazes. Later, when I returned sporting new quartz earrings, she showed me pottery pieces where she'd brushed on a powdered form of the mineral.

I learned that this was her first festival, though she's been a potter for fourteen years (working for the first twelve out of a small trailer). Now she has a studio and a part-time volunteer apprentice. She named her kiln Pelé ("after the Hawaiian fire Goddess who likes whiskey and dares to be dreadful").

Salinda's imagery evokes the spirituality of nature, featuring images of the Goddess, some of them naked. We discussed popularity, and she voiced suspicions regarding what could happen to her creative energy if she moved too close to a commercial market where her images might become trendy. I wondered about the safety of our collective creation, our woman-centered culture; can we nurture our creative powers without taming them too much? Does our support and approval of each other's work tend to enforce conformity?

Sunday Day Stage showcased the talents of Maggie Freund, Angela Motter, Susan Herrick, Zenobia, Ruth Segal's one-woman performance piece *Passion Show*, and the Grandmother Time Band.

I found the Sunday Night Stage to be the most uplifting of the weekend. In addition to a great lineup, there were some happy announcements. The 1993 attendance was the largest ever: 1,208 festie-goers, plus about 300 workers, artists, and craftswomen, for a total of more than 1,500 women on the land. Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida were the states most represented.

The "kamikaze antics" of the Seattle-based duo Dos Fallopia opened the show,

as Lisa Koch and Peggy Platt performed hits from their album *My Breasts Are Out Of Control*. Then came the dynamic Rhythm Express, featuring Ubaka Hill, Maria Breyer, and Robin Burdulis. On Sunday afternoon, Ubaka had offered a workshop on drumsong techniques. Their rendition of "Lifeline," about Harriet Tubman, was *truly great*. (In fact, the rhythmic accents of their version of the song traveled with me as I walked across Daley Plaza toward my first day back to work the following Tuesday.)

Next came the amusing Venus Envy, featuring Lisa Koch, Laura Love, Linda Severt, and Linda Schierman. The group has earned a cult following for its recordings *I'll Be A Homo For Christmas* and *Unarmed and Dangerous*. Girls in the Nose loudly finished up the night. (We *knew* the police would come during their set.) The band consists of six Austin-based rockers, including co-founder Gretchen Phillips; they say their philosophy "loosely translates as Viva la Vulva, or Feminism for the Fearless." As is always the case with Sunday Night Stages at festivals, the crowd had thinned considerably by the time the show was officially over.

I went for awhile to the Grand Finale dance party at the Hipsway, but soon went back to my tent for a few final hours of festival slumber.

## MONDAY

Monday: a day of last-minute shopping and last-minute exchanging of addresses. Throughout the festival, I had been watching the festival photographer, sure that I knew her from somewhere. Finally, I walked up to meet her and discovered (Jetta! It's you!) that we'd gone to school together some twenty years ago.

Dismantling my tent, I stopped to spend a moment with a women's studies professor from Alabama. I sat waiting for a ride with the official goodbye-sayer at general camping. We talked about the lives we were going back to, and the changes we hoped to make in the coming year.

So—all's well that ends well. It rained some during the festival, but it never reached disastrous proportions. Everyone would have been happier with more privacy, but that will be taken care of when the festival is held on different land. Generally, I found all that I was looking for at RhythmFest 4.

As each car left the parking area, the goodbye-sayer spoke to the women inside, flashing a big Southern smile, wishing them a safe trip. Each of us left with a warm and sincere "see you next year." •

## CHORAL FEST *from page 23*

Calliope Women's Chorus (Minneapolis) brought the long night to a close with several moving works composed by choir members, including "A Song From the Circle" (text written by Ojibwa member Carole LeFavor and music by accompanist Diane Benjamin), and the lovely and poignant "Suite of Four Movements" (by Diane Benjamin).

A dance and delicious reception followed, and everyone was so energized that the party continued late into the wee hours of Sunday morning.

### SUNDAY

On the last day of the festival, eight more choirs were scheduled to perform. Early Sunday afternoon, Mixolydian Mode (Madison) opened with a strongly lesbian-identified set, including take-offs of everything from "The Teddy Bear's Picnic" to Pachelbel's "Canon." The D.C. Area Feminist Chorus followed with songs written or arranged by members of their chorus, including "Roe v. Wade" (by choir member Ginny Real). Then Amasong: Champaign-Urbana's Lesbian/Feminist Chorus, a new ensemble of young and skilled singers, did traditional women's choir repertoire, with much of the music arranged by their founder/director Kristina Boerger. They were joined by Linda Thomas Jones on "Darlin' Corey" and included "Wild Nights," an original composition by Kristina. To close the afternoon concert, The Columbus Women's Chorus (Ohio)—a relatively new choir—presented both the meditative spirit of a chant sequence and the drive of Mary Goetz's "Fire."

Energy was running strong for Sunday night, and the final concert featured not only four choir performances, but the long-awaited mass chorus set, with 300 women coming into their voices together. Chicago's Artemis Singers opened the concert with a well-balanced set, including the intriguing work "Song of the Good Daughter," and the Sue Fink/Joelyn Grippo classic "Leaping (Lesbians)." Womonsong (Madison) followed with a program ranging from the Kenyan "Kwaheri" to the beautifully executed traditional Japanese "Hotaru Koi."

Next came The Bloomington Feminist Chorus (Indiana) with new conductor Janice Bagwell. They gave an animated performance of the Grace Morand composition "I Am a Can of Tuna," and ended their set with the pulsating strength of the chant "And She Will Rise" (by Dakota Butterfield).

The thirteen-year-old Kansas City

Womyn's Chorus (Missouri) shared the benefits of the hard work they have done on the choir's issues as it made the transition into its "teenage years." After a group therapy process, members have found themselves with a reaffirmed commitment to respecting consensus and celebrating diversity. They stated that the choir was thankful to be at the festival, and was "in awe of the transformative power of womyn who truly want something done." They concluded fittingly with Kay Weaver's song "One Fine Day."

Those who did not leave for intermission saw an awesome sight: the procession of hundreds of inspired singers walking onto the stage—300 women in all. There had been plenty of rehearsals of the mass choir pieces, both in our home cities and then together in Cincinnati. Over all those festival days our hearts had been filling with the spirit of every woman who had come onstage, and at that moment, all the preparation was over.

The power of the first chord in Carly Simon's a cappella "Let the River Run" drew an audible "Ahh..." from the audience. The rich and sensuous "The Earth Is Singing My Name" (by Marjan Helms) invoked the spirit which had bathed us throughout the festival. Then in Diane Benjamin's skillful combination of "Vine and Fig Tree" and Ray MacKeever's "Let Peace Fill the Earth," we returned our blessing. Holly Near's animated and witty "Perfect Night" put an official cap on the night.

However, no one could actually bring herself to end the experience. Melanie DeMore returned to the stage, reminding us again that our music must come from the very roots of who we are. "You have to sing from a place of power," she said, "and your intention must be clear.... The power to make music and to sing is a grand and miraculous one. It changes things. It changes the way the air looks. It changes the road." And with our hands joined, we sent our light to heal and hold in love every place where there echoes a woman's voice in song.

And we *still* couldn't stop. Bernice Johnson Reagon's "We Are the Ones" was spontaneously begun and chanted in the hall long after the singers had finally and reluctantly surrendered the stage to the stage crew. We felt what it's like to experience firsthand the power of our collective voice. We ended the festival knowing we had reclaimed July 4th as "Interdependence Day," and had birthed something new to take back to our communities everywhere across the country and beyond. •

*One woman's experience  
at the Feminist Fourth*

## CREATING VOCAL COMMUNITY

By Rachel Bagby

I attended the seventh annual Sister Singers Conference as a sistah/singer/composer in search of vocal community. Learning how to co-create such communities is an assignment I received in 1986 during a visioning ritual led by Starhawk at a women's gathering which focused on spirituality and politics.

Since leaving the Bay Area I have longed to re-create the experience of vocal community I enjoyed as a member of Bobby McFerrin's vocal ensemble Voicestra. We'd take our concerts out with a chant Bobby improvised, chanting as we danced and cavorted offstage (many times only stopping when management told us to, lest we go so late they'd have to pay the union workers double-time).

At Sister Singers I sought and I found: hundreds of women who love and/or live/come to power in vocal community. As is true in every community I've been blessed or cursed to breathe in, this one had its holy and hellacious moments. Personal snapshots include Crescendo (Tampa Bay) stripping off nun habits while singing "...and the witch hunt still goes on"; the visible ecstasy of women who premiered compositions; and the impromptu quitiplas (stamping stick) ensemble Ysaye Barnwell, Melanie DeMore, Jennifer Gale, Linda Thomas Jones, and I formed under the direction of Jackeline Rago and Erika Luckett to sizzle Saturday night's stage.

Then there was the meant-to-be comedic adaptation of a spiritual that galvanized discussion about what liberties are appropriate for whom to take with what music. At issue are tensions between respect and creative freedom that every vocal community borrowing music from another faces.

It gets hot when sisterhoods of various musical traditions meet. May the heat between us ultimately be of the regenerative kind. •

*ABOUT THE WRITER: Rachel Bagby, writer, vocal artist, and composer, recently released her first full-length recording, entitled 'FULL.'*

## HOTLINE from page 11

At press time, **THE PAULA POUNDSTONE SHOW** had been scheduled to air on Saturday nights during a time slot that has traditionally been death on ratings. (No show except *The Love Boat* has ever lasted more than a season in this slot.) To help the show stay on the air, write letters of enthusiastic praise to ABC-TV, 47 W. 66th St., New York, NY 10023....Linda Ellerbee hosted **THE OTHER EPIDEMIC: What Every Woman Needs To Know About Breast Cancer** last September on ABC-TV. Dr. Susan Love (one of the top breast cancer experts in the nation, and a lesbian who recently won joint custody rights of her child with her lover) was featured. Audre Lorde's photo was among those shown at the end of the program....**SIRENS**, a TV show about three women police officers, features a main character who is a lesbian. She is the instruction sergeant for the rookie officers and, in one episode, was visited by her lover at the hospital after being wounded....Watch the series **THE REAL WORLD** (about young adults living together in Venice) on MTV for the lesbian in its cast of characters.

At press time, **BARBRA STREISAND** and **GLENN CLOSE** were working together on a two-hour NBC telefilm based on the true story of **COL. MARGARETHE CAMMERMEYER**, the highest-ranking woman in the armed services, who was expelled in 1992 after acknowledging she is a lesbian.... According to *Movieline*, **CYBILL SHEPHERD** is among many actresses attempting to launch projects in which they'd play lesbian private eyes. The networks haven't been buying her small-screen ideas—especially since *Cybill* refuses to change the sex of the lead character's female lover.

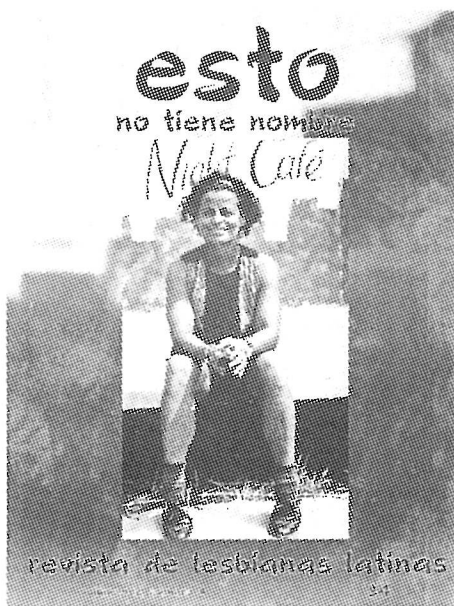
**RICKI LAKE** (*Hairspray*), a long-time supporter of lesbian, gay, and women's rights, has her own daily talk show. In some markets, she is the lead-in to the *Roseanne* reruns....For the first time ever on network television, CBS is presenting a major musical dramatic event with the airing of *Gypsy*. Watch for the three-hour special starring *The Divine Miss M* (**BETTE MIDLER**) in December.

The "SPEAK SEBASTIAN" (90.9 FM) show (broadcasting out of Calgary, Alberta) provides lesbian/gay info, interviews, panel discussions, and musical programming. The "Sebastian" folks also present/host the Annual Gay and Lesbian Awards Show. Send recordings and press materials to "Speak Sebastian" c/o CJSW—90.9 FM, 127 Mac-

Ewan Hall/U. of C., 2500 University Dr. NW, Calgary, Alb., Canada T2N 1N4.

## PUBLICATIONS

**LESBIAN WORLD**, published by Cheryl Neal Reed and Karen Williams, is a national newspaper by, for, and about lesbians containing news, photos, and cultural articles. 26151 Lake Shore Blvd. #2112, Euclid, OH 44132. (216) 289-2939, fax (216) 289-5885.... Need to find a lesbian-friendly B&B? A newsletter called **TEN** premiered this year, providing lesbians and gays with national **TRAVEL AND ENTERTAINMENT** information. P.O. Box 6288, Anaheim, CA 92816-0288....Fans of the Baltimore-based duo **DISAPPEAR FEAR** (sisters Sonia and Cindy Frank) may want to check out their



**esto no tiene nombre** is a quarterly bilingual magazine for/about Latina lesbians edited by tatiana de la tierra, Amy Concepcion, and Margarita Castilla. 4700 NW 7th St. #463, Miami, FL 33126. (305) 541-6097, or (305) 751-8385.

fan newsletter. P.O. Box 65095, Baltimore, MD 21209....**Black Links** is a new bimonthly contact publication for **BLACK LESBIANS**. The main focus will be social contact (coded ads) and features written to encourage dialogue and create unity. P.O. Box 48195, Philadelphia, PA 19144. (215) 224-6496....**Colorlife** is a new monthly publication for **LESBIANS AND GAY MEN OF COLOR**. The Kairos Project, 2840 Broadway #287, New York, NY 10025.

The 1993 **FREE MUSICAL SUCCESS RESOURCE GUIDE** contains more than seventy-five resources for working artists (songwriting, recording, promotion, etc.).

Spotlight Productions, P.O. Box 63423, Dept. PR, St. Louis, MO 63163....Heartland Books (run by two women) has announced the arrival of the second free **HEARTLAND BOOKS CATALOG**, which offers approximately 125 book selections plus wall calendars and datebooks. P.O. Box 1105F, East Corinth, VT 05040....The **LADYSLIPPER CATALOG** is the most comprehensive collection of women's recordings in the world. P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27715.

Tatyana Mamonova, exiled from the former Soviet Union for publishing and editing the *Samizdat Almanach: Woman and Russia* (which contained feminist writings), is now publishing *Woman and Earth Magazine*, an **INTERNATIONAL BILINGUAL FEMINIST MAGAZINE**. 70 Terry Rd., Hartford, CT 06105. (203) 523-9571....*Broomstick*, a quarterly national magazine by/for/about **WOMEN OVER FORTY**, may be forced to stop publication due to lack of money. They cite the reason as newly enforced legal requirements about staff payroll, which make them list workers as staff rather than as independent contractors. 3543 18th St. #3, San Francisco, CA 94110....*Venus Infers* is a new magazine by and for **LEATHERWOMEN**, containing erotic fiction, pictorials, poetry, interviews, nonfiction, essays, and S/M-related news. 2215-R Market St. #294, San Francisco, CA 94114.

According to *Broadsheet*, four women cartoonists (Robbie Welwood, Lisa Noble, Susan Earle, and Fiona Morris) are part of a collective producing New Zealand's first comic strip and **CARTOON MAGAZINE BY WOMEN**. 72 Hankey St., Mt. Cook, Wellington, New Zealand....Jodie Foster graced the cover of Premiere's **WOMAN IN HOLLYWOOD SPECIAL ISSUE**. Inside, stuntwomen, lighting techs, drivers, directors, producers, and actors told what it was like to work in Tinsel Town. For back issues and to request similar future coverage: Editor Susan Lyne, K-111 Mag. Corp, 2 Park Ave., New York, NY 10016....**K.D. LANG BIOGRAPHY** available from General Publishing, 30 Lesmill Rd., Don Mills, Ont., Canada M3B 2T6. (416) 445-3333.

The **FANS OF WOMEN'S SPORTS** fanzine, which comes out six times per year, reports on girls and women in all sports from a feminist perspective. P.O. Box 49648, Austin, TX 78765. (512) 458-3267....The June 21, 1993 issue of **NEWSWEEK** with the **LESBIAN COVER STORY** is still available as a back issue. *Newsweek* Back Order Dept., 333 Rt. 46, Mountain Lakes, NJ 07046....*The Monitor*

newsletter shares true stories of interest to people who watch **MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF GAYS**. GLAAD c/o Rodde Fund, P.O. Box 146343, Chicago, IL 60614.

Calling all librarians: A book-length bibliography entitled *Women and Music 1987 to 1992: A Selective Bibliography on the Collective Subject of WOMEN AND GENDER ISSUES IN MUSIC* is being compiled. The listing will include a comprehensive sampling of books, articles, theses, score collections, sound recording collections, etc. Thus far, the writer has almost 1,600 entries covering publications from the U.S., England, Germany, Sweden, France, and elsewhere. Margaret Ericson, Library-Music/Audio Dept., Ithaca College, 953 Danby Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850.

### SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT

Kay Gardner is calling for six **WOMEN TO SING SOLOS** in her oratorio *OUIROBOROS (Seasons of Life): Women's Passages*, an hour-long work for 100-voice women's chorus, forty-piece orchestra, and six female soloists. (The work may premiere at the twentieth National Women's Music Festival in June if they can raise the funds.) Singers to represent women of all colors are needed. P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207) 367-5552....Artistic performances are being sought for the rally to be held after the International **MARCH ON THE UNITED NATIONS** next June 26 on the Great Lawn of Central Park in New York. Video demos/press kits to: McCurdy & Assoc., 242 W. 27th St. #7, New York, NY 10001-5926....**NATIONWIDE TALENT SEARCH:** Rodell Records is now reviewing demos from all styles of original artists/bands and songwriters for upcoming releases. Artists "must be original and committed." Submit demo (three songs max) and press kit materials to: Rodell Records, P.O. Box 93457, Hollywood, CA 90093.

The Lesbian Health Project of Los Angeles is distributing a national lesbian/bi women's health survey to assess the risk of **CANCER AMONG LESBIANS**. To participate in the survey: LHP, 8235 Santa Monica Blvd. #308, West Hollywood, CA 90046. (213) 650-1508....A major U.S. health study is seeking lesbians who are willing to participate in research that aims to identify potential risk factors associated with **BREAST CANCER AMONG LESBIAN/BI WOMEN**. Lesbians who have a lesbian or bisexual sister will be asked to complete a questionnaire and provide a blood sample. Lesbians/bisexuals who don't have a lesbian sibling will be asked only to complete a questionnaire.

Confidentiality is assured. Dr. Angela Pataucci, N.I.H., Building 4A13, Bethesda, MD 20892. (301) 496-2979. (You can call collect.)

The editors of *Coloring Outside The Lines: Writings by MIXED-BLOOD AND MULTI-RACIAL WOMEN OF COLOR* announce their second call for poetry, theory, essays, short stories, history lessons, and relevant discussions of life as a mixed-blood woman of color. They are currently accepting poetry, short stories, essays, and theory. Jamie Lee Evans/Kate Berne Miller, 224 Minor Ave. No. #A, Seattle, WA 98109.... There is a call for submissions from **AFRICAN AMERICAN LESBIANS** in the form of poetry and line drawings. *Kuumba*, Box 83912, Los Angeles, CA 90083. (310) 410-0808....Non-white and mixed-race women are invited to contribute to an anthology on **ASSIMILATION AND IDENTITY IN CANADA** entitled "*But Where Are You Really From?*" Sister Vision Press, P.O. Box 217, Sta. E, Toronto, Ont., Canada M6H 4E2.

The *Newsletter for WOMEN IN COMICS* was "created out of a need for an unquestioned space for women to speak out, communicate, bitch, network, and organize." Articles, notices of upcoming books/events, letters, and calls for work to: Tyler Cohen, 2525 W. Moffat—Bsm., Chicago, IL 60647. (312) 489-5726....*The Femme Mystique* will be a **LESBIAN ANTHOLOGY** that examines "all areas of femme life"—the joys and sorrows, sensuality and sexuality. All forms of writing considered. SASE to Lesléa Newman, P.O. Box 815, Northampton, MA 01061.

Submissions are being sought for a newsletter that will address issues for lesbians and gays who are **HARD OF HEARING/DEAF**. The editors are looking for life stories, coming out stories, cartoons, poems, art, and essays. *What!!! Queers!!!*, 831 Scott St., San Francisco, CA 94117. (415) 992-5191....*Sinister Wisdom* is seeking submissions from/about **OLD LESBIANS/DYKES**. The over-sixty guest editors invite all kinds of writing and art from lesbians born before 1935. P.O. Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703. (415) 585-0666.... "**POOR WHITE TRASH WOMEN** calling Poor White Trash Women!" Seeking stories, essays, poetry concerning the experience of "growing up pwt" in North America. "Enough of the stereotype! Let's speak for our own lives; passionate, brave, and formidable." Deadline: March 31, 1994. Pauline Will Triumph, 3536 University Blvd. North #198, Jacksonville, FL 32211.

Short stories, drawings, poems, photos

sought for *COMMON LIVES, LESBIAN LIVES*. Lesbians from various ethnic groups and social backgrounds share their work in this journal. P.O. Box 1553, Iowa City, IA 52244....Lavender Crystal Press is seeking one-act and full-length **PLAYS THAT DEAL WITH LESBIAN ISSUES**. Dramas, mysteries, and comedies as well as works in other genres will be considered for inclusion in an anthology. P.O. Box 8932, Red Bank, NJ 07701.

Helen Forelle is planning to put together a **HANDBOOK FOR DEALING WITH HARASSMENT** in a positive manner. Send stories of triumph over this kind of environment and the skills you used to cope. Submissions due by the end of 1994. Tesseract Publications, RR1, Box 27, Fairview, SD 57027-9719. (605) 987-5070....Historian seeks material for a book on the social, cultural, and political history of **HOMOSEXUALITY AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY**. Author particularly needs information from before 1980 from women and people of color. G. Koskovich, Box 14301, San Francisco, CA 94114-0301.

*Women & Recovery* is seeking manuscripts (essays, exposés, humor, inspirational, self-help, product or treatment profiles, reviews, opinions, personal experience, etc.) related to **WOMEN'S RECOVERY ISSUES**. Query with published clips. Need To Know Press, P.O. Box 161775, Cupertino, CA 95016.... *Lesbian Ethics 5:3* on **RADICAL HEALING** seeks papers. "If you know something that could help another dyke, don't keep it to yourself! This issue is for sharing information about useful methods for healing the whole range of ills that befall us, including the relationship between healing and radical political action." Deadline: April 1, 1994. P.O. Box 4723, Albuquerque, NM 87196....Anthology about lesbians and **MENOPAUSE**: What has been your experience with symptoms, estrogen replacement, herbs, sensations and sexual response, etc.? Send to **MENOPROUD**, Box 7726, Albuquerque, NM 87194.

Current Tee Corinne projects seeking submissions: (1) Sensual/sexual stories, essays, commentaries; stories that reflect real-life situations (or tell about learning to be sexual with women) wanted for anthology of **LESBIAN EROTIC FICTION**. Deadline: March 1, 1994. (2) **SELF-PORTRAITS AND PERSONAL COMMENTARIES**/essays by lesbian and gay male artists wanted for a series of articles. Send with your bio and SASE to Tee A. Corinne, P.O. Box 278, Wolf Creek, OR 97497. •

## LESBOMANIA from 15

God's sperm get into the Angel Gabriel's mouth?"

"Oh, gross!" We all squealed and pounded the table.

Poor Mr. Paschke tried to ignore our blasphemy and plowed on. "God sent Jesus because He loveth all His children, all races, all colors, all creeds."

Bobby Harmintz was one of the major class troublemakers. He said: "But God must love women better than men."

"What?" said Mr. Paschke.

"Sure," Bobby snorted. "Otherwise, God would be queer."

Nowadays, more sexually attuned thirteen-year-olds might respond with a shrug: "Maybe God's bi." Some really awake kid might even ask, "Why is God always portrayed as male, anyway?" But back then, a shocked silence fell over our young adult class. Bobby Harmintz had gone too far. Even kids who had no idea of what it meant knew "queer" was on the roster of curse words.

In retrospect, I think Bobby Harmintz was gay-baiting Mr. Paschke, a rather feminine man who described himself as a lifelong "confirmed bachelor." But at the time such matters went right over my head. I was not a lesbian-atheist-pagan back then, but a teenybopper-quasi Presbyterian-wannabe, and I was concerned that a thunderbolt could whomp down to wipe out the entire young adult class as a result of Bobby's sacrilege.

I decided somebody had better come to God's defense.

"But...God had Jesus with Mary, so he couldn't have been...that," I said.

"Sure he could," said Bobby with an Elvis sneer, as if he knew a lot more about these things than I did. (And he did—as I gathered from later reports.)

"But...God was sort of married to Mary in a way, wasn't he?" I mused in my thirteen-year-old religious romance-comic haze. "I mean, he picked Mary out of all the other women to have his kid with."

Bobby snapped back impatiently, "No, stupid, she already was married. *To Joseph.*"

I covered my mouth with my hand. "Hey, that's right! But then, that means that God was committing adultery with somebody else's wife! That's against the Ten Commandments!"

And we all turned our gaze to the now crimson-faced Mr. Paschke for an answer to this conundrum.

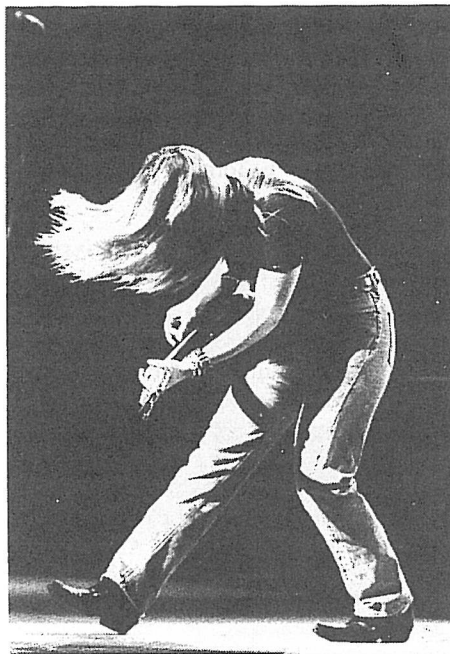
At such moments—and there were

many such moments in our young adult class—Mr. Paschke in his desperation retreated into an almost Catholic mysticism. He merely said, in a small, trembling Mr. Peepers voice, "The Lord works in mysterious ways."

Doesn't She, though?

Like Ebenezer Scrooge, one comes to see the past in a new light. I'm sorry now that we teased Mr. Paschke so mercilessly. From my vantage point, thirty-some-odd (some very odd) years later, I suppose our "confirmed bachelor" Sunday School teacher—now long dead—was, like God, probably Queer after all.

Merry Solstice! •



Linda K. Misenheimer

## MELISSA from page 5

all disco'd out. We had a good time—which is fine and great, because we love to do that—but this event was very much a political power statement. Like, here we are, and each one of us is making this statement. I'll tell you, getting on the stage there...well, there's a picture of the crowd that Martina gave me, one that she took from the stage—it's like a million people waving at the camera. It's *unbelievable*. You cannot imagine the feeling of all that energy coming from that many people. It was nice to see so many men and women there together. It's nice to see the community finally getting together...

...FOR A HAPPY OCCASION INSTEAD OF A TRAGIC ONE.

Yeah, we've been doing the AIDS thing,

fighting it, and I think it really brought us together. Unfortunately it took something like that.

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT THE WOMEN'S MUSIC SCENE IS THAT IT GENERALLY FOCUSES ON BUILDING POSITIVE, HAPPY CONNECTIONS—LIKE WHAT THE FESTIVALS DO. YOU'VE PLAYED SEVERAL OF THEM YOURSELF. IF YOU WERE A PRODUCER OF A WOMEN'S FESTIVAL AND YOU HAD THE CHOICE OF ANY ENTERTAINERS FOR YOUR STAGES, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR LINE-UP?

What a good question. If I could hire anyone? Well, I would mix it up. I would have different styles of music in the show each night—like I would start it out with someone like Deidre McCalla, and then somewhere in there I'd have Casselberry-DuPreé, because they're so entertaining. I'd have some really good comedy—there are so many great female comics now. I'd convince Rosie O'Donnell to go, so she could yell at everybody. In general, I'd put musician, comic, musician, comic. Then I would end it up each night with a big rock act, like Babes in Toyland. The women who don't want to rock and get crazy could go back to their tents—but the ones who do could stay and play.

IF I MAY GET IN THE LINE TO SAY SO, THANK YOU—FOR COMING OUT AS A LESBIAN, FOR EMBRACING THE WORD FEMINIST, AND FOR CONTINUING TO BE RESPECTFUL TOWARD THE WOMEN'S MUSIC SCENE. EVEN THOUGH IT WAS SORT OF SPONTANEOUS ON YOUR PART, IT STILL TOOK NERVE. WHAT YOU'VE DONE CHANGES HISTORY FOR ALL OF US.

Well, I feel a great support, which is really neat. I was in Germany and was walking, and this guy with a really thick German accent said, "Thank you very much, Melissa, for being at the March [on Washington]." It obviously means a lot to people. I hope in time publicly coming out won't have to be unusual—or brave.

.....  
*Melissa Etheridge will receive fan mail sent to Island Records, 400 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10003. Also, the Melissa Etheridge Information Network includes preferred tickets at concerts, free access to the Melissa phone hotline, exclusive merchandise, and a subscription to the Melissa newsletter. M.E. Info Network, P.O. Box 884563, San Francisco, CA 94188. •*

# NINTH ANNUAL 'HOT WIRE' READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

- *HOT WIRE* has presented awards since 1986 to women who have made outstanding contributions to women's music and culture. In the September issue, readers were asked to submit nominations specifying the contribution of their nominees. The point is not competition but appreciation of those who have contributed to our network in an especially outstanding way. Below are the nominations we received.
- *HOT WIRE* readers do the nominating, not the magazine staff.
- The survey of favorites is included for fun and to give us at *HOT WIRE* a closer look at the tastes of our readers (so we know better who and what to cover in the next year's issues).
- Readers' Choice votes and surveys for this year can be written on a separate piece of paper or photocopied from this page. (Don't feel compelled to rip up your magazine).
- Please vote for one individual and one group.
- Please vote only once.

*We must receive Readers' Choice surveys no later than February 15, 1994.*

**SEND TO: HOT WIRE READERS' CHOICE, 5210 N. WAYNE, CHICAGO, IL 60640**

## INDIVIDUALS

- ALISON BECHDEL** for her *Dykes to Watch Out For* cartoon series, calendars, and books.
- MELISSA ETHERIDGE** for her strong feminist/lesbian presence in the mainstream, and for not turning her back on women's music.
- K.D. LANG** for being the first major music celebrity to publicly come out as a lesbian.
- ROBIN TYLER** for the West Coast and Southern festivals, and for stage production work at the 1993 March on Washington.
- ALICE WALKER** for the inspiration, role modeling, writing, and spiritual guidance she provides for women of all races and persuasions.
- SUZANNE WESTENHOEFER** for doing out lesbian feminist comedy in mainstream clubs, and for her work in schools.

## ORGANIZATIONS

- THE INSTITUTE FOR THE MUSICAL ARTS** for providing training and opportunities for women musicians, especially women of color.
- LADYSLIPPER** for maintaining the world's most comprehensive catalog of music, videos, and other resources by women.
- NAIAD PRESS** for more than two decades of lesbian fiction and for introducing lesbian writers to the public.
- NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL** for being the longest-running large-scale women's festival (started in 1974).
- OLIVIA RECORDS & TRAVEL** for twenty years of dedicated service to the lesbian feminist cultural community.
- REDWOOD CULTURAL WORK** for dedication to multicultural music and commitment to women musicians and singers.
- ROSETTA RECORDS** for preserving and promoting the work and biographies of women jazz and blues foremothers.

## FAVORITES

Vocalist \_\_\_\_\_

Group/band \_\_\_\_\_

Songwriter \_\_\_\_\_

Bass player \_\_\_\_\_

Percussionist \_\_\_\_\_

Drummer \_\_\_\_\_

Electric guitarist \_\_\_\_\_

Acoustic guitarist \_\_\_\_\_

Keyboard player \_\_\_\_\_

Instrumentalist \_\_\_\_\_

Wind instrument player \_\_\_\_\_

Comic/comedienne \_\_\_\_\_

Emcee \_\_\_\_\_

Dancer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Sign language interpreter \_\_\_\_\_

New performer \_\_\_\_\_

All-time favorite performer \_\_\_\_\_

Current song (last 2 years) \_\_\_\_\_

All-time favorite song \_\_\_\_\_

Current album (last 2 years) \_\_\_\_\_

All-time favorite album \_\_\_\_\_

Album producer \_\_\_\_\_

Live sound engineer \_\_\_\_\_

Recording engineer \_\_\_\_\_

Album cover \_\_\_\_\_

Book cover \_\_\_\_\_

Writer \_\_\_\_\_

Poet \_\_\_\_\_

Fiction book \_\_\_\_\_

Nonfiction book \_\_\_\_\_

Periodical \_\_\_\_\_

Cartoonist \_\_\_\_\_

Photographer \_\_\_\_\_

Movie/film \_\_\_\_\_

TV star \_\_\_\_\_

TV show \_\_\_\_\_

Film star \_\_\_\_\_

Film director \_\_\_\_\_

Radio show \_\_\_\_\_

Mainstream performer \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

*In my opinion, the most exciting recent development in women's music and culture has been...*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

The island of Lesbos has been one of Olivia's cruise destinations. "They gave me a statue of Sappho to commemorate our being there, and we raised some money for them to put a statue of Sappho in their square," says Judy. "The main newspaper even printed a double-page spread, talking about this 'women's club of lesbians,' and calling us 'priestesses of Sappho.'"

## OLIVIA from page 47

ago. I love these women, and it's wonderful to see how much they love each other and how special their collaborative work is for them and for their audience."

.....

As with any institution, Olivia has been targeted over the years by some members of the lesbian feminist community, and others, who find it easy to criticize—a deci-

## DONNA ALLEN from 44

The new plan also envisions reporting the exchange of information between women who attend and those in all the countries back home who are unable to be there (but who wish to know about the issues discussed and the decisions reached). It is expected that this will include interactive telecommunication by satellite, as was done by WIFP from the last two UN World Conferences of Women (Copenhagen 1980 and Nairobi 1985).

Beijing '95 will also include a learning component. Women students will be able to use this opportunity to gain hands-on experience reporting a major women's event from the scene, supervised by their journalism or communications instructors.

The multimedia effort will include electronic media, satellite, print, computers, music, film, video, drama, and the arts. In keeping with her long-term enthusiasm for music as a prime communication mode, Donna is expressing interest in

sion; a financial practice; a particular artist. But the twentieth anniversary celebration weekend ignored all of that, focusing instead on celebrating Olivia's many successes, and on how they have kept a vision and persevered—through thick and thin, through Reagan and recession, through invisibility, social pressure and hatred, through financial adversity. And how they have, in spite of everything, made an immeasurable contribution to our community and our history.

"After 1982 it was really hard," says Olivia President Judy Dlugacz. "[Olivia] kept going because, quite literally, the artists and I wouldn't let it go. We simply didn't let it go. From every standpoint, it probably should have stopped around the tenth year. Between the tenth year and the seventeenth year was very, very difficult. Moneywise it was impossible; Olivia was financially not viable. But we did everything we could to stay around, because there was no question the need was there."

It's hard to imagine what life might be like if there had never been an Olivia Records. As future generations grow up with "lesbian chic" as a starting point of their experience, it's important for our community to acknowledge the invaluable work of institutions like Olivia who have made a ripple with profound and far-reaching effects. As Judy Reagan sings in her song "Hollywood Haircut," "Sisters, while you're walking on the path from your oppression, just remember who pointed the way."

arranging a women's music broadcast as part of the Beijing '95 project. She gets a twinkle in her eye at the thought of being able to beam a live concert—possibly a performance by Alix Dobkin—to the women of the world via satellite.

As American history moves inexorably toward the end of the twentieth century, the work of Donna Allen continues to influence it. Whether it's blazing trails for women via mimeographed newsletters or connecting women around the world via satellite telecommunications, there's no stopping her.

The next time you find yourself thinking that communicating is a little too hard, that you don't really have time to pay attention to how the media is treating women, or that you don't really have the time or money to do that women's project...just stop and think of Dr. Donna.

To find out more about Beijing '95, contact Donna Allen, Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Place NW, Washington, DC 20008. (202) 966-7783. •



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Dykes ahoy! Melissa Howden and Jill Cruse are two of the women who get amazon travelers on the high seas under the Olivia banner.

Thank you, Olivia. And here's to your next twenty.

1994 cruise destinations include the Western Caribbean, Montreal, and Mexico. To get information on Olivia cruises or music, or to obtain a catalog of their merchandise: Olivia, 4400 Market, Oakland, CA 94608. (510) 655-0364, fax (510) 655-4334. •

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**SOUNDSHEETS**

from inside back cover

country." This song, "Gold in the Tapestry," refers to the great gift Jess sees that lesbians/gay men have to offer society: "We are like gold thread woven through the world's tapestry; we bring life its sparkle."

**SUGAR MAMA**

WRITTEN/PERFORMED BY: Gwen Avery

FROM: *Gwen Avery, Live at I.M.A.*

Fabulous Records

P.O. Box 374, Bodega, CA 94922

(707) 876-3028

Gwen Avery made a brief but indelible impression as part of the pioneering Varied Voices of Black Women tour in the 1970s. Gwen's "Sugar Mama"—first recorded on *Lesbian Concentrate* (Olivia Records, 1977), sung like molasses, clinging like love, and salty as the sea—has become an unforgettable classic. Having disappeared from national view until recently, Gwen has emerged from personal struggles stronger than ever. She shares her journey both in music and spoken word in this album recorded live at the Institute for the Musical Arts (I.M.A.). Rhythm and blues from the source and gospel from the heart, captured in the moment and masterfully edited by June Millington.

**COMING INTO MY YEARS**

WRITTEN BY: Betsy Rose

ARRANGED BY: J. David Moore for MUSE

PERFORMED BY: MUSE, Cincinnati's Women's Choir (Catherine Roma, musical director)

FROM: *Coming Into Our Voice*

MUSE/Catherine Roma

P.O. Box 23292, Cincinnati, OH 45223

(513) 681-4419

"Coming Into My Years," the bold and jazzy declaration of a woman owning her strength and her self, was arranged for and recorded by MUSE on their recent release *Coming Into Our Voice*. MUSE is a women's choir dedicated to musical excellence and social change, whose repertoire reflects the diversity the choir prizes, from the steel drum Calypso sound of "Columbus Lied" to the intricately interwoven harmonies of "Sky Dances" and the vigor of "Wanderlust." The choir is conducted by founder/music director Catherine Roma, and her artistry is heard in the voice of MUSE, a voice found and not to be silenced again.

**I LIKE BEING A DYKE**

WRITTEN BY: Alison Farrell

PERFORMED BY: Alison Farrell (vocals, guitar), Anthony Pasqualoni (bass), Richard Hill (percussion), and Cliff Furnald (percussion)

FROM: *Tomboy*

Alison Farrell

P.O. Box 847, New Haven, CT 06504

Alison wondered how listeners would respond to "I Like Being a Dyke," her first out song, featured on her second recording, *Tomboy*. They love it! Not only does "ILBAD" get lots of local airplay, Alison was voted "Best Folk Performer" and *Tomboy* was among Best New Recordings in the 1993 Sounds of

New Haven poll. *Dirty Linen* magazine calls *Tomboy* "an impressive offering from a gifted performer." *Tomboy* includes the gutsy, autobiographical title song; also "Gibbous Moon," a lyrical tribute to Wicca; "Allan's Song," which chronicles a friend's AIDS-related death; "Billboard Camel," an irreverent look at the phallic cigarette mascot; and other memorable tunes.

**TICKET TO WONDERFUL**

WRITTEN BY: June Millington

PERFORMED BY: June Millington (guitar, vocals), Jean Millington (bass, vocals), Janelle Burdell (drums), additional vocals by Cris Williams, Tret Fure, Lynn Vidal, Jenna Mamina

FROM: *Ticket to Wonderful*

Fabulous Records

P.O. Box 374, Bodega, CA 94922

(707) 876-3028

Written during the Gulf war, "Ticket" reaches back to the Millingtons' first California days in the music biz, during the '60s heyday dreams of Flower Power, civil rights, and ending the Vietnam war—when somehow everything seemed like a ticket to wonderful. Without the immediacy of that period's innocence and hope, the Millingtons might never have dared to be groundbreakers for women in music in the 1970s. "This title cut brings us full circle," says June. "The ticket, the wonderfulness still remains...offered to us all, as testament to our common dream." The duo combines their Philippine island roots, elevated lyrics, and folk-rock sensibility to create a unique blend: "Island consciousness and global rhythms." •

## CLASSIFIEDS

**RATES** for one year (three consecutive insertions): \$45 prepaid/\$50 if we bill you. One-time insertion/pre-paid only: \$20. Ads include name, address, and phone plus 10 more words. Additional words: 25¢ per word. **DEADLINES:** February 10 for May issue; June 10 for September issue; October 10 for January issue. Send ad copy to **HOT WIRE Classifieds, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 784-0817.**

## ARTISANS & MAIL ORDER

**THE '94 LUNAR CALENDAR: DEDICATED TO THE GODDESS IN HER MANY GUISES.** Luna Press, PO Box 511, Kenmore Station, Boston, MA 02215. (617) 427-9846. 19th annual edition. Filled with new art, poetry, prose. It hangs 11x17; \$14.95 in the U.S. plus \$3.75 s/h. Will send gifts worldwide. Offer same-day shipping and quantity discounts to individuals.

**DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR CALENDARS.** 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (602) 272-0000. Features the cartoon adventures of Mo, Harriet, and their lesbian friends. Available at bookstores. By Alison Bechdel.

**FESTIVAL STAGE 1994 WOMEN'S MUSIC CALENDAR** by Carole Browne. PO Box 2165, Upper Darby, PA 19082. Features Pam Hall, Lisa Koch, Suzanne Westenhoefer, the Lesbian Lounge Lizards, Maile & Marina, Alice DiMichele, Lynn Thomas, Susan Herrick, Seraiah Carol, Jennifer Berezan, Julia Haines, and Rhythm Express. Proceeds to benefit featured artists. \$12.95.

**HEARTART GREETING CARDS.** Raphaella Vaisseau, 12006 Maxwellton Road, Studio City, CA 91604. (818) 762-9594. Hand-painted, watercolor, photographic art, and sketch art. Custom work available.

**LADYSLIPPER CATALOG.** PO Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705. (919) 683-1570. World's most comprehensive catalog of records/tapes/CDs/videos by women; free, but stamps appreciated.

**WOMEN'S GLIB-CARTOON CALENDAR 1994** edited by Roz Warren. The Crossing Press, Freedom, CA 95019. The 1994 spiral-bound desktop calendar features cartoons, quotes and plenty of writing space. A variety of contributing artists.

**WOMYN WORK.** Laura Irene Wayne, PO Box 2507, Daly City, CA 94017-2507. (415) 994-6538. Womyn-identified images, T-shirts, prints, paintings. Also custom orders. Catalog \$1.50.

## STORES & PLACES

**EVE'S GARDEN.** 119 W. 57th St., 14th floor, New York, NY 10019. (212) 757-8651. Women's sexuality boutique. A comfortable environment where women can buy tools of pleasure. Open noon to 7 pm. Visit when you're in New York, or send \$1 for our mail order catalog.

**WOMANWILD/TREASURES BY WOMEN.** 5237 N. Clark, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 878-0300. A year-long wimmin's festival of womyn-identified jewelry, pottery, clothing, stained glass, mirrors,

crystal, candles, and more! We feature merchandise (made by women) we've seen at festivals. Located next door to Women & Children First Bookstore in the Andersonville neighborhood.

## WOMEN PERFORMERS and SPEAKERS

**JAMIE ANDERSON.** PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. Lesbian singer-songwriter/comic/parking lot attendant. "She's the anti-Ferron," says Suzanne Westenhoefer.

**SERAIAH CAROL.** 5944 S. Princeton, Chicago, IL 60621. (312) 752-1713. Fabulous singer/songwriter; award winning actor; experienced in musical comedies; lively solo show. Recording and/or video demo available.

**KELLY CONWAY.** 7777 Sunrise Blvd. #1800-151, Citrus Hts., CA 95610. (916) 725-5512. Singer/songwriter and guitarist.

**DESTINY.** 622 S. 5th St., Philadelphia, PA 19147. Booking: (215) 925-9991. Finger snapping, toe tapping empowering Lesbian, Feminist music. Be inspired by such songs as "Lesbian Luver," "Little Brown Baby Hannah," "Two Step With My Lady," "Homophobic Blues," "Provincetown," "Softball...," "Lust," "It's Alright," "Suzy B. Blues." Introducing our first recording 'WE ARE DESTINY,' available through Goldenrod and Ladyslipper records. Lively, funny, happy shows full of Pride. Also available to emcee at events.

**THE FIVE LESBIAN BROTHERS.** Heidi Blackwell, 225 E. 25th St. #3D, New York, NY 10010. (212) 481-4168. The five are Maureen, Babs, Dominique, Reg, and Lisa.

**ELLYN FLEMING.** PO Box 117, Northbridge, MA 01534. (508) 234-6360. Singer/songwriter, plays acoustic guitar and harmonica. Contemporary, intense, passionate, and rockin'.

**KAY GARDNER.** PO Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207) 367-5076. Concerts; workshops: Music and Healing; Women, Music and Power Ritual. Also Sunwomyn Ensemble and OneSpirit.

**SUSAN HERRICK.** Management: Donna Styer, 35-35 N. Market St., Lancaster, PA 17603. (717) 393-3755. Bookings: Cyn Ferguson, Lavender Bridges, PO Box 6451, Bloomington, IN 47407. (812) 331-8611. Singer/songwriter touring 'Truth And The Lie' (CD/cassette). Guitar, piano, congas and unique voice. Experience the passion, Power, humor, and hope of Susan's concerts/festival gigs. Susan & Jessie Cocks offer their workshop, TAPROOT SONG: a vehicle for womyn's participation in a sacred and revolutionary (and fun!) expression of the music within each of us.

**LISA KRON.** 187 E. 4th St. #2K, New York, NY 10009. (212) 533-9352. Comedienne, author of 'Paradykes Alley.'

**LAVENDER UNDERGROUND.** Jill Long, 7777 Sunrise Blvd. #1800-151, Citrus Hts., CA 95610. (916) 725-5512. Provides multimedia art shows followed by concerts of comedy, folk, rock, blues, and performance poetry.

**MUSICA FEMINA.** PO Box 15121, Portland, OR 97215. (503) 233-1206. Flute/guitar duo Kristan Aspen and Janna MacAuslan. National "concert/informance" tours, recordings of classical women composers and "new classical" originals.

**CAROL LYNN PEARSON.** 1384 Cornwall Ct., Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Currently performing 'Mother Wove the Morning,' a one-woman play featuring sixteen women throughout history and their search for God the Mother.

**RUTH PELHAM.** PO Box 6024, Albany, NY 12206. Bookings: (518) 462-8714. Performing original women's and folk music for concerts, festivals, colleges/universities, coffeehouses, conferences. Warmth, humor, and spontaneity; passionate vision of world peace and social justice. Her songs "The Activity Room," "I Cried," "I Am a Woman," and "Look to the People" have been recorded/performed by over thirty musicians, including Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert.

**LIBBY RODERICK** c/o Lauren Bruce, PO Box 203294, Anchorage, AK 99520. (907) 278-6817. Concerts, lectures, workshops.

**PHYLLIS SANCHEZ.** PO Box 12862, Albuquerque, NM 87195. Instrumental works for different emotions—each unique.

**MARCIA WILKIE.** Bookings/information: Pat Bechdel, 3111 N. Kenmore, Chicago IL 60657. (312) 929-1081. Original one-woman theater, women's stories, full of humor and poignancy, "Critic's Choice." Adaptable to most spaces.

**CATHY WINTER.** 1017 Chrisler Ave., Schenectady, NY 12303. (518) 377-6312. Singer/songwriter. Feminist folk music and blues since 1970s.

**THE WYRD SISTERS.** PO Box 26062, 116 Sherwood St., Winnipeg, MB R3C 4K9, Canada. Kim Baryluk, Kim Segal, and Nancy Reinhold make music that is an intimate, powerful experience that is so often lost because it is so rarely found.

## WANTED

**PHOTOGRAPHERS** experienced in shooting live performances. 'HOT WIRE' is in perpetual need of good quality photos from women's festivals and other events. Looking for photos from early '70s to present. Contact editor if interested.

**WOMAN WAVES RADIO SHOW** c/o Laura Shine, 207 Idelwylde Dr., Louisville, KY 40206. Seeking contributions of music for radio airplay.

## PRODUCERS OF WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE

**BARSEL & BROWN PRODUCTIONS.** PO Box 2165, Upper Darby, PA 19082. Seeking to produce women's music in Philadelphia area. Send demos and bios.

**DYKES ON MYKES.** Kelly Conway, 7777 Sunrise Blvd. #1800-151, Citrus Hts., CA 95610. (916) 725-5512. Dykes on Mykes cultivates local talent to produce ongoing concerts and maintains a referral network. We also provide workshops on how to produce concerts.

**LAVENDER MUSIC.** 40 Grange Rd., Rokeby, Tasmania, 7019 Australia. Phone/fax (International) 61-02-479720. Distributors of Women's Music. If you are interested in Australia, please send demo tape and glossy to the above address.

**LEFT BANK PRODUCTIONS.** 104 S. Oak Park Ave., Oak Park, IL 60302. (708) 383-4700. Independent producers of women's performances in a variety of venues.

**MOUNTAIN MOVING COFFEEHOUSE.** PO Box

409159, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 561-6544 or (312) 685-8310. *Oldest women-only coffeehouse in the world. 30+ Saturday night shows/year; all types of entertainment; "big names" (last season: Ferron, Topp Twins, Karen Williams, Dos Fallopa) and novices. Chem-free. Also, annual one-day midwinter festival in early December.*

**DENISE NOTZON.** 1450 Sixth St., Berkeley, CA 94710. (510) 527-7545. *Booking consultations for agents, self-represented artists, and producers. Assessing/evaluating producers, artists, and agents; negotiating and clarifying contracts; conflict resolution; communication; billing systems; strategies for successful business. 12-year veteran in the entertainment/seminar industry.*

## FESTIVALS

**CAMP DYKE.** Particular Productions, Lin Daniels, 2854 Coastal Hwy. #7, St. Augustine, FL 32095. (904) 826-0410. *First annual. Memorial Day weekend 1994 in Santa Cruz, Calif. Workshops, fabulous entertainment, jazz every night, theater.*

**CAMPFEST.** RR5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322. (609) 694-2037. *The comfortable wimmin's music festival. Every Memorial Day weekend.*

**EAST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL.** Particular Productions, Lin Daniels, 2854 Coastal Hwy. #7, St. Augustine, FL 32095. (904) 826-0410. *Labor Day weekend 1994. Music, comedy, theater, films, panels, writers' tent, more. 3 hours north of New York City. ASL intensive course by/for lesbians at "Silent Pre-Fest" three days before festival begins.*

**HAWAIIAN WOMEN'S FESTIVAL.** Particular Productions, Lin Daniels, 2854 Coastal Hwy. #7, St. Augustine, FL 32095. (904) 826-0410. *The first annual Hawaiian Women's Festival on Oahu. Edwina Lee Tyler, Ginnie Clemmens, Maxine Feldman, Melanie Demore, and more, on the beach. February 14-21, 1994.*

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURAL JAMBOREE.** PO Box 42344, Portland, OR 97242. (503) 223-7237. *First weekend in July at Western Washington University in Bellingham. Four concerts, two dances, a workshop series, a crafts fair, movies, swimming, tennis,*

*volleyball, softball, and more! For information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.*

**WOMEN'S MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA.** PO Box 10626, Norfolk, VA 23513. (804) 392-5681. *Non-profit organization features minifest to benefit battered women. Annual in May since 1991.*

**WOMONGATHERING.** RR5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322. (609) 694-2037. *The festival of women's spirituality; Labor Day 1994.*

## VIDEOS

**MOTHER WOVE THE MORNING.** 1384 Cornwall Ct., Walnut Creek, CA 94596. *A one-woman play written/performed by Carol Lynn Pearson. Sixteen women throughout history search for God the Mother and invite her back into the human family.*

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**SEA GNOMES HOME.** PO Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207) 367-5076. *Women's rooming house on the Maine coast; open June-September. Several rooms; ocean view.*

## BOOKSTORES

**NEW WORDS BOOKSTORE.** 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 876-5310. *Since 1974. New England's largest women's bookstore offers an exciting selection of women's, lesbian, and multicultural music, books and journals. Full mail order services and newsletter.*

**WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST.** 5233 N. Clark St., Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9299. *Since 1979. Feminist, lesbian, and children's books; records, tapes, posters, jewelry, rentable videos. Weekly programming, readings and book signings by local and nationally known talent.*

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**GRAPHIC SERVICES FROM A TO Z.** Lambda Publications (publisher of *Nightlines* and *Outlines* lesbian/gay newsmagazine), 3059 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 871-7610. *Using advanced desktop publishing, we can meet your artistic and graphic needs, including posters, menus, flyers, brochures, letterheads, newsletters, camera-ready ads, resumés, and more.*

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**NEED MONEY?** Wolfe Video, PO Box 64, New Almaden, CA 95042. (408) 268-6782. *Offering special fundraising packages to groups for the performance rights to 'Two In Twenty,' the world-famous lesbian soap opera. Call for details.*

## PERIODICALS

**BROOMSTICK.** 3543 18th St. #3, San Francisco, CA 94110. *National feminist political journal by, for, about women over forty. 4x/yr; U.S. \$15, Canada \$20 (US funds), Overseas/Institutions \$25, sample/\$5.*

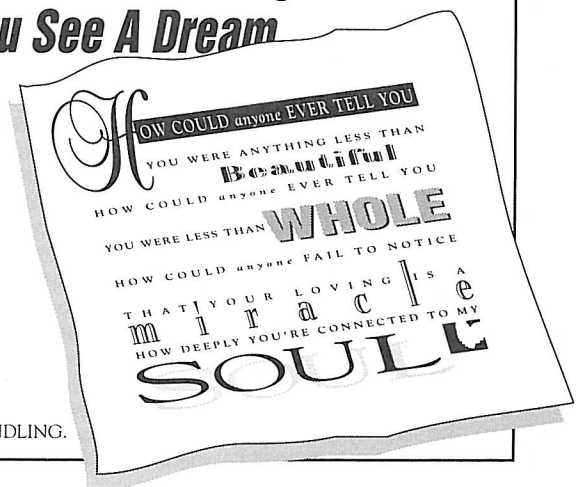
**CAULDREN.** PO Box 349, Culver City, CA 90232. (310) 633-2322. *Lesbian-identified publication seeking writers, artists, photographers. 4x/yr; \$13/yr; \$26/2 yrs.*

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**COMMON LIVES, LESBIAN LIVES.** PO Box 1553, Iowa City, IA 52244. *Lesbian quarterly. Includes graphics, essays, poems, short stories, and classified ads.* 4x/yr. \$15. Add \$7/yr. foreign.

**FANS OF WOMEN'S SPORTS.** PO Box 49648, Austin, TX, 78765. (512) 458-3267. *Grassroots organization supporting women's sports. Request free sample newsletter.*

**FEMINIST COLLECTIONS** by Phyllis Holman Weisbard, 430 Memorial Library, 728 State St., Madison, WI 53706. *A quarterly of women's studies resources.* \$7 subscription.

**HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music & Culture.** 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9009, fax (312) 728-7002 *Only publication devoted to national woman-identified music & culture scene. Music, writing, film, dance, comedy. Many photos. Each 64-page issue includes two-sided stereo recording of four-six women's music tunes.* 3x/yr.; \$17/yr, \$7/sample (includes postage). Canada: \$19-US/yr. Overseas: write or see masthead on table of contents page for rates.

**IN THESE TIMES.** 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. (800) 827-0270. *ITT is committed to democratic social and political change. Weekly coverage of the nation, the world, the arts. Free sample copy.*

**IOWA WOMAN MAGAZINE.** PO Box 680, Iowa City, IA 52244. *Pays for essays, fiction, poetry, and visual art by women everywhere. SASE for submission guidelines. Mention this ad and send \$4 for sample copy.* Subscriptions \$18/yr, 4x/yr.

**KALLOPHE: A JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S ART.** FCCJ, 3939 Roosevelt Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32205. *Collection of poetry, prose, and art by women.* 3x/yr.; \$10.50/yr.; \$20/2yrs.

**LESBIAN ETHICS.** L.E. Publications, PO Box 4723, Albuquerque, NM 87196. *This lesbian journal has many articles, few poems, some classified ads.* 3x/yr. \$14 domestic; \$16 foreign-surface, \$24 foreign-air.

**NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN.** PO Box 3000, Denville, NJ, 07834-3000. (800) 562-1973. *Political & progressive, reaching 65,000+ readers; 6x/yr: politics, health, grassroots activism, racism, homophobia, sexism. We critique pop culture from a blissfully biased feminist perspective.* Nat'l/int'l. Sample/\$3.

**SINISTER WISDOM: A Journal for the Lesbian Imagination in the Arts and Politics.** PO Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703. *Quarterly publication of, by, about multi-cultural, multi-class lesbians.* 4x/yr.; \$17 domestic, \$22 foreign.

**SOUND AROUND.** PO Box 297, Hadley, PA 01035. (413) 549-6283. *Music venue directory. Acoustic, electric folk, alternative. Entire U.S. \$25; regionally \$10.*

**TRIVIA 20 RETROSPECTIVE.** Box 9606, North Amherst, MA, 01059-9606. *Ruthann Robson, Linda Nelson, Daphne Marlatt, Rena Rosenwasser, Barbara Mor, Anne Dellenbaugh, Betsy Warland, Susanne Harwood, Leah Halper, Lise Weil, I. Rose, Harriet Ellenberger, Michele Causse.*

**WOMAN OF POWER.** PO Box 2785, Orleans, MA 02653. (508) 240-7877. *Women's spirituality.*

## GROUPS

**WOMEN'S INITIATIVE.** AARP, 601 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20049. *Organization helping to*

*ensure that economic, social, health, and long-term care needs of mid-life/older women are met.*

## RECORDINGS

**155th AND ST. NICHOLAS,** The Sugar Hill Duo. Big Noise Productions, PO Box 141121, Cincinnati, OH 45250. (513) 381-1048. *Dynamic jazz keyboards and vocals by mother/daughter duo Jay and Punky Allbright. Includes "Take the 'A' Train" and "Blue in Green."* \$10 cassette/\$15 CD + \$2 postage.

**ABOUT TIME MUSIC CO.,** Elsmarie Norby, PO Box 2226, San Anselmo, CA, 94960. (800) 995-0290. *Six albums on tape and CD; soothing, reflective acoustic piano music (1 album with flute) for reviving the sweet mystery that sound is to the soul.* Brochure available.

**ADVENTURES IN AFROPEA 2,** Djur Djura. Luaka Bop, PO Box 652, Cooper Station, New York, NY 10256. (212) 255-2714, fax (212) 255-3809. *This author, filmmaker, singer/songwriter has recorded (in her native Algerian language) songs of women's repression in Arabic society.*

**DRUTHERS,** Teresa Chandler. PO Box 21577, Piedmont, CA 94620. *Includes "What are Friends For," "Crazy Blues." With musicians Barbara Higbie, Nina Gerber, Jake Lampert, Michaelle Goerlitz.* Cassette \$10 + \$2 shipping.

**FANTASY WOMAN,** Kim Wilcox. PO Box 653, Charlotte, MI 48813. (517) 543-3995. *10 tracks, including "Nobody Knows Me Like You" [on the 9/93 'HOT WIRE' soundsheet], "No Pumps Required," "Flag of Love," and more.*

**FLYING WITH THE ANGELS: Songs From the Theatre of the Living Soul,** Karen MacKay. Angelink, PO Box 23016, Philadelphia, PA 19124. (215) 537-0954. *Includes "Home to West Virginia" and "She" \$10 cassette/\$15 CD.*

**GAYLE MARIE SINGS CHRISTMAS SONGS.** Gayle-O Music/Angel Productions, PO Box 496, Penngrove, CA 94951. *Traditional carols, including "Silent Night" and "Jingle Bells," instrumental tracks only on Side 2.*

**GIVE IT ALL UP, ZRAZY.** Madeleine Seiler, 5 Wellington Gardens, Ranelagh, Dublin 6. Tel. 976451, fax 976719. *Carole Nelson/Maria Walsh. This Irish duo angered their government by producing the song "6794700" (the phone number for the Women's Info Network), which is illegal to display because it provides pregnancy counseling.*

**GLASS HOUSE,** Kathryn Warner. Fabulous Records/IMA, PO Box 253, Bodega, CA, 94922. *Funk, blues, romantic ballads, INCREDIBLE VOCALIST! Includes "Must Be Love" [heard on the September 1993 'HOT WIRE' soundsheet.]*

**HEAL THE BROKEN WING,** Judith May. Yes You May! Music, PO Box 31539, San Francisco, CA 94131. (415) 661-6553. *Judith May, singer/songwriter, therapist, and former bassoonist with several metropolitan orchestras, combines her musical and healing talents on this 11-song album.*

**IDLEWILD,** Idlewood (Kris Kitko Stockert and Karen Van Fossan). 418 Dover Dr., Bismarck, ND 58504. (701) 255-1927. *This recording includes "Two" and "Crystalize."*

**I'M DANGEROUS,** Carol Steinel. 4326 SE Woodstock Blvd. #236, Portland, OR 93215. (503) 771-3748. *Includes "Lesbian Shuffle," "Abnormal and Proud," and other lesbian-identified tunes.*

**I SURVIVED A FEMMEI,** Teresa Chandler and Karen Ripley. PO Box 21577, Oakland, CA 94620. *Country-flavored funny cassette includes "Squeezin' Yours" and "D-Y-K-E."*

**LEAVE A LITTLE LIGHT,** The Wyrd Sisters. PO Box 26062, 116 Sherbook St., Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4K9 Canada. (204) 475-5116, fax (204) 452-4576. *Debut cassette includes "The Faucet," "Solstice Carole," and "This Memory," which memorializes the December 6, 1989, murder of 14 female students at Montreal College.*

**LEAVE A LITTLE LIGHT BEHIND,** Jess Hawk Oakenstar. Hallows Records, 1826 East Willetta, Phoenix, AZ 85006. *Upbeat country rock and moving ballads from world traveler/troubador. Includes "Dear Gertrude Stein" and title track.*

**THE MEANING OF LIFE,** The Physical Scientists. Third-World Amplification, PO Box 9892, Moscow, ID 83848. *Includes "Family Values" and title track.*

**NEDRA JOHNSON,** Nedra Johnson. PO Box 20308, Thompkins Square Station, New York, NY 10009. *Contemporary R&B in the gospel tradition. Includes "Get It and Feel Good," "Where Will You Be?" and "Jubilee!"*

**THE NEON GIRLS...CHRISTY & JOAN...DEFYING GRAVITY.** Sally M. Baker, 4049 Pennsylvania #206, Kansas City, MO 64111. (816) 756-1626. *This demo tape includes the amusing "Will You Support Me" and "Their Brains Were Small."*

**NEXT SWEET TIME,** Cathy Winter. 1017 Chrisler Ave., Schenectady, NY 12303. *Feminist folk music and blues. Includes "Electrician Blues."*

**NORTH SKYE,** Jane and Julia. PO Box 3084, Baltimore, MD 21229. (410) 455-9522. *Includes "Blue Love," "Only in Time," "Lily." Mellow pop/rock with an emphasis on keyboards.*

**GRETCHEN PHILLIPS.** PO Box 4600, Austin, TX 78765. *Formerly of 2 Nice Girls, thought-provoking solo tape. \$8.50 each, postage paid. All covers are handmade.*

**PUZZLE PALACE,** Maggie and Melissa Connell. (818) 762-9594. *Demo tape; includes "Look in the Mirror" and "Mixed-Up World."*

**SAMPLE THIS,** DFH (Dykes From Hell). Vicious Pet Productions, PO Box 322, Vandalia, OH 45377. (513) 667-2181. *This EP cassette from Jake, Amy, Abby, and Robyn includes "Texas-Mexican Bar" and "Not Satisfied."*

**SONGS FROM MY SELF,** Phyllis Sanchez. Violet Flame Music, PO Box 12862, Albuquerque, NM 87195. *Six-track recording; includes a variety of loud and quiet piano pieces.*

**SPEAKING STONES,** Kathleen Tracy. Offroad Productions, PO Box 18481, Seattle, WA 98118-0481. (206) 723-6853. *Includes "Shackle and Chain," "Hurricane," and "Heart Like a Highway."*

**SPINNING WHEEL.** 119 Mt. Eden Road, Auckland 3, New Zealand/Aotearoa. Tel. 64096387422, fax 64096387423. *This 13-track, self-titled album from Ieraine horstmanshoff and Karen Hunter includes such tunes as "In My Dreams," "Ebenhazer Blues" and "Melt." Bluesy folkrock.*

**TATTOO URGE,** Meg Hentges, Jo Rae DiMenno, PO Box 4297, Austin, TX 78765-4297. Tel. (512) 441-3067, fax (512) 451-0754. *Formerly with the bands Neo Boys and Two Nice Girls, Meg Hentges breaks out with this EP. Includes the rockin' "This Kind of Love Is" and "Flick of the Switch."*

**TRUTH AND THE LIE,** Susan Herrick. WATCHfire Records, PO Box 657, Unionville, PA 19375-0657. (215) 486-6139, fax (215) 486-6326. *Distribution:*

Ladyslipper, PO Box 3124-R, Durham, NC 27715. 1-800-634-6044. "You Deserve" (cassingle too!), voted best new song in 1992 by 'HOT WIRE' readers. A listener wrote, "I met my true soulmate through the 'together listening' of your music as we were 'Slow Burnin'!...'One Moment At A Time'/ 'Never Have I' and 'Silent Friend.' I mean wow, these have been like a guidebook-color-by-number to our flowing communication!"

**WE ARE DESTINY**, Destiny, 622 S. 5th St., Philadelphia, PA 19147. (215) 925-9991. Tapes available through Goldenrod catalog. New release by the "finger snapping, toe tapping" original empowering lesbian feminist music group. Enjoy songs like "Lesbian Lover," "Homophobic Blues," "Provincetown," "Lust," "Softball," "It's Alright."

**THE WAR IS OVER**, Karen MacKay. Angelink, PO Box 23016, Philadelphia, PA 19124. (215) 537-0954. \$10 cassette includes "Bethlehem" and "Little Brown Betty."

## BOOKS

**THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHILD'S HERITAGE COOKBOOK** by Vanessa Roberts Parham. Sandcastle Publishing, PO Box 3070, South Pasadena, CA 91031-6070. A large, easy-to-read, step-by-step recipe book encourages kids to participate in cooking. Includes African-American vignettes.

**ALISON BECHDEL: Featuring Absolutely No Dykes to Watch Out For!** Gay Comics #19, Early Summer 1993. 395 9th St., San Francisco, CA 94103-3831. Alison shares herself and another of her comic strips, "Servants to the Cause," in this special edition of the *Gay Comics*.

**BEFORE OUR EYES** by Joan Alden. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. A novel that follows the life of a daughter from an All-American family as she uncovers their hidden secrets (including alcoholism and lesbianism).

**BEHIND CLOSED DOORS** by Robbi Sommers. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Short stories, plenty of erotica.

**CAN'T KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE** by Ellen Orleans. Laugh Lines Press, PO Box 259, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. A collection of essays by humorist Ellen Orleans; first book by the only press devoted to women's humor.

**CAR POOL** by Karin Kallmaker. Naiad Press, Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Lesbian romance.

**THE CAT CAME BACK** by Hilary Mullins. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Fictional story of a young lesbian infatuation with two women teachers and a classmate.

**THE CHANGE: Women, Aging & The Menopause** by Germaine Greer. Ballantine-Del Rey-Fawcett-Ivy, 201 E. 50th St., NY, NY 10022. A direct look at the physiological and emotional aspects of menopause. Other chapters explore traditional and alternative treatments and myths.

**THE COMPLETE GARBO TALKS** by Garbo. Big Breakfast Publishing, PO Box 02394, Columbus, OH 43202. A collection of humor pieces dealing with everyday lesbian life.

**DAMRON ROAD ATLAS, 3rd ED.** Damron Publishing, PO Box 422458, San Francisco, CA 94142-2458. Travel guide for gay men/lesbians.

**DOG TAGS** by Alexis Jude. New Victoria Publishers, PO Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055. Tel./fax (802)

649-5297. A story describing the lesbian relationship of two military women stationed at a U.S. Army base in Korea.

**EMPATHY** by Sarah Schulman. Plume-Penguin Books, 375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014. Several characters face their homosexual identity and experience homophobia and rejection.

**EXPERIMENTAL LOVE POETRY** by Cheryl Clarke. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. 83 pages of clear and direct poems dealing with racism, death, sex, and love.

**FORTY-THREE SEPTEMBERS ESSAYS** by Jewelle Gomez. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (607) 272-0000. Essays from the Lambda Literary Award-winning author of 'The Gilda Stories.'

**FRIENDS AND LOVERS: A Romance** by Jackie Calhoun. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. A woman tries to recover from her first lesbian affair only to be pulled in different directions by her ex-husband, ex-lover, some possible loves, her mother, her teenage daughter, and various friends.

**GOBLIN MARKET** by Lauren Wright Douglas. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. The Lambda Award-winning author traces events in the fifth Caitlin Reece mystery as C.R. follows monsters in human form—the goblin men.

**LADY LOBO** by Kristen Garrett. New Victoria Publishers, PO Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055. Tel./fax (802) 649-5297. Young dyke jock balances a college basketball career and an interracial relationship.

**A LEGAL GUIDE FOR LESBIAN AND GAY COUPLES** by attorneys Robin Leonard, Hayden Curry, Denis Clifford. Nolo Press, 950 Parker St., Berkeley, CA 94710. (510) 549-1976. Spells out steps couples must take to protect their legal and financial rights. Also includes copies of contracts, forms, and certificates.

**LESBIAN CULTURE: An Anthology** edited by Julia Penelope/Susan Wolfe. The Crossing Press. Poems, stories, photos, cartoons abound in this 560-page anthology. Writers and artists featured include Jorjet Harper, Toni Armstrong Jr., Alison Bechdel. Many 'HOT WIRE' reprints.

**LONG GOODBYES: A Virginia Kelly Mystery** by Nikki Baker. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. An African American woman returns to her hometown for a high school reunion that is disturbed by the mysterious drowning of a former teacher's spouse.

**MAKING THE ESTROGEN DECISION** by Gretchen Henkel. Fawcett Columbine, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022. Discusses many aspects of hormone replacement therapy that women use during menopause.

**MEETING AT THE CROSSROADS: The Landmark Book About the Turning Points in Girls' and Women's Lives** by Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan. Ballantine Books, 201 E. 50th St., New York, NY 10022. During a six-year period of interviews with 7- to 18-year-old girls at a private day school, a team of psychologists/educators uncover what girls give up physically, emotionally, and spiritually on the way to womanhood.

**NO MORE "NICE GIRL": Power, Sexuality & Success in the Workplace** by Rosemary Agonito. Bob Adams, Inc., 260 Center St., Holbrook, MA 02343. (617) 767-8100, fax, (617) 767-0994. Dr. Agonito's book offers women realistic strategies

for dealing with personal, professional, and structural sexism.

**NOT TELLING MOTHER: Stories From a Life** by Diane Salvatore. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Fictional lesbian couple deals with events in life.

**THE OTHER SIDE OF SILENCE** by Joan M. Drury. Spinsters Ink, PO Box 300170, Minneapolis, MN 55403. (612) 377-0287. Tyler Jones and her dog, Agatha Christie, walk through the park and discover squirrels, trees, and a dead body. Tyler also finds she's the prime murder suspect!

**THE RAGING GRANNIES SONGBOOK** edited by Jean McLaren and Heide Brown. New Society Publishers, British Columbia, Canada. Filled with favorite peace, environmental, and anti-war lyrics. Includes the names of tunes lyrics are sung to.

**SISTER/STRANGER: Lesbians Loving Across the Lines** edited by Jan Hardy. Sidewalk Revolution Press, PO Box 9062, Pittsburgh, PA 15224. Stories, poems, essays about lesbians loving across differences of race, class, religions, ethnicity, size, ability, age. \$11.95 + \$1.50 postage.

**SPAWN OF DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR** by Alison Bechdel. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (607) 272-0000. The fifth book in the series showcasing our favorite cartoon dykes!

**STAY TOONED** by Rhonda Dicksion. Naiad Press, Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Cartoons by author of 'The Lesbian Survival Manual.'

**THIN FIRE** by Nanci Little. Madwoman Press, Inc., PO Box 690, Northboro, MA 01532-0690. Novel follows young girl as she leaves her small town for a three-year stint in the Army.

**TORCHES THE SEDUCTION** by Lorraine Stone. Hummingbird Press, PO Box 8116, Santa Rosa, CA 95407-1116. A lesbian erotic romance that rarely uses euphemisms. "Passion with little poetry and no exploitation."

**UNDER THE SILK COTTON TREE** by Jean Buf-fong. Interlink Books, 99 Seventh Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11215. Novel follows the life of a young girl and her dreams living in her native Granada.

**WE'MOON '94—GAIA RHYTHMS FOR WOMYN CYCLES** by Musawa and others. Mother Tongue Ink, PO Box 1395, Estacada, OR 97023. (503) 630-7848. An astrological moon calendar, appointment book, and daily guide for womyn. Includes photos, drawings, lore, and more!

**WE OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES** by Julia Willis. Alamo Square Press, PO Box 14543, San Francisco, CA 94114. Lesbian screenplays! Now showing in a bookstore near you, or order your own autographed copy (\$11) from Julia Willis, PO Box 183, North Weymouth, MA 02191.

**WHAT I LOVE ABOUT LESBIAN POLITICS IS ARGUING WITH PEOPLE I AGREE WITH** by Kris Kovick. Alyson Publications, Inc., 40 Plympton St., Boston, MA 02118. 153 pages of witty cartoons and essays touching on politics, religion, therapy, lesbians, sex, and more!

**WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED SEX?** edited by Roz Warren. The Crossing Press, Freedom, CA 95019. Various cartoonists give their impressions of what women endure, all in the name of sex.

**WOMEN'S TRAVELLER: USA, Canada, Caribbean '93, 4th ED.** Damron Publishing, PO Box 422458, San Francisco, CA 94142-2458. Travel guide alphabetically listing (by state) where to stay, eat, and visit. •

# SOUNDSHEET

Produced by Joy Rosenblatt



ELLYN FLEMING

## BACK OFF

**WRITTEN BY:** Ellyn Fleming  
**PERFORMED BY:** Ellyn Fleming (vocals, rhythm guitar), Ken Selcer (guitar), Larry Jackson (bass), Russell Leach (drums)  
**FROM:** *Something Real*

E.F. Records  
 P.O. Box 117, Northbridge, MA 01534

Ellyn Fleming is a wild acoustic guitar rocker from the Boston area about whom many New Englanders are whispering. [Read her article, "From Partying Body Builder to Clean and Sober Musician" in the September 1992 issue of



BACK TO BACK

Jane Tyska

*HOT WIRE.*] "Is anybody else out there a wee bit tired of those cars that drive by honking their horns and yelling, 'Hey baby! How 'bout a little fun tonight?'" asks Ellyn. "My suggestion: Pump up the volume and blast this song at 'em!"

## ANYBODY HERE

**WRITTEN BY:** Barbara Lee Supeno  
**PERFORMED BY:** Back to Back: Barbara Lee Supeno (lead vocals, guitar), Kenni Feinberg (harmony vocals), and Mila Schiavo (percussion)

**FROM:** *Anybody Here*  
 Carpe Diem Music  
 P.O. Box 337, Carlisle, MA 01741  
 (617) 522-3068

"Anybody Here" is a song of empowerment and courage. It inspires us to stand up for what we believe, and to follow our hearts and our dreams no matter what obstacles/opportunities



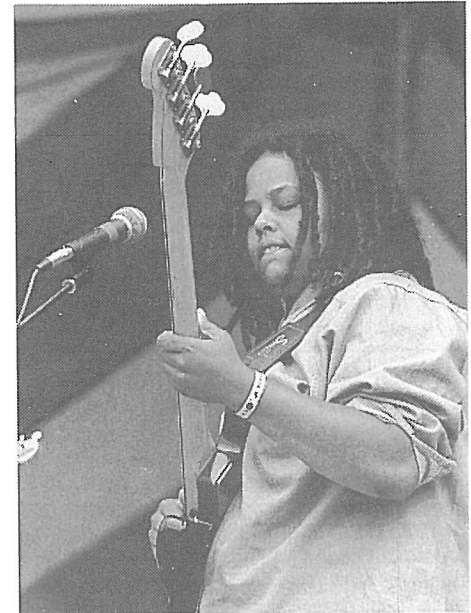
ZENOBIA

life may bring. The all-female trio Back to Back's captivating and upbeat original acoustic sound and sparkling humor have been winning over audiences everywhere, and quickly gaining them the attention of the more prestigious musical venues/festivals across the East Coast and elsewhere. The owner of Passim (Cambridge) says, "Definitely a group to keep your eye on. A rising act."

## HOME

**WRITTEN BY:** Zenobia  
**PERFORMED BY:** Zenobia (vocal, MIDI programming; arrangement of drums, bass, keyboards, strings, bells, tubaflugel, percussion)  
**FROM:** *Persistence Of The Heart*

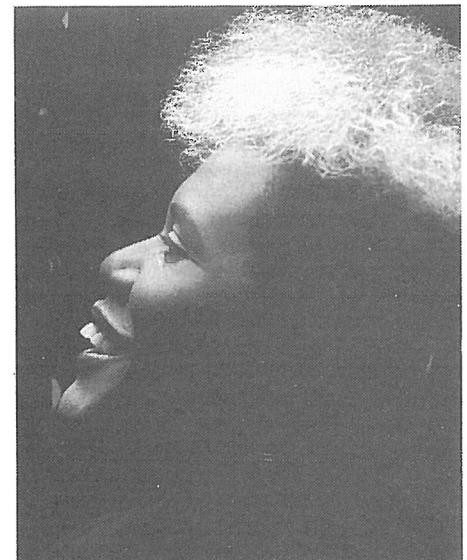
Issmay Bibbs Music  
 464 11th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215  
 (718) 499-8247



NEDRA JOHNSON

You only know it when you feel it, and there's only one word that can describe it: "home." The comfort, unwavering trust, and undying truth that is felt—all in a single moment. "When I was working on the lyrics, I knew this was as honest as I'd ever been," says Zenobia. "I stopped writing and performing for twelve years because the truth hurt so much. Now I think I'm ready to be vulnerable to my audience and expose my heart, love, and my desire again. It's a painful celebration." This is Zenobia.

*continued on inside back cover*



GWEN AVERY

Toni Armstrong Jr.

bia's first recording endeavor since 1984. She's back with a vengeance, a song in her heart, and many projects in progress, especially *Persistence Of The Heart*.

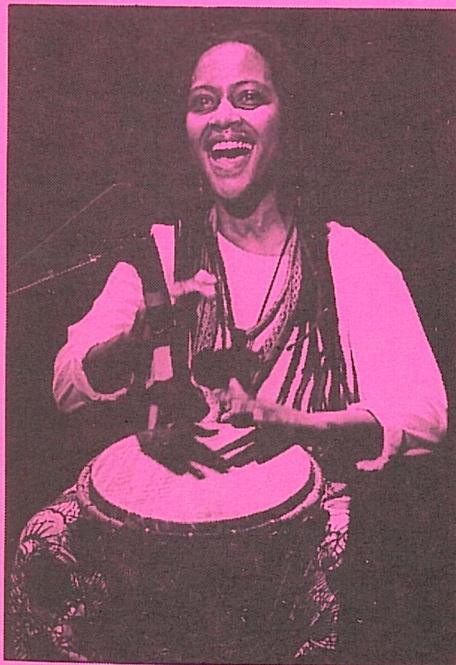
## WHERE WILL YOU BE?

**WRITTEN BY:** Nedra Johnson  
**PERFORMED BY:** Nedra Johnson (vocals, bass), Paul Branin (guitars, sax, drum program)  
**INSPIRED BY:** Pat Parker/Audre Lorde  
 Nedra Johnson  
 P.O. Box 20308, Thompkins Sq. Station  
 New York, NY 10009  
 (212) 477-1802

This New Yorker has performed with Toshi Reagon and Helen Hooke; her gigs include the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and the 1993 March on Washington. Part R&B, part "gospel tradition," part radical women's music—Nedra's work is full of powerful politics and danceable grooves. "Where Will You Be?" is a cut from her debut album of original music, which she is now in the studio making. It will include "Jubilee!"



JEAN AND JUNE MILLINGTON



UBAKA HILL

Toni Armstrong Jr.

## CONCON

**ARRANGED BY:** Ubaka Hill  
**PERFORMED BY:** Ubaka Hill (djimbé, udu, sangha, ashiko, claves, whistles, bells), Caru Thompson (shekere)  
**FROM:** *Drumsong*  
 Drumsong Productions  
 311 Quincy St., Brooklyn, NY 11216  
 (718) 499-8247

Ubaka Hill has been a long time coming with her first all-percussion recording. Her interpretation of the West African public domain "Concon" is what she calls "in the tradition of jazz...transforming...innovation!" Ubaka's focus is to present songs of drums and percussion in expansive and new directions that are unlike commonly known forms used in ceremonies, ethnic-traditional music, or formless jams. Ubaka's rhythmic arrangement of "Concon" is a colorful weave of traditional, contemporary,



ALISON FARRELL

Virginia Blaisdell

New Age, Worldbeat, and improvised expressions. With Zenobia Conkerite producing and Blaise Sires engineering, Ubaka passionately sculpts with her hands each drum part and other natural, acoustic sounds.

## GOLD IN THE TAPESTRY

**WRITTEN BY:** Jess Hawk Oakenstar  
**PERFORMED BY:** Jess Hawk Oakenstar (lead vocal, acoustic guitar), Hilary King (harmony), Gary Bruzzese (drums, percussion), Russ Skaggs (bass), Ron Herndon (piano, keyboards), Jeff Dayton (acoustic, electric, and lap steel guitars)  
**FROM:** *Leave a Little Light Behind*  
 Hallows Records  
 1826 E. Willetta, Phoenix, AZ 85006  
 (602) 258-7985

Jess, who was born and brought up in Zimbabwe and also resided in New Zealand (Aotearoa) for more than ten years, has been living and touring in the U.S. for the past three years. Her music has been called "a new genre of women's" *continued on page 63*

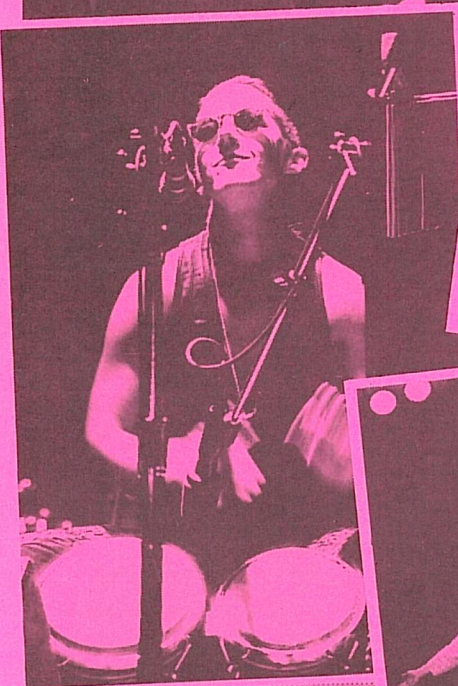


JESS HAWK OAKENSTAR

Toni Armstrong Jr.



MUSE, CINCINNATI'S WOMEN'S CHOIR



1993 saw a flurry of activity, including anniversary extravaganzas and festivals. Clockwise from upper left: Vicki Randle, Suzanne Westenhoefer, the Washington Sisters and Topp Twins, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Home Girls...Going Home, Barbara Borden, mass chorus at the National Women's Choral Fest, Alive! reunion, Robin Burdulis, Linda Tillery & Teresa Trull.

