

# HOT WIRE

A JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

Featuring An Interview with Kate Clinton and

Festivals

Stage Fright

Kay Gardner

Women's Radio

Mary Lou Williams

Music, Magic, and Matrism

The Washington Twins

Computer Music

Politics and Art

Tour Booking

Ann Bannon



Volume One, Number One, November 1984 \$5

# From the Editors

When a new journal pokes its masthead up out of the crowd of publications vying for your attention, it isn't always easy to decide if this young upstart deserves your attention. Flipping through the pages--though it may give you an inkling of the journal's subject matter and style--doesn't always answer questions you want answered before investing in a subscription. Questions like: Where does this journal come from? Who does it come from? What are its intentions? Essentially: What are its roots?

Hot Wire's roots are firmly planted in an organization called Not Just a Stage, whose own roots sprang from the groundwork laid by Toni Armstrong. Toni began publishing an annual directory of women's music resources in 1977. In the Fall of 1983, Toni took on two partners--Michele Gautreaux and Ann Morris--in this awesome project. Subsequently, Ann and Michele also agreed to join Toni in producing the second annual women's Music Industry Conference at the National Women's Music Festival (NWMF). In January of 1984, the final member of the "ménage"--Yvonne Zipter--joined the group to take on the primary responsibility of organizing the first women's Writers' Conference at NWMF. And so Not Just a Stage was born.

Not Just a Stage has as its animating purpose working as a catalyst to develop and maintain a network of creators of women's culture. The primary aims of Not Just a Stage are to:



Vada Vernée

- \*disseminate information to creative women about women and creativity, especially women's music;

- \*organize events where creative women can meet, network, share talent, enjoy each other's work, and provide encouragement and support as well as exchange information;

- \*produce and circulate a good quality journal of women's music and culture;

- \*promote and provide forums for the examination of woman-identified interests, processes, ethics, ideas, viewpoints--including and especially music and writing;

- \*provide forums for the examination, discussion, and promotion of woman-identified art and the politics that inform that art;

- \*promote and encourage participation by women of color within the women's music network;

- \*be a catalyst for women trying to make a business or career out of their creativity, focusing on resources and contacts available within the existing and developing feminist networks;

- \*celebrate women's culture --especially woman-identified music, writing, and performing

arts.

These are the ambitious roots of Hot Wire. With this background and intent, Hot Wire has begun publication. More specifically, Hot Wire intends to:

- \*provide a wide range of articles that focus on women's creativity, especially women's music, the performing arts, and writing, including: essays, festival coverage, "how-to" articles, interviews, announcements of significant events (past and future), technical articles, and personal experiences;

- \*circulate information, resources, energy, and inspiration to women everywhere;

- \*provide access to print for women writers, graphic artists, and photographers;

- \*work within the woman-identified women-in-print movement, choosing women to do the work every step of the way: writing, editing, production, printing, advertising, and promotion.

We hope this will answer some of the questions you have about Hot Wire. And we hope you will subscribe.

If you have additional questions about Not Just a Stage or Hot Wire, please write--we love getting mail!

Not Just a Stage

Toni Armstrong  
Michele Gautreaux  
Ann Morris  
Yvonne Zipter

**HOT WIRE: A Journal of Women's Music and Culture**

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Ann Morris  
Yvonne Zipter

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We welcome announcements of noteworthy events in your community for Hot Line as well as unsolicited manuscripts, graphics, and black and white photographs; write Not Just A Stage for details.

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By Michele Gautreaux

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Mountain Moving Coffeehouse** of Chicago is delighted and proud to announce the start of our **tenth** season. We are a drug-free/alcohol-free space for womyn and children providing live entertainment and cultural events (films, dance, lectures, readings by writers, and, of course, the best of womyn's music!). We are open every Saturday night (except during August) and have maintained our operating structure (collectively run by volunteers) for all these years. Every year we sponsor our annual "Minifest" featuring several hours of live entertainment upstairs and thirty to forty merchants and artisans downstairs. We love womyn-only space and encourage all visitors to come celebrate our tenth season with us during 1984-85. For information: (312) 769-6899.

**Allegra Productions** of Cambridge, Massachusetts, is proud to announce its **seventh** anniversary of producing women's music. Founded in 1977 by Polly Laurelchild and Anne Wilson, Allegra is one of the oldest self-supporting companies in the women's music industry. Allegra has produced over sixty programs, ranging in audience size from fifty to 5,000, including joint efforts with politically

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Hot Line announces upcoming events in women's music and culture and presents capsule reports of past happenings.

progressive organizations. Allegra is committed to community building and providing access for differently-abled women. For information about Allegra's seventh season, call (617) 547-1378.

Approaching her **fifth** birthday, **Women and Children First bookstore** has even more cause for celebration than usual. Chicago's feminist and children's bookstore moved in August from Armitage to 1967 N. Halsted. The new space, almost twice the size of the former and light and bright and airy, provides a delightful setting for browsing the shelves for books and records or attending Tuesday evening programs or Saturday story times. For Ann, Linda, and Flo--the women who staff Women and Children First--and for the many women who have supported this center of feminist activity and thought over the years, the move means more than a pleasanter environment: it signifies the growth and health of feminist enterprise. Cause, indeed, for celebrating at the day-long anniversary party on Saturday, November 10.

## FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

The second **National Festival of Women's Theatre** was held in Santa Cruz, California, October 4-14. It featured over thirty performances, thirty workshops, lectures, forums, open-mike performances, play readings, and guest speakers.

Participants from all over the United States saw many new works from companies representing all parts of America. It offered special attention to the continuing development of women's theatre as a significant cultural movement and provided a forum to address and evaluate future directions as well as honoring the work of the past.

The **San Francisco Women's Building** will hold its sixth **Annual Winter Women's Arts and Crafts Fair** December 1-2 and December 8-9, 1984. The entire four floors of the building will be open, with a splendid display of hand and woman-made arts and crafts, round-the-clock entertainment, events, and visitor hospitality. Arts and crafts will include works created by women representing all cultures, ages, and backgrounds to show the quality, vitality, and diversity of experience expressed in women's creative work today. Work by women of color and work that clearly represents and reflects women's culture will be prominently displayed. The Women's Building is wheelchair accessible. The San Francisco Women's Building is located at 3543 18th Street, San Francisco, California 94110.

The Eleventh **National Women's Music Festival** will be May 31-June 2, 1985, in Bloomington, Indiana. Performers interested in being considered for

Showcase should send their audition tapes, before the end of the year, to Denise Sierp, P.O. Box 2907, Indianapolis, Indiana 46206.

**The Alpen Musikfest** is a week-long festival focusing on women in music held July 22-28 in Estes Park, Colorado. The 1984 festival featured a thirty-member wind ensemble, conducted by festival director Jane Frasier, and the performance of Patsy Rogers's chamber opera, A Woman Alive.

The purpose of the Alpen Musikfest is to give women an opportunity to gather and share their skills and love of music, and to build a spirit of camaraderie among the participants.

The 1985 festival will feature performances by the wind ensemble as well as chamber music recitals. Scores by women composers are being sought for both the large group and the smaller wind and percussion ensembles.

For further information regarding submission of music or auditions, contact Jane Frasier, 8861 E. Florida B112, Denver, CO 80231, or call 303-696-9428.

**The Winnipeg Folk Festival** is the largest event of its kind in North America. The four-day festival features some of the finest regional, national, and international folk music artists. The festival includes a Kids Area, WOMEN'S MUSIC, Hand-Made Village, and International Food Village. The festival takes place the second weekend in July (July 11-14, 1985). For information write: Winnipeg Folk Festival, #8-222 Osborne Street S., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3L 1Z3 Canada.

**The East Coast Womyn's Camp-fest '84: A Festival of Womyn's Music and Sports** took place over Memorial Day Weekend, May 25-28, 1984, in southern New Jersey. Among those featured on Night Stage were Gayle Marie, Hunter Davis & Julie Homi, Ginni Clemmens, Judy Reagan, and Mary Watkins. There was also a Day Stage. For more information, write to P.O. Box 30381, Philadelphia, PA 19103, or call (215) 985-0401.

### MUSIC NEWS

Information concerning **funding for music organizations** is available from the Music Program, National Endowment for the Arts, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20506, (202) 682-5445.

**June Millington** is currently planning a promotional tour for spring 1985. In addition to performing, Millington is offering a **recording and production workshop** entitled "Demystifying the Recording Process." The five-hour course is a detailed survey covering recording concepts, techniques, and equipment, and offers an excellent overview of production by outlining the steps and processes involved in making a record. The course offers a unique opportunity for any woman interested in the recording world to share information largely inaccessible to anyone outside the mainstream music industry.

**Swingshift** began a two-week tour of Nicaragua September 18, 1984. The band performed at the fifth anniversary of the women's organization (AMNL-AE), among other events.



Jane Vanderhoff

Alpen Musikfest

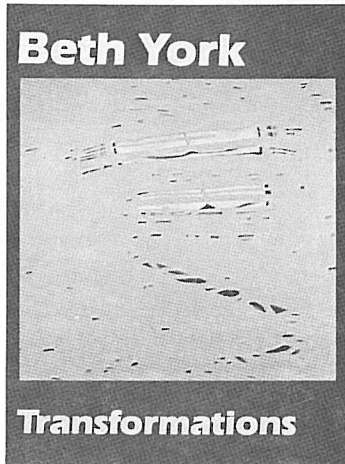
**Redwood Records** awarded a prize to **Zango Distribution** of Northern California for being the largest seller in 1983 of women's music. The award consisted of a subscription to Billboard magazine.

**Redwood Records** is now distributing Ferron's album Shadows on a Dime and is looking for new artists.

A new production company has been formed in Los Angeles: Lavender Unicorn, 5300 Hollywood Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90027.

**Sue Goldwomon**, host of "Her Infinite Variety," a two-hour show of music by women airing weekly on **WORT radio**, Madison, Wisconsin, is interested in any and all music, comedy, poetry, drama, or anything else recorded by women. Ms. Goldwomon is especially interested in playing new and less well-known artists, but also wants music by established performers. "Nothing is too big or too small! Nothing is too unimportant or far-out!" Send promo

*Continued on p. 59*



**TRANSFORMATIONS, by Beth York.** (Engineered by Janet Snyder and Eddy Oxford, Calliope Music, 519 S. Candler Road, Decatur, GA 30030. Distributed by Ladyslipper.)

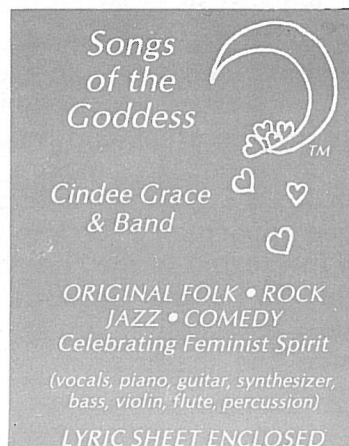
*Transformations* is a collection of instrumental music performed by Beth York and six Atlanta-based instrumentalists: Karen Sassman, Dede Vogt, Karen Morsch, Lisa Goldfarbe, Joan White, and Susan Ottzen. The content is healing, spiritual, contemplative, and nurturing. One piece, "Dolphinia," was written for the Dancer's Collective of Atlanta and performed as part of the Atlanta Dance Festival in 1982. "Go to Sleep," a lullabye of Southern Appalachia, acknowledges Beth's roots as a Southern woman and honors her grandmother, the first woman to sing to her.

The title piece was written, Beth says, to "express spiritual change within me as I explored my relationships with other women. Five movements represent distinctly different moods, from restless abandon to contemplation and hope."

**SONGS OF THE GODDESS, by Cindee Grace and Band.** (Produced by Lee Glenn and Cindee Grace, Grace & Goddess Unlimited, P.O. Box 4367, Boulder, CO 80306. Distributed by Grace & Goddess Unlimited.)

This cassette album of songs by Cindee Grace also features Ginny Silcox on piano, flute, synthesizers, guitar, and percussion; Illana Zhenya Gallon on bass, violin, and percussion; and Maya Ziglar on percussion and drums. The folk-rock-jazz flavored songs celebrate the Goddess, egalitarianism, and social change.

As Cindee explains in her article elsewhere in this issue, the aim of her music is to draw together the three strands of women's music, matristic spirituality, and New Age religion and music. These themes are represented on the album in songs such as "Space Child," "Pre-enlightenment Blues," and "Choose to Be Free."



**THE EDGE OF THE HORIZON, by Karen Beth.** (Produced by Karen Beth, Cattail Recordings, Box 371, Bearsville, NY 12409. Distributed by Ladyslipper.)



On her fourth album, Karen Beth sings and plays acoustic and electric guitar, synthesizer, piano, accordion, and banjo. She is joined by Barbara Cobb on electric bass, Molly Mason on upright bass, River Lightwomoon on drums and percussion, Tony Parker and Harvey Sorgen on drums, Mary Pantaleoni on fiddle, Hope Ruff on piano, Sue Pilla on alto and C flutes, Billy Voiers on electric slide guitar, dobro, and mandolin, and Alix Dobkin, Amy Fradon, and The Bethettes on harmony vocals.

Karen Beth lives in the heart of the Catskill Mountains. Her music has been shaped by her love for the land, and guided by the knowledge that its beauty must be protected for all time. Musical styles on *The Edge of the Horizon* include reggae, country, rock, and folk. Of performing, Karen has said, "I am always strengthened and inspired. I drink deeply the energy and spirit, and go home hoping I have given back as much as I have received." She shares this energy and spirit on her latest album.

## THE TWO OF US



DARDANELLE

VIVIAN LORD

**THE TWO OF US**, by Dardanelle and Vivian Lord. (Produced by Bernard Brightman, Stash Records, P.O. Box 390, Brooklyn, NY 11215.)

On this album, Dardanelle (vocals, vibes, and piano) and Vivian Lord (vocals and piano) carry on the tradition of jazz vocalist-instrumentalists begun by such luminaries as Sarah Vaughn, Carmen McCrae, Dinah Washington, Nat Cole, and Louis Armstrong. Joining the two of them on this album are George Duvivier on bass and Charlie Persip on drums.

Both Vivian Lord and Dardanelle have had extensive musical careers including formal musical educations, national and international tours, the jazz club circuit, and, for Dardanelle, a position during the sixties as staff pianist at WGN-TV in Chicago, Dardanelle and Vivian are neighbors and friends who have shared occasional professional associations over the years, but this is their first album together.

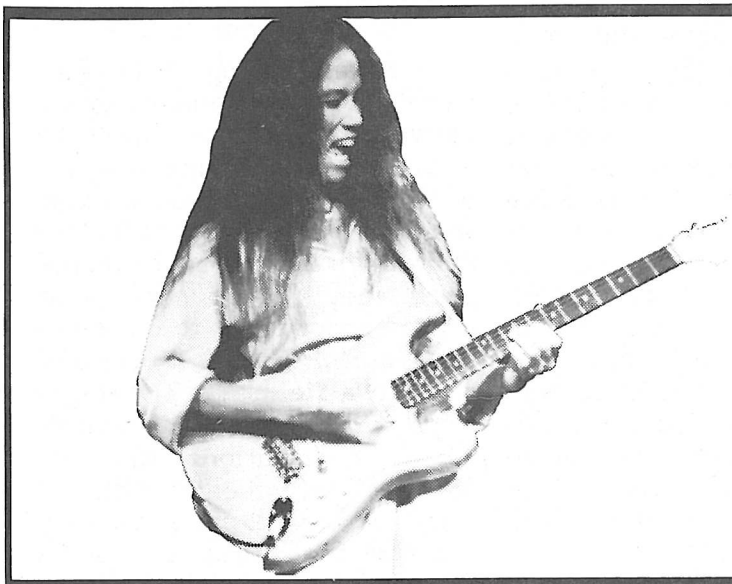


**OCTOBER ROSES**, by Linda Allen. (Produced by Julian Smedley, Nexus Records, P.O. Box 5881, Bellingham, WA 98227. Distributed by Redwood Records.)

Linda Allen's musical background as a researcher of traditional music of the Northwest and teacher of guitar, autoharp, and dulcimer is reflected in her second album of original folk music, October Roses. In this album she sings of women's lives and women's

strengths in songs such as the title song, an affirmation of aging, and "I'm a Mother/I'm a Writer."

Other musicians appearing on the album are Cary Black (bass), Margie Adam (piano), Julian Smedley (violin, synthesizer, guitar), Laura Smith (banjo), Jim Knall (trumpet), Geof Morgan (guitar, vocal), Eric Schoenberg, Jack Hansen, and Tracy Moore (guitar), and Janet Petersen (vocal).



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# Behind the Scenes

By Lucy Diamond

**SUSIE GAYNES** could probably be considered a one woman music network herself with the amount of talent and experience she has! This woman from Cazenovia, New York, is currently managing Susan Freundlich and doing bookings for both Susan and Kate Clinton. She is an active member of a three-woman production company, KKS Productions of Syracuse. In her spare time, Susie welcomes special projects. An example of one of her projects is the co-production work she did for Ladyslipper on Kay Gardner's album A Rainbow Path.



Linda Dederman

Susie began as a folk singer, and then found herself singing and drumming in an all-woman rock and roll band in

Behind the Scenes profiles the "unsung" women in the women's music network. Each column traces the career and development of women who are instrumental in building the network.

the early 70s. From there she became a sound technician, record distributor, and producer. But Susie's life as a musician was far from over. In 1978 she appeared at the Fourth National Women's Music Festival with the band No Sense of Humor. Soon after, she began touring with a new band, Flight of the Phoenix, doing both women's music and straight rock and roll. This experience of being "on the road" provided her with vital insight on how performers are treated (little did she know at the time how valuable this insight would be in her future work). Dropping out of women's music, and "off being a rock and roll star" in the band Siren, Susie returned to the network on occasion to work as a sound engineer. After two years, two of the band members decided to leave. It was good timing for Susie, too; she needed a rest from managing the band and touring.

In 1981, after only two months of rest, Susie jumped back in. This time she became a booker, and began working with Kate Clinton and her manager, Trudy Wood. Susie had come home to the women's music network and was so pleased to return with a talent as wonderful as Kate. Within the last year Susie has been expanding her experience further by helping Susan Freundlich develop her one-woman show. Susie is a strong link in the chain of women's music professionals.

**KAREN GOTZLER** is one of the two dynamic forces behind Midwest Music Inc. (formerly Midwest Women's Music Distribution, Inc.). It is through her efforts and those of her partner, Pat Reddemann, that much of the country has the opportunity to find women's music on store shelves. Their territory covers fourteen states from Canada to Mexico, stretching through the heart of the country.



Linda Dederman

Karen, along with Pat, came into the women's music network in 1981. Wanting to be in business for themselves, and both coming from jobs working with the Girl Scouts (who are known for their good managers), they saw the network as a good opportunity to do something useful. Having a desire to work in a field that just might "change the world," women's music distribution was the business for them. With no prior network experience, they describe their first six months as spent "being totally shocked



and wondering just what was going on here!"

But they learned fast. Unfamiliar terms (list price, inventory control, etc.) quickly become a main part of their new experience with paperwork. It was the beginning of their new life.

Karen says now that she never anticipated the amount of work involved, but admits she loves what she is doing. Her role in Midwest Music is that of general manager. She keeps the day-to-day operation going, does promotion, and works with their attorney. She supervises the office, staff, and their volunteers. Karen also handles concert production and promotion, and edits their newsletter, Women's Music News. She thinks women's music has a message for everyone, and strongly believes in the concept of outreach. She says, "Everyone needs to hear about it and needs to be transformed by the words and the music." "Women's Music Sings to You" is a Midwest slogan that demonstrates that great spirit of outreach.

Karen's work is a mission of the heart. Her dedication can best be summed up by her own words: "This is what I want to do, and this the network I want to help build."

**DIANE LINDSAY**, whose electrifying bass playing charged the Meg Christian tour, has been backing up women's music for the past six years. But performing as a back-up musician is only a small part of this very talented woman. It seems like every time you turn around, you find Diane doing something new in the network. She wrote the beautiful song "Sweet Darlin' Woman," she co-produced

Linda Tillery's album, and has performed on tour with Margie Adam, Cris Williamson, and most recently with Meg. But Diane's story has only just begun. She has recently released her first solo album, Open Up, on her own label, Back Street Records.



Jane O'Neal

Even though many of us know Diane for her bass playing, piano was the instrument she began with at the age of four. She was taught piano from a classical orientation, and as she got a little older, showed great promise as a classical pianist. Encouraged by her parents and teachers, she continued in the classical tradition until the day she discovered pop music. Diane had always had a curiosity about the bass guitar. But it wasn't until a friend she was co-writing with encouraged her to buy one and to start taking herself seriously that she finally did. She bought her first bass from a guy who, although "desperate for money," was simply unable to comprehend what use a girl could have for a bass guitar. He kept repeating, "I work with this." She literally had to throw the money in his face and run out the door when the purchase was made. Moreover, the manager of the band she was playing in at the time told her

"girls don't play bass," but that didn't stop Diane. She took herself and her bass playing very seriously and began to teach herself. She listened to the records of B. B. King, Albert King, and John Mayall, to learn technique. From the very beginning, she felt a heart and gut relationship with the bass and recognized early its versatility. Developing a real feel for what the bass does was a major step in learning to play. With the power of this instrument, Diane can shape and mold the music and express herself as opposed to "just playing notes." She holds a strong commitment to play music that touches her, because if it touches her, she's sure it will touch someone else. She has described her own style of playing as one that "shapes feelings."

Diane entered what we call women's music in an "organic" way. She believes women's music itself was the product of an organic process, in that it wasn't planned and then promoted. Women's music was a result of more and more women hearing her music and the music of other women like her, and discovering that the music spoke to their lives. As the process continued, more and more the audiences in the clubs where these women worked became mostly female.

In 1976, by referral, Diane was contacted by Margie Adam to work on her album Songwriter. Next she played on Teresa Trull's album The Ways a Woman Can Be, then on to Meg Christian's album Face the Music, and finally Linda Tillery's. She left the network for a short time due to lack of work, but is back with Open Up.

Diane feels she owes a lot

to women's music. It has given her the opportunity to get her music out, to get herself in front, and the ability to have freedom lyrically. The support she has received for who she is and what she does is wonderful, and she returns those feelings through her music. Her love and dedication to the network can be best illustrated in her desire to someday have Back Street Records provide the opportunity for other performers to record their music. Diane's reminder to us is something we should not forget, "we're all in this together!"

**RUTH DWORIN**, concert producer and sound technician, whose extraordinary work is done primarily in Toronto Canada, is currently producing full time. She has her own company (Womynly Way), and does approximately ten shows a year. Ruth can also be found hard at work at many of the women's music festivals during the year.



Linda Dederman

Three major events in her life led her to women's music. The first event was at the Philadelphia Folk Festival in 1972, where Ruth heard Frankie Armstrong perform in concert. One song in particular struck

her so directly that she realized she could accept feminism through the music where other means had failed. For years Ruth's friends had been attempting to win her over, but it took the music to finally show her the way.

Then, in 1974, Ruth attended the Boston Women's Music Weekend. One of the workshops she attended was on Bulgarian singing. She was excited to have the opportunity to sit and listen to what she thought would be folk-type music, which she loved. It didn't work out that way. In fact they made her sing. She had always believed she couldn't sing, because when she was in school, Ruth was told to just mouth the words. Even though she says she doesn't carry a tune well, the experience of singing with a group of women was very empowering for her, and helped to change her life.

While attending a Casse Culver concert in 1976 in Toronto, Ruth became fascinated with a sound board. She was so curious about it that after the concert she stayed and spoke to the sound women, helping them tear down and load up. The very next weekend Ruth was off to the Spring Boston Women's Music Festival. She attended a workshop given by the sound women. This workshop proved to be another life-changing event. While in the workshop she got the courage to ask questions. She was supportively answered and above all she understood how everything worked. Ruth also discovered that she could hear different sounds and in fact sort them out. For a person who was told she was tone deaf all her life, this was quite a discovery.

Since then Ruth has

jumped full blast into working for the women's music network. In 1977 she was a member of the collective Sappho Sound and Lights, has worked many years at the National Women's Music Festival on the sound crew, and has freelanced as a producer and sound technician. It was in 1980 that she decided to work as a full-time producer. Through some very creative means, she financed the beginning of her company Womynly Way. She continues to utilize monies made available by the Canadian government for grant programs, along with any other fund raising ideas she can think of. Through the continual effort of visibility in her community, Ruth has established a solid professional image of concert production. She is an outstanding role model for all women doing production in the network.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*Lucy Diamond, pen name for Linda Dederman, has been involved in the women's music network since 1974. She has done concert production, artist management, booking, and record distribution.*

**How far does HOT WIRE reach?**

**\*25 U.S. states**

(AL, CA, CO, CT, DE, GA, IA, IL, IN, MA, MD, MI, MN, NC, NE, NM, NY, OH, OR, PA, TN, VT, WA, WI, WV)

**\*3 Canadian provinces**

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## Women Guitarists of the Nineteenth Century

By Janna MacAuslan

There have been a number of women guitarists throughout history whose contributions have largely gone unnoticed. This is due to several factors: (1) discrimination by music publishers and concert promoters toward women artists, (2) the restriction of woman's role by society, (3) the devaluation of women's work, and (4) the discrimination today by writers who don't recognize that women have been left out of the records for centuries.

In looking for women musicians and composers from the past, we find that often these women were wives, daughters, or sisters of famous male musicians. Such is the case with the guitarists I have researched who performed on the nineteenth-century guitar. These were certainly not the earliest women to play a guitar, however. I have found references that go back as far as around 1800 B.C. to women playing guitar-like instruments!

Emilia Giuliani was the daughter of the famous guitarist and composer Mauro Giuliani. She was born in Vienna in 1813. From 1821 to 1826 Emilia was educated at the L'Adirziona di Gesu, a convent in Rome, as was typical of a

Note Worthy Women is devoted to reclaiming and celebrating the talent and accomplishments of our lost and denied musical foremothers.

young Catholic girl at this time. Her father was her guitar teacher, and Emilia performed with him in concerts as a young child. At some unknown date she married Pietro Guglielmi. Her father died in 1829, when she was only sixteen years old. We know something about her prestige as a concert guitarist from his obituary:

"He is succeeded by a daughter of tender age who shows herself to be the inheritor of his uncommon ability . . . a circumstance which alone can assuage the sadness of his loss."<sup>1</sup>

Another reference says that Emilia rivaled her father's skill on the guitar. She toured Europe in 1841 and 1842. Aside from being an outstanding

player, Emilia composed solos for the guitar, facsimiles of which can be found in Deborah L. Nolan's thesis on nineteenth-century women guitarists.<sup>2</sup>

Catherina Josepha Pelzer was another nineteenth-century concert guitarist who was aided in her career by her father. She was born in Mulheim, Germany, in 1821. Her father, Ferdinand Pelzer, taught his talented daughter and encouraged her career as a performing artist. With his help she began touring the Continent as early as 1830, at age nine. In 1831 she traveled to London, where she played duets with another child prodigy, Giulio Regondi. The two children were so small that they had to be placed on a table to be seen by the audience. We can tell something about her fame and prestige by the stature of other performers she shared concerts with, such as Madame Grisi, who was a very popular opera singer. At a concert in 1836 a review of one of her concerts reads as follows: "The interesting little beneficiaries are astonished her hearers by her wonderful performances upon the guitar . . . producing effects from the guitar of which we had no previous conception it was capable."<sup>3</sup>

Catherina settled in London in 1838, where, with the aid of her patroness, Lady John



Tee A. Corinne

Janna MacAuslan (at right)

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# Making Conversation with Kate Clinton

By Yvonne Zipter

*High school English teacher turned lesbian feminist stand-up comedian (she claims it's a natural progression), Kate Clinton has been performing comedy since March 1981. HOT WIRE caught up with Kate May 6, 1984, the day after Hurricane Productions brought her to Milwaukee.*

**Hot Wire:** You once said that Gyn/Ecology had influenced you a lot. How has it influenced your views on humor and the way you perform?

**Kate Clinton:** When people ask me, "Who are your role models?" they expect me to say someone like Lucille Ball. I always say, "Mary Daly. She's an incredible stand-up comedian. Have you caught her act?" Before Gyn/Ecology, Beyond God the Father took the top off the head of this particular recovering Catholic. But Gyn/Ecology taught me how to take apart language. Her method of dissecting popular language and culture is very important. It is a lot of what I do now in my routines. Daly also showed me that the really big joke is the joke on women--that women are oppressed. As a funny woman, I had always been afraid of humor. As women we are always afraid of humor because it's been used so well and long against us. We know whose butts have been the butts of the jokes. Reading Gyn/Ecology helped me put all that into perspective. When Mary said, "Men

who tell jokes about women are funny, but women who tell jokes about men are anti-male," one of those famous clicks went off in my head. Probably one of the most important things she said was that women must take things that oppress us out of the dark background and bring them into the light. That's essentially where "making light" came to me.

**HW:** Who are some of your other role models?

**KC:** Adrienne Rich has been extremely important to me. Dream of a Common Language

and On Lies, Secrets, and Silence provided an important philosophical and ethical framework for me. I memorized "Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying," and even now when I'm writing, if I feel myself saying, "Oh you can't say that!!" that's usually just what I need to explore. And I also remember what Muriel Rukeyser once said, "If one woman were to tell the truth of her life, the world would split open." Those splitting opens are whys/cracks.

**HW:** Do you have comedic role models as well?

**KC:** I do. I like David Letterman. I think he's very funny. I love the video work he does--his street interviews, pizza delivery races. He's very dry and very late. Someday I'll have a VCR. Lily Tomlin, of course, is one of my role models. I've heard she's doing a movie with Steve Martin, which ought to be funny. I like Steve Martin too. I think he's got one of the funniest comic bodies. His take off of "Beat It" was genius. And I'm meeting women in the lesbian community who are very funny. Every community has its own funny woman or women in the honored position of clown. She usually does opening emceeing or writes the funny column or does the spoof on community mores. It's good to meet women like that because I always get new ideas from them, just seeing how they do



Kate Performing

Trudy Wood

material.

**HW:** There are very few lesbian feminist comedians, although I suppose they're in about the same proportion as comedians to musicians in mainstream, but why do you think it is that there are so few female comedians altogether?

**KC:** Because it's so hard to do. In the last ten years the number of women comedians has increased from say one in ten to one in three at comedy clubs. But few women are catapulted to stardom like an Eddie Murphy or John Belushi. Few women comics are given a crack at movies. Many women comedians make more money writing for other comedians or for TV. There still is your basic oppression of women. I think every lesbian is a comedian--our sense of humor is our basic survival sense. Some go on the road. Some stay home.

**HW:** What do you think are the main differences between mainstream humor and your humor--other than of course you do lesbian material and they don't!?

**KC:** Ah, but they do do lesbian material and it's not at all funny to lesbians. I call myself a feminist humorist--a fumerist--and just by saying that I am a feminist sets me off from the mainstream. As a feminist, I believe that women are oppressed, and that it must end. Most of men's humor, if it says that women are oppressed (and it never does), says also that that's the way it should be, that's the way women like it, they asked for it. Mainstream women's humor, if it says that women are oppressed (and it sometimes does), says that's life. Men's humor is absurdist,

escapist, and really about maintaining the status quo. There is nothing new under the sons. Occasionally there is a glimpse of hope in mainstream women's humor. One time I heard Joan Rivers say, very impromptu, to Susan Anton, "Oh, Susan, you know the only reason women have sex with men, is so they can go shopping the next day." It's hopeful, but that doesn't go far enough. A feminist humorist would say, further, "And that's why men invented shopping malls."

Because I say that our oppression must end, I think feminist humor is about change; it is active as opposed to the passivity of men's humor. Feminist humor holds out the possibility of change, movement. There is a spiraling helix of hope that is

ist, absurdist men's humor, takes a point of view. I think it's important for audiences to see me as a lesbian take a point of view. It's important because I say I'm a lesbian and I'm not dead. Audiences take heart from that. And if you're in an audience to see a comedian you must take a point of view. You either laugh or you don't laugh. Comedians demand a physical response from an audience. I think it's good practice for women to put their bodies on the line. What better practice than through laughter?

Two of the key elements of humor are surprise and dissonance. Each woman laughs with the shock of surprise that I don't see the world exactly as she does. Then when that woman realizes that every

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***"Mary Daly. She's an incredible stand-up comedian."***

---

in the work of feminist humor that I find totally absent from men's and mainstream women's humor.

**HW:** It seems that feminism is the political inclination that most informs your humor, but do you have other political beliefs that affect your humor? How much do you let your political beliefs influence your humor?

**KC:** Feminism for me is the umbrella company whose anti-homophobic subsidiaries include Anti-imperialism, Anti-nuclear, Anti-racism, Anti-pornography, Anti-war, Anti-death, etc. Some people think my material is not political, but I believe it is radically political in its celebration of our lives as women. Feminist humor, unlike escap-

other woman in that audience is laughing for that same reason, she begins to comprehend the multiplicity of viewpoints which can abide in the unity. Cosmic and comic, no? I think that times of women laughing together contain intimations of how we can be together in community.

**HW:** Could you explain that further?

**KC:** Of course, Bright Eyes. I think we are all exploring ways of being women together laughing. We are all in our communities, trying to create our versions of utopia, which in Greek means "the here" and the "not here." We are looking for the paradoxical blend of our private and public lives, the one and the many. I think we are

looking for the happy medium, and I personally think The Happy Medium is a comedian from Flint, MI, named Joy comedian laughs at her own joke . When I came out, I told a straight friend (we've all had these experiences) and she actually said to me, "Well, you've certainly made a commitment to joy in your life." (I can't write better lines than that.) Joy, the Happy Medium, bridges the either/ors which have been forced on us. When women laugh together we are the quintessential outsiders laughing with in-group humor. We are paradoxically thus outside and inside at the same time. We are laughing to save ourselves--we are thus serious and humorous at the same time. The either/ors are bridged.

In our communities we are also exploring the erotic--often reduced to workshops on "Monogamy and Non-Monogamy." Humor springs from the same source as the erotic--a deep

absent from the world of men and deeply present to ourselves.

I also think women in community are exploring the nature of equality, and when women in audiences of all ages, abilities, colors, ethnicities, and everything all laugh at once at the same thing, it gives me great hope that we can work together to a profound new definition of equality and freedom. I think we will come to see that we are working toward not so much a consciousness of community as a community of consciousness.

**HW:** You aren't doing strictly lesbian audiences anymore--you're doing colleges and other types of engagements--how, if at all, do you change your routines when you're doing primarily straight audiences?

**KC:** Well, I miss everybody when I'm doing it, I can tell you. . . . I like to rile college audiences up with completely

have to listen to your white, male, heterosexual humor all the time. One night out of your life won't kill you." And I'm doing more challenging stuff and I'm getting more comfortable doing it--and making them uncomfortable. But it takes a lot out of you. I did three or four colleges in a row and I thought I was really going to die because you don't get anything back. I don't ever do material about lesbians because I don't think they have any right to know privileged information. But I'm always speaking from a clearly identified lesbian viewpoint.

**HW:** You are on the road on tour much of the year. Can you make your living as a stand-up comic?

**KC:** Sure, until I need to buy something. No, really [comedian falls off chair laughing at own joke--it's not even her joke], all of my income is from performing. And I work with two other women. My manager and partner Trudy Wood, who also does the promotion and publicity, designs and co-produces my records, and laughs at my jokes even at home. Susie Gaynes, who also laughs at my jokes, was an early encourager to "go for it," and now has a phone permanently fixed to her ear, does my booking and represents me. The direction and commitment that I get from Trudy and Susie is not only invaluable, but also one of the biggest reasons I've gotten as far as I have so fast. And we're always looking ahead.

**HW:** You spend a lot of time writing and thinking about humor. Do you think of yourself primarily as a performer or as

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*"If after I've written a line, my first thought is about bail money, I know it's good."*

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wellspring of Joy who says we are not suffering anymore. My earliest sensual memories with my girlfriends came from times laughing with them--wild, rolling around laughing, free, helpless, alive. I've often said women laughing together are like women coming together--we rock back and forth, we make sounds we don't ordinarily make, and there's soft moaning after. Times of women laughing are a lot like. . .well. . .you really had to be there. And for full erotic experience, you do have to be there. I think it's good practice for women to be

unquestioned things. I do penile humor. To talk to a bunch of lesbians about penises is a lost cause; they're beyond them. I do a lot of the things from the first record--the penis jokes and about how it's the responsibility of the women to control the boy's drives, his urges. I make fun of football, fraternities, all the sacred cows. I like to do political material. And I've noticed that with a college audience, I revert very much to old high school English teaching days with a touch of Joan Rivers. I say "Oh come on. Grow up. You need to know this. We

a philosopher/theorist about humor?

**KC:** You know, the two are inextricably bound. Often when I am being a fumerosopher (a woman who loves to think about feminist humor), I write a great one-liner. And then when I'm trying to write a new part of a new routine, I'll finish a bit and see how it illustrates a concept of feminist humor. Theory and practice cross-pollinate.

**HW:** How do you prepare yourself for a performance? I would imagine you can't always be in a wonderful mood every time. . . .

**KC:** Other than teaching high school English for eight years, I have no dramatic training. I did a humor workshop with a theater group in Portland, OR, and I was excited to get advice from them about different theater techniques and acting techniques. I asked one of the women there, "What do you do before you go on stage?" And she said "I keep breathing." Well, that was very helpful. There's no mystery. The real "getting up" for a performance involves the ten hours a day I spend writing and working on new material when we are home and off the road. I write all the time while we are gone--descriptions of women and places, trends in communities, bits of dialogue I've heard--but it really takes being home at my desk and typewriter to work on a piece. All of that material which looks very spontaneous is scripted, memorized, practiced for hours before I perform it. That's how I "get up" for a show. Exciting, no?

**HW:** How do you come up with most of your material? Just

from things that happen or do you try to think funny. . . ?

**KC:** I take notes on the culture, both our lesbian culture and the straight culture. That means reading People magazine, going to movies, watching TV, MTV, talking to women in communities, reading feminist newspapers and journals. I read a lot. I give myself assignments. I've been working on a piece about non-monogamy and weight loss (two fairly neutral topics in the lesbian commun-

ended up too heavy. Then I got a note from a woman--women are sending more and more ideas to me--and she said "Think about the seven warning signs of lesbianism." And that was all it needed. Humor is a very collective art form. (So keep those cards and letters coming in.) Humor is added on. It's things I hear from people. They tell me jokes. They tell me stories. It builds. I can write a lot, but the performing and the adding of details from



Trudy Wood

With the "Vessels of Sin" at NEWMR

ity, dontcha know). I've tried to finish it. Every time I start on it, I get nervous and have to get something to eat. If after I've written a line, my first thought is about bail money, I know it's good. Serendipitous things happen too. I had written the routine about mammaries because we had been in the Midwest in the Fall of '82 and had been in two or three communities where women were dying of cancer because they were too afraid to do anything. Or to talk about it. So I really wanted to talk about my mammogram experience. But it was a piece I couldn't finish. It

other women's lives gives a routine its finished quality.

**HW:** You always seem to be just delighted up there, like you're really enjoying yourself. And not that you do the same material all the time, but you do take little pieces of it and some jokes you've done a lot. . .

**KC:** My friends tell me I'm my own best audience. I do love to make women laugh. Since I believe surprise is a big part of humor, I try to bring new material to audiences. I do turn over a lot of material, and there are some routines that I hate to stop doing. I miss them.

I loved doing the routine "De-dyking" the apartment and I loved doing the material on pajama parties. But we move on. I do have some "fav." lines I try to slip in anywhere, like about sneezing and blowing your tampon out about a quarter of an inch, and if abortion is murder, why isn't fucking a felony?

**HW:** Do you ever still get stage fright? And if so, how do you deal with it?

**KC:** I don't get stage fright. I do get very, very excited.

**HW:** How and why do you fit into the women's music circuit? Do you think it's similar audience and similar goals?

**KC:** My understanding of women's music is that at its root, it's revolutionary. I think humor--the way I'm doing it--is also a real revolutionary art form that demands change. In that sense, I think it's as much a part of women's culture as women's music.

**HW:** You have said that you intend, no matter what happens, to stay pretty much in the women's community with your performances. Do you still see that as what you want to do, or do you think now that you would like to branch out at some point and try to hit more mainstream audiences?

**KC:** I actually am doing more mainstream (and I know you meant "mainstream" in quotes) audiences than when I first started, although I believe that the women's audiences and the lesbian coffeehouses and clubs have been the best training for me. I know I'm well loved. And it's important to know that when I go to places where I'm not so well-loved but where people need to hear what I have

to say even though they're not too wild about it. The strength and support of a women's audience enables me to drag others through change. If I can expand in the mainstream to make more money so that I can continue to do the women's com-



Vada Verneé

#### MCing NWMF Showcase

munity, that's fine. I believe that starting with the lesbian feminist community is the most expansive level, it is my mainstream.

**HW:** I think always one of the fears when women's music and comedy performers--and writers, for that matter--move outside of the women's community is that they are going to begin to deny their lesbian roots and their lesbian lifestyle and background. And therefore it's a denial of us. Do you think that you'll find yourself wanting to deny your lesbian roots? I know you can't be as

upfront about it, at least not in the same way. . . .

**KC:** As I said before, I don't share lesbian information with straight audiences and I am always clear that I am speaking from a lesbian viewpoint. I have tried to write "straighter" material. That's usually when I end up writing my most esoteric lesbians. I cannot and will not deny my lesbian roots. I haven't got the brains for it.

**HW:** In your routines, you poke fun at yourself and you poke fun at other people and other groups of people. What kind of response do you usually get? Is it generally positive? Or do you ever get negative?

**KC:** I don't think I "poke fun"--I think men poke fun and we know what they're poking with. Since feminist humor is not based on the hierarchical structure of male penile humor (the ultimate stand-up comedy), it's more based on the egalitarian notion or stand-with comedy and does not rely on the put-down of fun-poking. The response I've gotten is 90% positive and 10% quiet. That quiet is usually in colleges, and it's generally when they are realizing that I look like a lot of women they know. Their roommates, girlfriends. I really haven't gotten negative, but then again I haven't waded into any red-neck bars either. I am a bit selective. I doubt if I'll be doing Micky Gilley's in the near future.

**HW:** You have two comedy albums out, Making Light and Making Waves--where did those titles come from?

*Continued on p. 60*



# Overcoming Stage Fright

By Jorjet Harper

"There's nothing natural about standing in front of thousands of people and singing," Holly Near once commented. Whether it's an audience of three or three thousand, when all eyes in a room are on you, when hot lights are glaring in your face, it's natural to feel nervous. Learning to be at ease onstage, and learning to put an audience at their ease, is something that requires skill. It's something that comes more "naturally" the more you are able to do it. But stage fright can be a tricky business. Some people never have much trouble with it, some have it a little, and some have it bad. And the negative feedback of repeated stage fright experiences can add to the fear, making you afraid of how afraid you'll be.

I consider myself a survivor of stage fright--or, to use the more genteel phrase, of "performance anxiety." That doesn't mean I don't get feelings of anxiety before or during a performance. But I feel like a survivor because at least I can function onstage. I can do a whole show now without seeming to be afraid at all. People often tell me, "Oh, but you looked so relaxed up there!" It surprises me to hear that, because inside it's still sometimes touch and go suppressing the fear that I'm going to forget the next line of whatever song I'm singing. But five years ago the very thought of standing up on a stage made my heart

pound with fear.

## THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE

Natalie Rogers, of the department of psychiatry at Cornell Medical College, divides the common symptoms of stage fright into three categories: physical, mental, and emotional. Physical symptoms include rapid heartbeat, trembling knees, quivering voice, tightness in the throat, faintness, stomach nervousness, uncontrolled gasping for air, teary eyes, and even a runny nose.

The symptoms that affect mental processes include loss of memory; repetition of words, phrases, or messages; general disorganization; and thought blockages that can cause you to have no idea of what you intended to say. Emotional symptoms, which can themselves be caused by the physical and psychological effects, include feelings of terror, a sense of being overwhelmed or of having lost control, helplessness, embarrassment, panic, shame, and humiliation.

Any of this sound familiar?

We could probably add a host of more individual quirks brought about by stage fright, too. Facial tics, unpredictable aches and pains, unpleasant mental associations, the certainty that your zipper is open, your underwear--or lack of it--

is showing, your pants are about to fall down.... In short, the fear that somehow you are going to make a fool of yourself in front of others.

Rogers, a behavioral psychotherapist and former actress, specializes in training people for public speaking. She has theorized that stage fright is triggered by feelings of separation from a group; the audience is together, "out there," while you are alone, with high visibility, "on trial." The speaker or performer must have something to say, must prove herself, and has no choice but to continue, even if no one is paying attention. "It will seem to you, although not to the audience," says Rogers, "that every movement you make, every gesture, every slip of the tongue, is magnified a hundred times in size and importance." And if someone you want to impress is in the audience, "you have all the more reason to feel like a duck in a shooting gallery."

Kato Havas, who made her debut at seven and performed at Carnegie Hall for the first time at seventeen, believes that stage fright is "nothing more than the fear of not being able to control one's actions in front of people." For someone with the symptoms, of course, this can become a vicious cycle. Havas, a violinist and teacher, has been leading master classes for many years, and her book, Stage Fright: Its

Causes and Cures, deals with the specific ways stage fright manifests itself in violin players: fear of not being loud enough, of not being fast enough, of being out of tune, fear of trembling fingers, and the fear of "not being good enough." The generalized fight or flight reaction tends to localize in these concrete fears, and her method of helping students overcome them is to attack each one of these fears separately as they arise. Havas claims that the most widespread fear of all among violinists is the fear of actually dropping the violin on the floor.

As anyone who's suffered from stage fright knows, the mere thought of performing can bring on symptoms. Stage fright operates by the well-known "fight or flight" reaction. Performing is a high stress situation, particularly for the beginner, and the brain's thoughts affect the body. While you are really not in any physical danger (unless you've picked a very nasty crowd to perform for), you perceive that something is threatening. This stress, or even the anticipation of it, stimulates the hypothalamus, a part of the cerebrum, and this in turn triggers the sympathetic nervous system. Once the reaction begins it happens quite reflexively. Your body starts pumping

out the chemicals that are appropriate for danger situations. The nerves of the sympathetic nervous system secrete noradrenalin to the heart, the smooth muscles, and the glands. The adrenal medulla starts to secrete adrenalin into the bloodstream. So your heart rate goes up, your blood pressure rises, and your body is in an abnormal state of excitement. There you are, ready to stand and fight a raging tiger or turn and run for your life--only it's just a nice crowd of people out to enjoy some live entertainment.

### **BUILDING COURAGE SLOWLY**

As a child I was ready to sing at the slightest invitation. In grade school I always sang solos at assemblies and performed in class plays, and during my high school years I sang in front of audiences of several thousand people with no more than a slight twinge of fear. But while I was in college, for reasons that are still unclear to me, I became increasingly self-conscious. I became deeply afraid of stepping up onto a stage. This was compounded by two particularly harrowing experiences on stage. I grew so demoralized by stage fright that for years I was unable to sing or play guitar or piano if I

thought anyone--anyone at all--was within earshot. I envied performers who looked as though it was the simplest thing on earth to get up there and "just" play. Every once in awhile I'd try performing, but even among close friends my panic level was very high. The less I could bring myself to perform, the more the phenomenon occurred.

When I began writing my own songs about five years ago, however, I had a new impetus to try to get over my stage fright. After all, the world would be no worse off for not having heard my personal rendition of "House of the Rising Sun," but if I didn't perform my own songs, nobody would ever hear them.

I tried doing one or two jittery, timid Open Mic performances, and felt like a bug under the lens of a dissecting microscope. All I wanted to do was disappear off that stage. The turning point for me came when I took a class in performance skills given by singer/songwriter Jo Mapes. Jo dealt with stage fright a great deal in the course, giving us simulated audience-performer situations. One particularly grueling exercise was to have us choose a song we felt very deeply about, and then each person would have to sing the song they chose all the way



through, alone onstage, while the rest of the class pretended to be an unappreciative, even heckling, audience. After each of us had gotten through this exercise in turn, we all felt surprisingly strong, toughened by this simulated "combat" experience. We had made it through one of our stage fright nightmare scenarios in a conscious game.

In Jo's class I met someone else who was interested in going to Open Mics, and the two of us began making the rounds regularly together, helping each other lessen the fear. We didn't perform together, but we gave each other moral support before each performance, and tactful critiques afterward. In this way I worked on my stage fright, going to at least one, but sometimes two or three, Open Mics a week, week after week, for well over a year.

When I began this regimen, I needed to take two aspirin tablets forty-five minutes before going onstage to keep my temperature from going through the roof, even in the most nonthreatening environments, places where there would be no audience at all but my friend and the bored bartender. My worst fear was that I would forget the lyrics of my songs or lose my place on the guitar. Once or twice I was so

scared that I did forget. I was shocked afterward to find that some people didn't even notice. Sometimes I practiced at home with a lamp shining in my eyes, to get used to the glare so it wouldn't spook me when I was actually onstage.

Personally, I feel that Open Mics, as tedious as they sometimes are, are wonderful skill-building places. Half the audience is waiting for their own turn onstage, so they sympathize, they want you to reciprocate their politeness when it's their turn in the spotlight. Yet you do have a real audience, not only just other "student" performers. The cards are stacked in your favor, and no one is expecting top entertainment.

It's when you begin longing for more than fifteen minutes onstage that you are just about ready to graduate from the Open Mic scene. I went on to do full sets, paid gigs in programs with professional performers, and now entire evenings of my own shows featuring my original songs and stories.

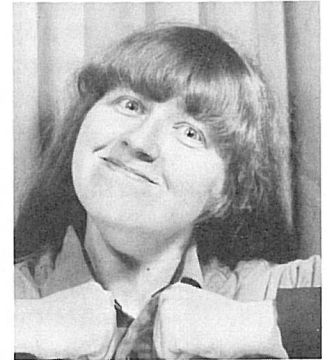
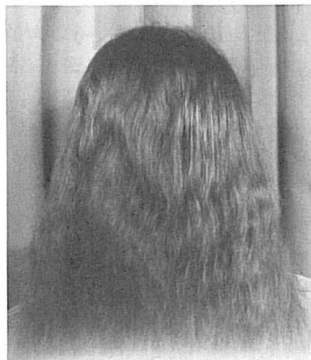
Earlier this year I opened for Adrienne Rich, reading a section of the novel I've been writing. The house was packed. I felt such great anticipation that I couldn't really tell if my jumping heartbeat was stage fright or just the rhythm of my excitement, of the thrill of

what I was doing. And the audience's appreciation and applause served to strengthen my conviction that it's been well worth the time I've put in struggling to learn to enjoy myself while onstage.

### "IF ONLY I'D..."

From my own experience and from talking to many other performers who have suffered from stage fright, I've formulated some simple rules I've found useful for fighting off the fear. They may work for you, or you may have to adjust them to fit your own particular situation. (1) Always practice well. (2) Perform material that you believe in. (3) Give yourself the time you need before a show to prepare yourself for going on. (4) Don't dwell on your errors while onstage. (5) Avoid negative experiences when you can.

There are some performers who do better under stress, but I'd be willing to bet that the majority of performers have experienced that recurring regret, "If only I'd played onstage as well as I did in my living room!" The best favor you can do for yourself is to give yourself more than an adequate amount of time to rehearse, because you need to know the music to a far greater degree for performing than you



do in order to play it well under nonstress conditions. You don't want to be razzing yourself right before a performance for not being totally prepared technically.

If you don't want to practice, maybe you should take a hard look at your material. If you don't believe in the material you are performing, if it

problems. Tune out the preshow hubbub, forget about what the lighting tech is shouting to the sound crew. Your job is to perform your best, and whatever psychological and physical techniques suit your preshow workup, that's part of the job, too. If you can relax enough to just bop up there onstage at a moment's notice, that's great.

complicated emotional juggling act--letting go of the things that don't go well while maintaining the courage to relate spontaneously to the audience and to the material. The "How'm I doin' now?" mind frame can be lethal for the beginner, a judgmental game your mind can play on itself, triggering spurts of panic. So dur-

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*Your pants are about to fall down . . . it's the fear that you are going to make a fool of yourself . . . .*

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doesn't excite you or interest you much, you can't expect an audience to get involved in it either. When the audience is listless or restless, you get more nervous.

Some people use yoga, deep breathing exercises, or other physical relaxation techniques before performing. Some give themselves pep talks, tell themselves that the way they act onstage is going to change the lives of their listeners. Others need to tell themselves that this particular performance is insignificant, that whether they do well or badly doesn't matter in the cosmic scheme of things. Whatever you've found that helps you prepare yourself mentally and physically, and minimizes your nervousness, use it. Make sure you give yourself the time and space you need to do that before you go on. It's an important part of your preparation, just as rehearsal is, particularly for those of us with stage fright

But when you need preparation time, take it.

**"HOW AM I DOING NOW, FOLKS?"**

All performers, no matter where they perform, want to be good, want to create moments of magic onstage, want the audience to be enthralled by their talents. We hope for this, but when we expect it and it doesn't happen, we can really lose our equilibrium.

We tend to judge our own performances much more harshly than we would judge someone else's. And when you're too sensitive to your own goofs, you make it harder for yourself to recover from each slight mistake. If you are constantly evaluating yourself as you go along, reassessing the situation, you are probably not doing your best, because you can't concentrate wholeheartedly on your music, acting, whatever. The seasoned performer is capable of doing a

ing a show, try to recover from mistakes, forget them as best you can, and move on.

There's plenty of time after a performance for evaluation. If you like, have a friend in the audience deliberately take note of any glaring mistakes for you, so you don't feel obliged to make a mental note of them yourself at a time when it will distract you even further. It's also good if you can find a friend or two who will discuss with you, honestly but sensitively, their impressions of your overall control, the ebb and flow of your set, and what parts the audience reacted especially well or badly to. When you think of what you're doing as a learning experience, this can help dampen your fear of the situation. Group performers often discuss these things as a matter of course. You can also make it a habit to tape your performances. Then listen, and congratulate yourself that you have actually gotten up there and done this brave thing.

Evaluate your performances, but don't beat yourself over the head for any mistakes you hear on the tape.

Take the time to study your own thoughts and feelings as you watch others perform. When you are in the audience, how exacting are you, how forgiving of minor flubs? Are you generous and grateful toward a performer who moves you with her music? Most audiences are looking for the highlights of a show, not the low points.

The more you become accustomed to performing, the more it becomes a habit and not an abnormal, unique situation. So use every opportunity you can to perform, learn to work up the courage to do it despite your fears except in situations that you can be fairly certain in advance are going to be negative ones.

I've never been dragged off a stage--not yet, anyway--but there have been times I'd have been grateful to get the hook. Once a drunk came up and blew smoke in my face. Once some customers in the bar I was playing in got in a fistfight while I was onstage. I still have tapes of old performances in which the shouting and sounds of glass breaking are audible above my desperately cheerful alto. At the time I was already strong enough to keep my head--fortified by Jo Mapes's exercises. But if it had been during my very early attempts, I might have been devastated.

So to risk stating the obvious, it's a good rule of thumb to avoid hostile audiences. Every performer will encounter audiences from time to time that are indifferent or even hostile. But to feel gradually more secure onstage, you want

little challenges, not big disasters. It's dangerous to your psyche to expose yourself to an audience that you can safely bet doesn't like the kind of music you perform. Performers with established reputations can gamble on giving an audience a sound they aren't expecting, but even for them there's a certain amount of risk. Bookers know better than to bring in Jean Ritchie, the mountain dulcimer player, for example, as a warmup act for a heavy metal band, or to book a rock group that plays top-forty hits in a folk venue. A rowdy cowboy audience expecting Nashville country music is not going to react well to you if your repertoire is old English ballads with seventeen verses and no chorus--even if you do have a voice like Betsy Lippitt.

You have to learn to assess venues and know when it's best for you not to play as well as when you should give it a try. Ask yourself, is this courage or foolhardiness? Don't walk into a guaranteed bad situation on the theory that you should be strong enough to play under any circumstances. It will only feed into your stage fright when you bomb.

### USING BETA BLOCKERS

Because it is based on so many nebulous factors and not always controllable physical triggers, stage fright can recur even in performers who have, for the most part, conquered it. Some musicians never get over stage fright at all, but learn to live with it as a part--an unpleasant part--of their performing lives. I spoke with one woman at the National Women's Music Festival this year who said she'd been performing

professionally for almost twenty-five years and had never significantly conquered her performance anxiety. But she had, unlike others I've talked to, rid herself of it. How? With a prescription drug called Inderal. She takes the drug an hour or so before each performance, and her stage fright goes away.

I found this very intriguing, and did some research. Inderal, I discovered, is a brand name for a chemical compound called propranolol hydrochloride, a chemical that is a member of a class of drugs known as beta-andrenergic blocking agents, or just "beta blockers." Quite simply, what beta blockers do is block certain receptor sites on the membranes of cells, sites that would otherwise bind with the adrenalin which is released as part of the "fight or flight" response. In this way the beta blocker prevents the adrenalin from affecting the tissues. So propranolol

*Continued on p. 60*

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

*Jorjet Harper is a writer, songwriter, and performer. Her articles have appeared in The Chicago Sun-Times, The Reader, and other publications. Several years ago, American Atheist magazine printed her cartoon of a sperm swimming upstream wearing a ghost costume and a halo. Jorjet is a regular contributor of music and theater reviews for Gay-Life, and is editor of the Feminist Writers' Guild Newsletter in Chicago. She has published and illustrated a book of her own songs, Dark Side of the Moon. She is currently working on a comic novel about the nuclear family.*

# A Dialogue: The Washington Twins

By JAG

In the fall of 1983, Sharon Washington and Bobbi Pederson, coordinator of Calico's Women's Coffeehouse, told Sandra that Sharon had scheduled a concert for the two of them, and that Pederson had already sent the preliminary publicity to press. Caught in a bind, Sandra agreed to do one concert. After the two con artists made good their statements, they told Sandra it had all been a plot to force her into pulling her music "out of the closet," so to speak.

**SANDRA:** What prompted me to think about performing? My sister. Seriously, I would have waited years, if ever, to begin the cycle. I was writing lots of music, but usually my sister was the only one who heard most of the stuff.

**SHARON:** And me? My sister! Sandra was writing good songs, and I really thought others would like to hear them. I would sing some of her stuff anonymously for my friends and they would love it. So, with a little bit of nerve and Bobbi Pederson to back me up, I lied to my sister about a "phantom" concert. I'll never live it down, but put the two of us on stage together and you'd never know I had to twist her arm into it. Our first performance was in December, but we weren't scheduled until January. Haresuite was doing a concert at Calico's in December and asked us to do a warm-up set.

**SANDRA:** It was a wonderful break. Sharon and I couldn't

have dreamed up a better chance for us to promote ourselves. Haresuite gave us a fantastic opportunity, and I think we've taken their initial belief in us and done something productive with it.

**SHARON:** Our first concert in January was terrific. I was nervous and hyper, which aggravated Sandra, who gets real meditative and inward before a performance. But anyway, the amount of people who came to the show . . . I couldn't believe the numbers. Every time we thought we'd get started the door would open and more womyn would come in. Calico's is a small place, and everyone was packed in there like applesauce. You know what I mean?

**SANDRA:** Yeah, applesauce. Strange, Sharon, strange. I think the primary reason so many womyn came was because Sharon has a reputation of throwing excellent parties, and everyone showed up to see what type of food she was serving for this one.

**SHARON:** We perform a lot of different types of music: folk, contemporary, heartfelt . . . . Heartfelt is a word I use to describe a type of music combining soul with gospel influences and rambunctious womyn! I guess I could add that heartfelt is that type of music that comes from soul and power and good energy--so in that sense it would be everything we perform. When we're working together we play off each other well. Sandra talks a lot, and

she's funny. Much funnier than when we're alone.

**SANDRA:** That's not fair! I'm a fairly sedate person, and I think my calm is what gives me the energy to be really "out" on stage. During performances I try to project that I'm having a good time, and that I care about the music we perform.

**SHARON:** Yeah. I feel the same. I really enjoy performing, and the interaction between Sandra and me, and the audience and us, is very inspiring. I haven't put a lot of thought into the function of our music, but we have music that inspires laughter and thought and deep feelings. As long as our music is enjoyable to others I don't expect anything else of it. I would like to add that most of the original material we perform is written by Sandra, and that I think her songs touch people, and that she is getting better at what she does.

**SANDRA:** Thank you. Lots of things motivate my writing. A conversation, a book, a feeling from a personal experience, etc. . . . lots of things. I would like to write more humor--let others know that irreverence can stop insanity. Sharon is real good with rowdy material, and humorous songs. She feels at ease with the child in her and it shows when she performs.

**SHARON:** Thanks.

**SANDRA:** There isn't one process or series of steps that create a song for me. Often several pieces are running through my mind--a melody line for one

song, lyrics for another half-written song, and a rhythm or mood to another song that has no melody or words yet. I very rarely write with an instrument, so I usually keep a tape recorder nearby to tape melodies. There are songs I struggle with for months, put down, and come back to in a year or so, and then there are the gifts. A gift song is one which flows through me all at once--words, melody, guitar chords. It is as if I knew the song on some other level, or that the song has been there, out somewhere, waiting for a vehicle to move through for expression.

**SHARON:** I feel excited and extremely fortunate starting out in the womyn's music industry. So far we've had excellent opportunities for experience and exposure. There are so few womyn of color in the womyn's music industry that there is a pressure, both external and internal, to make it. With the growing awareness of racism, white womyn may begin to see their previous lack of support of womyn of color as racist. I

think producers at festivals and in some local communities recognize the inequities and are encouraging more womyn of color in the industry. Eventually, I hope the audiences will struggle with their racism and begin to support womyn of color in larger numbers. Interaction with black womyn performers exposes white womyn to the infinite diversities of black womyn. I believe there has been and is a tendency to think that one black woman was or could be a voice for us all. "It's a long row to hoe, and I can see a lot of weeds in them there beans." I do love a challenge! Our mother is an incredibly strong woman, and we owe a lot of ourselves to her. Mom believes in strength and achievement. Inner strength is survival and leads to progress, which leads to achievement.

**SANDRA:** Very simple and inclusive. She taught us to fight against whomever tried to block that process. So as black feminists-lesbians it is impossible for us to remain apolitical when we are trying to achieve

anything. From the word "go" we knew we had to fight racism, sexism, heterosexism, etc. **SHARON:** Before we stop talking, Sandra, let's talk about our plans. This fall and winter we plan to do a little work in Columbus and in neighboring states. I'll be completing my graduate work in May, so afterward we're planning to go out on a spring tour. Sandra likes to organize things, so she'll be doing our bookings. Long-term plans include locating a backer or backers to produce a tape or album and performing at the Metropolitan Opera House.

**SANDRA:** People ask what it's like to be twins performing together. Come and see!

Since their debut performance, the Washingtons have performed at Calico's Open Mic Night, the Famous Feminist Day Celebration in Columbus, Ohio, Dennison University, the National Women's Music Festival, and the New England Women's Musical Retreat. For bookings contact Sandra Washington at P.O. Box 142092, Columbus, Ohio 43214.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*JAG, a long-time friend of the Washingtons, lives in Columbus and considers herself a groupie. She was instrumental in organizing this dialogue and helping to generate questions and ideas.*



Suzanne Hyers

**Hot Wire: A Journal of Women's Music and Culture** seeks articles on subjects related to women's music. Especially welcomed are features by women of color. Experienced as well as first time writers are encouraged to submit materials.

# Women's Music, Magic, and Matrism

By Cindee Grace

Women's music is not a twentieth-century million-dollar phenomenon. Actually, women's music is as ancient as woman herself, dating back to nature-based cultures that were egalitarian, peaceful, and magical. Starhawk uses the word "matristic" to describe the women-supporting societies, rather than "matriarchal" (since the latter contains "-archal," implying, erroneously, hierarchy).<sup>1</sup> Women were their tribes' prominent healers, teachers, and musicians. The body, as a sacred temple of spirit, was the likely channel for expressing divinity through music and other arts. Nature was thought sacred; the environment was cherished. The Goddess, whether as psychological symbol or deity, was praised with matristic music throughout the world.

When Judaic-Christian religions came into power, fanatics of these patriarchal religions almost totally destroyed matristic cultures. Temples were set afire, artworks smashed, sacred songs outlawed. Under threat of torture and death, people tried to forget the older, more natural ways of life and adapted to some degree to patriarchal codes.<sup>2</sup>

Along with other art forms, music dramatically changed. Throughout Europe, a white, male God and a restrictive, elitist science were the subjects for lyricists. The

strict, Classical composition style "civilized" music, erasing spontaneity and sensuality from most popular music. Ironically, women sang in religious choirs about the "evilness" of the senses and of themselves: the "weaker sex," the "tempters of Man."

Much later, the nineteenth-century labor movement and suffragist movement brought political chants and protest songs to the ears of the world. The jazz revival "shamelessly" presented spontaneity and sensuality to music again, drawing from African and Hispanic styles. The 1960s top-ten charts included songs decrying the political injustices of the world. A resurgence of feminism encouraged a more specialized music style with lyrics addressing the needs of women. Later, singers such as Holly Near and Meg Christian sang of even more particular audiences' issues (women of color, older women, differently abled women, and lesbians).

Simultaneously, during the growth of the women's music network, two other alternative music networks were developing. New Age music, usually made up of meditative, soothing pieces, became popular with those interested in metaphysics, holistic health, and Eastern religions. Often, New Age religions invalidated the physical world in general and political activity in particular as "illusory," "Maya," "not spi-

ritual." So, most New Age music was designed to take the listener to a more "spiritual" level of reality (the Tao, nirvana, heaven, "pie-in-the-sky").

The underground network of pagans and others interested in Earth religions also got involved with recordings, secretly sharing music praising the Goddess, Pan, and Nature. The tactics used to survive during the "burning times" (the Inquisition) were (and are today) still very much in practice, since groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and "born-again" Christians threatened the lives and property of pagans. Because of the often brutal public reactions, many pagans avoided political and other activities that might bring attention to themselves.

In the 1980s, we are on the verge of a powerful musical merging of these three networks. Matristic spirituality (so long cherished by the pagans) is finding its way into women's music (for example, Kay Gardner, Cris Williamson, and Chicagoan Paula Walowitz's Goddess chants). Politics is slowly seeping into New Age recordings, and feminism is growing within pagan musical efforts. All three subcultures can gain much by uniting, musically and otherwise, for they have a common adversary: patriarchy. Education seems to be a key for uniting these networks . . . and music is a language that all three speak.



My own music cassette Songs of the Goddess is a nationally distributed album especially aimed at bringing these three networks together. Through heartfelt and humorous lyrics and danceable rhythms, the underlying philosophies common to feminism, the New Age, and paganism are highlighted. My biggest challenges, so far, regarding my music are:

\* educating feminists about the true function of spirituality; that spirituality can be highly individual and creative, personally rejuvenating, matristic, and "politically correct"

\* educating New-Agers about the spirituality of the physical realm and of the need for political action; the difference between paganism and Satanism (Satanism was an invention of the Christian Church; pagans don't even have a concept of the devil or of abstract evil in their philosophies!)

\* educating pagans about the relationship between the status of women and the status of The Goddess; about the need



Cindee Grace (top) & Band

to be more socially and politically visible

As many of us realize, music is an effective peacemaker; it can express more to our hearts than mere rhetoric can. I am delightfully amused that Songs of the Goddess is sold in places where the retail-

ers might think the other retailers are "strange" or irreparably different from themselves. For instance, the album is sold at gay bookstores, health food stores, women's centers, occult shops, and mainstream record outlets! Evidently, my musical matristism is bridging some sub-cultural gaps.

Although I am happy that the women's music network allows some people to make a living with music, I am concerned about our network's priorities . . . or lack of them. What is women's music for? Is it to provide temporary escape from oppression, stars for lesbian groupies? The cartoon caption "Nuclear war? There goes my career!" illustrates what I feel our top priority should be: the preservation of

Jan Parker

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**  
Cindee Grace, doctor of naturopathy and certified massage therapist, has a holistic health practice in Boulder, Colorado. Wholesale inquiries about Songs of the Goddess and booking inquiries are welcome.

# "Songs of The Goddess"

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# Making Music with Computers

By Nancy Norman

Computers!!!! Crunch those numbers! Increase your productivity! Work faster, more efficiently!! Bits, bytes, boot, disk drive, operating systems, RAM, ROM. . . .

Welcome to the world of computers, with its macho marketing hype and high-tech buzz words that strike fear in the hearts of many girls and women.

What do computers and music have to do with each other? I asked myself that very question in 1981, when I stumbled upon an article, "Macro-music from Micros," by composer Laurie Spiegle. In that article, Laurie predicted that computers would become the next folk instrument, and that they would enable individuals lacking traditional instrument technique and training to communicate musical ideas and explore their music-making abilities. Previous work had taught me to respect the computer's capacity for information management, but as an aid to music-making or, more incredibly, a musical instrument? These notions fascinated me, because years of haphazard practice and neglect, not lack of traditional training, had turned my flying fingers into destitute digits. Since piano playing was no longer the joy it had once been, I had resigned myself to the role of music appreciator. Still, curious about improvising and composing, I dutifully attended workshops at the Nati-



Vada Vernée

onal Women's Music Festival taught by Edie Herrold and Julie Homi, hoping to explore these mysterious worlds. I learned some basics, could read a lead sheet, and even play a simple arrangement; but alas, I soon realized that becoming a proficient improviser required good chops and demanded time and energy that I didn't have to give. By then, I was primed for an experiment into computer musicland.

In the early 1980s choices were limited. Apple had a virtual monopoly on commercially available microcomputer-based music applications, and MIDI was still a twinkle in the goddess's eye, so I went with the

Apple-based Syntauri Music System by Syntauri Corporation (also notable because Syntauri is primarily a woman-run business). The system included a five-octave keyboard through which notes are inputted into computer memory. Sound is generated by sixteen oscillators found on synthesizer boards that are placed in two adjacent slots within the Apple II. Two oscillators are assigned to each note, thus allowing polyphonic sound up to a maximum of eight voices. Other computer manufacturers have now come into the act. Among them are Commodore, Radio Shack, IBM, and Atari. The Apple II, Commodore 64, and IBM-PC seem to be the computers of choice for MIDI software writers, so those interested in computer control of synthesizers and drum machines should take note (more on this subject later). If you don't have a particular preference for keyboards, other software products now exist that provide for note entry through a variety of codes, or through use of a Koala pad from Koala Technologies Corporation, joysticks, or light pens. A reference listing of articles containing product reviews follows this article. The Apple itself is capable of producing sound without extra peripherals, but tone quality and memory limitations restrict its usefulness for music applications. Readers with access to an Apple II may want to try the

sound-generating program that appears in the box accompanying this article.

How do you communicate musical ideas to the computer? First you assume that you have musical ideas that you wish to explore and communicate. That was my first mistake. Although I could read others' works, it never occurred to me that I might have musical ideas of my own to explore. It took quite a bit of consciousness raising to convince myself that my bell-ringer version of "Simple Gifts" played by computer was as legitimate an expression of a musical idea as Judy Collins's vocal arrangement. Consciousness raising aside, it is fairly easy to store your ideas in the computer's memory. With the Syntauri, press spacebar, "R," return, and voila, you are in the record mode. Any note you play on the keyboard will be stored in memory exactly the way you played it. A maximum of 2,000 notes can be sequenced together to form a note file. If you can't record your music as fast as you'd like to hear it played, the computer can speed up the tempo during playback. If you are strictly a "white key" player, the computer can transpose the playback to the key you desire. When the system is booted, the keyboard becomes "live" with your choice of one of ten "instruments" (or pre-

sets). Changing instruments is simply a matter of pressing a number (0-9) on the computer. Presets are programmable, so those interested in designing sounds can have a heyday changing waveforms, varying harmonic content, modifying ADSR envelopes, and the like. A new bank of ten instruments can be readily loaded into memory from disk, so theoretically the library of sounds that you can collect is limitless.

At first, I explored my ideas about matching sounds to songs, experimenting to find the "right" instrument for a song: bells for "Simple Gifts," clavichord for a Bach Invention, B3 organ-percussion for "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." To make things more interesting, I began splitting the keyboard so that my left hand played one instrument and the right hand played another. In retrospect, I can see that I was learning some basics of orchestration, though I didn't know that at the time.

The notion of sixteen-track recording, introduced by Syntauri's Metatrak software, was most interesting, yet I was only able to utilize it in a very pianistic way. I understood that sounds could be layered--that recorded tracks could be laid on top of one another--but I had no idea how to do it. My hands played as a unit to pro-

duce music, and the most I could do was record two tracks--the left hand and then the right hand. However, this program allowed you to produce music like an orchestra. How do you do it? I was a neophyte at piano arranging, let alone orchestrating! How do you break pianistic playing into component instrument parts? I was stymied. So what did I do? I retreated to the piano. I found that my playing was much freer than it had been, and I began getting into what I guess might be called extemporaneous improvisation, or letting your fingers do the walking over the ivories. This led to a wonderful discovery--I could compose! The mysterious world of composing had suddenly become crystal clear. Needless to say, I was terribly excited. I'm sure my work with the computer was training me to listen in a way I had never done before.

The next step on my musical journey was a course in Music Production offered by a musician at a local studio. Since Metatrak worked like a sixteen-track tape recorder, I thought producing a song on an eight-track recorder would teach me what I needed to know to use Metatrak. It did. I wrote a bass line, arranged the keyboard parts, recorded them following a click track, and corrected my mistakes by



Fig. 1 Computer Printout of Arrangement of "Simple Gifts"

punching in and punching out. I learned to break my pianistic arrangements into component instrument parts and learned the lingo of multitrack recording.

Having gotten the musical guidance that I needed, I began arranging and orchestrating my compositions--a feat I never dreamed possible. In some ways, I think I had to unlearn making music like a piano player and refocus on the way a chorus makes music, except, instead of learning just the second soprano part, I was responsible for designing the bass line, the alto part, the soprano part, and having my fingers sing them.

I have found that using a computer as a vehicle to express musical ideas has several distinct advantages. First, performance anxiety is virtually eliminated, since the computer does the playing and any mistakes you make during the programming phase (i.e., recording) can be edited. It has enabled me to compose and play music which is more complex than I'm capable of performing on piano. Immediate feedback and the opportunity to play with musical ideas make fertile ground upon which chance occurrences can fall and creative ideas can grow. Experimentation with composition and orchestration becomes possible by focusing on sounds and the generation of musical ideas, not through perfect performance or note reading or writing requirements. Since my music copying is somewhat primitive, another handy feature of computer usage is the music printing program (see figure 1).

One important effect the computer has had on me is that

```

10 GOSUB 9000
20 REM PLAY H NEAR'S SONG
30 PRINT "PRESS ANY KEY TO START"
40 GET A$
50 FOR REP=1 TO 2
60 P=120:L=240:GOSUB 1000
70 P=107:L=240:GOSUB 1000
80 FOR VAMP=1 TO 3:P=101:L=200:GOSUB 1000:NEXT D
90 FOR D=1 TO 3:P=101:L=200:GOSUB 1000:NEXT D
100 P=101:L=240:GOSUB 1000
105 P=90:L=240:GOSUB 1000
110 P=107:L=240:GOSUB 1000
115 P=120:L=255:GOSUB 1000
120 NEXT VAMP
125 P=135:L=240:GOSUB 1000
130 P=120:L=240:GOSUB 1000
135 P=107:L=255:GOSUB 1000
140 FOR PAUSE=1 TO 300: NEXT PAUSE
145 NEXT REP
150 END
1000 REM PLAY TONE WITH PITCH P AND DURATION L
1010 POKE 768,P: POKE 769,L
1020 CALL 770:RETURN
9000 REM STORE SPEAKER ROUTINE
9010 DATA 160,0,174,0,3,173,48,192
9020 DATA 136,205,5,206,1,3,240,5
9030 DATA 202,208,245,240,237,96,256
9040 AD=770
9050 READ X
9060 IF X=256 THEN RETURN
9070 POKE AD,X
9080 AD=AD+1
9090 GOTO 9050

```

it has helped motivate me into putting more energy into music and, ironically, spending more time at the piano, which in turn retrains my fingers and in turn motivates me to spend more energy on making music, and so on. Although using a computer won't turn you into a musical genius, I am convinced that it will enable some untrained music lovers to become music-makers. By minimizing the physical factors that interfere with the expression of musical ideas, making music with computers becomes a more mental pursuit. Thus, music-minded individuals whose involvement in music has been limited by physical handicap, lack of opportunity, or learning experiences that turned them off, can

become active participators, perhaps making significant contributions to our musical culture. Discovering unknown musical skills and learning some new ones have made making music with computers very appealing indeed.

## FUTURE SHOCK

Looking ahead, computer-aided music-making holds exciting things in store. Here are just two of many possible scenarios.

1. The composer sits down at the keyboard, about to present her newest composition. But wait, that's not a keyboard, it's a computer terminal! She types in a command, and the drum machine begins to play. The Minimoog joins in with a

bass line. Then the Yamaha DX7 starts to play the melody line. Soon the room is awash with sound textures heretofore unknown to womankind. Is it magic? No, it's MIDI. With the newly developed Musical Instrument Digital Interface, various keyboard instruments, drum machines, sequencers, etc. can be connected and controlled from a computer.

2. After a busy day on the road, you return home, turn on your computer, and check your electronic mail. You find a note from Jan in San Francisco letting you know she has worked up some changes to the song the two of you have been collaborating on and is anxious for you to hear it. You dial her up, hook up your modem, and her computer sends your computer the note file she has developed. You save the file to disk, boot up your music system, and hear the results. Telecommunications makes long distance collaboration the next best thing to being there.

## DICTIONARY

**ADSR:** Attack-Decay-Sustain-Release. A type of amplitude envelope that tells the "amplitude history" of a tone.

**APPLESOFT BASIC:** A programming language, a variation of Basic, developed by Apple Computer Inc.

**BIT:** A Binary digIT (1 or 0). Computers store information in binary code represented by electrical impulses on (1) or off (0).

**BOOT:** Process of loading disk operating system (DOS) instructions into the computer, which occurs when you turn on the computer (cold boot) or which can be initiated with the computer already on (warm

boot).

**BYTE:** A grouping of eight bits.

**CLICK TRACK:** A timing reference signal (i.e., one click for each quarter note) used in multitrack recording.

**DISK:** or floppy disk, or diskette. A magnetic medium used to store digital information for later use.

**DISK DRIVE:** A device that enables the computer to read information from a disk or write information to a disk.

**ENVELOPE:** A contour or shape that changes as a function of time and is used to process or control some aspect of sound (i.e., amplitude).

**HARMONIC CONTENT:** The harmonic structure of a waveform consisting of various waves with frequencies that are multiples of the fundamental frequency (2d harmonic, 3d harmonic, etc.).

**JOY STICK:** A device having a gearshift-like lever that can be used to input information into the computer. (Also used in playing computer games.)

**KOALA PAD:** A specialty device (trademarked by Koala Technologies Corporation) which is similar to a sketch pad and is used to input information into the computer.

**LIGHT PEN:** A penlike device that, when held to the video screen of a computer, inputs information into it.

**MEMORY:** Integrated circuits that store bits (1's or 0's) for later access by the computer.

**MIDI:** Musical Instrument Digital Interface. A standard agreed upon by many musical equipment manufacturers that specifies the necessary requirements to interface digitally controlled musical instruments.

**MODEM:** A MoDulator/DEModulator; an electronic device that transmits and receives in-

formation over telephone lines, thus allowing two computers to "talk" to each other.

**OPERATING SYSTEM:** A type of software that oversees the entire operation of a computer system.

**OSCILLATOR:** A device that produces a repeating waveform.

**PERIPHERAL:** Equipment external to the computer, such as disk drives, printers, keyboards, etc.

**POLYPHONIC:** Having the capacity to produce more than one pitch simultaneously.

**PROGRAMMABLE:** Describes a function that can be changed or broken down into a set of instructions that the computer can then perform.

**PUNCH IN/OUT:** A procedure used in multitrack recording that allows you to correct an error by retaping a particular segment.

**RAM:** Random access memory.

**ROM:** Read only memory.

**SOFTWARE:** or programs. The set of instructions that tells the computer what to do.

**SYNTHESIZER:** An electronic instrument that produces sound by analog or digital means.

**TELECOMMUNICATIONS:** Transmission of data between computers that occurs through phone lines, satellites, radio waves, etc.

**WAVEFORM:** A repeating (periodic) signal produced by an oscillator. Each basic waveform (sine, square, pulse, saw-

*Continued on p. 62*

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*Nancy Norman is a computer unprofessional whose workshops, writings, and music communicate the benefits of computer technology in a different voice.*

# Sisterfire

By Rena Yount

Sisterfire was held for the third year this June on the grounds of a junior high school close to Washington, D.C. The atmosphere was festive and easygoing, with blankets spread across the grassy hillside for seating, old friends greeting each other, and crowds checking out the booths displaying crafts, publications, and food. In spite of a downpour that disrupted the second day of the weekend event and cut attendance to under 4,000, Sisterfire offered a broad array of musicians along with poets, storytellers, actors, and dancers.

Each morning there were three stages going, offering an abundance of choices. Should you see Latina poets Yolanda Mancilla and Alicia Partnoy, or fiddle and banjo player Cathy Fink? Actor Mary Beth Miller of the New York Deaf Theater, or the First World Dance Theater with their combination of music, dance, and African folklore?

In the afternoon there was one stage, letting the audience focus on some of the most popular performers, including Holly Near, Cris Williamson, Sweet Honey in the Rock, the New-York-based rock and reggae group Ibis, and Robin Flower's bluegrass/folk band.

Sisterfire is organized by Roadwork, a Washington-based production company for women artists. Since 1978, Roadwork has booked such women as Meg Christian, Teresa Trull, Holly

Near, Alive!, Wallflower Order Dance Collective, Linda Tillery, and many others. Like most similar groups, Roadwork's staff is small, overworked, and underpaid; producing Sisterfire would not be possible without a strong volunteer network. This year around fifty volunteer "Sistersparks," headed by Bridget Warren, took on major responsibilities such as publicity and fundraising, helped erect and dismantle three stages, and carried much of the endless labor that goes on behind the scenes of any festival.

Sisterfire coordinator Ivy Young says, "Since D.C. is a diverse city, we get volunteers from a variety of places. They're lesbian and straight, black and white, really multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. In working together, people become familiar with other communities."

The idea of crossing racial and cultural lines, of building coalitions, is central to Roadwork, and to Sisterfire. The Sisterfire statement of purpose says, "We are building bridges between the women's move-



The Sistersparks Volunteer Corps

Joyce Wellman

ment and other movements for progressive social change." Taking place near a major city, Sisterfire is accessible to women who might not be able to reach or afford some festivals. Though the audience is predominantly women, men attend also. From the beginning, Sisterfire has worked hard to draw performers from a variety of communities.

The result is an exciting blend of commonality and differences. The performers come together through their experience as women, but they also speak to the audience out of their experience as blacks, whites, hispanics, lesbians, straights, rural women, women from poor and working-class backgrounds.

Sweet Honey in the Rock, well known for their beautiful a capella harmonies, performed

the song that one member says has probably won them more applause and more attacks than any other:

Every woman who ever  
loved a woman--  
you ought to stand up and  
call her name.

They also sang about black struggles in America and about the fight for freedom in South Africa. Appalachian Hazel Dickens sang to Sisterfire's predominantly urban audience about miners and mountain living. Lifeline, a three-woman D.C.-based band, described themselves as "bringing labor issues to the women's community and feminist issues to the labor movement." Anti-nuke songs and a "Round Robin" on Nicaragua took their places along with lesbian love songs

and a satiric number directed at male lawmakers who voted down the ERA.

There was diversity in creative forms, too. Though the emphasis is still on music, Sisterfire has taken some important steps toward becoming a festival of all kinds of women performers. Some of the weekend's most electrifying mo-

*Continued on p. 61*

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*Rena Yount is a feminist and long-time activist living in Washington, D.C. She has worked as a newsletter editor, co-authored two books for community organizers, written free-lance articles on a variety of topics, helped start a women's writing group called Stone Soup, and recently published her first fiction.*

## Mateel Music Festival

**By Rixanne Wehren**

Every year the Mateel Women's Music Network presents its showcase of local talent, the Mateel Women's Music Festival. This festival highlights twenty local acts of dance, theater, and music, varying from folk music to new wave. Outstanding musicians as well as beginners to the stage show their talents in this event, which has developed a reputation for being lively and entertaining. Beginnings School site near Garberville, CA, was open from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. on July 28 and 29, with sets of acoustic music in the afternoon and electric bands in the evening. Tickets were on a sliding scale of \$10-20 for adults, half price

for youths over ten, and kids free. Craftswomen and political booths lined the school grounds.

The festival has always tried to present a balanced variety of musical styles, and to encourage musicians at all levels. Many instrumentalists play with more than one band, which encourages their musical development and fills out the bands. The stage is not limited to women only, although women are definitely encouraged to play. The bandleader must be a woman, but the decision of who will play is totally up to the artist. Everyone is welcome, and the festival is always well-attended by local people. The technical and support staff is made up of all women who share their skills

voluntarily to put on this show. The musicians also are all volunteers.

The schedule of performances included several acts from last year as well as newcomers: Mary Bigford, Linda Lee, Jude Vasconcellos, Beauty Shop Quartet, Rising Tide, Lisa Swerdlow, Anna Banana, Lipstick, Alafia Dancers, Transformer, Interference, Becky and Linda, Sherry Champagne, Diana Gilon, Mesecina, Mary Weatherly, Skinny Wires, Las Malandras, Avalanche, and Razers.

The Mateel Women's Music Network (the producer of the festival) is a loosely organized group that is open to any

*Continued on p. 62*

# First Southern Fest

By Penny M. Landau

For the first time in history, a festival produced by women, peopled by women, and performed by women went into the deep South for four days of music, comedy, camping, workshops, and just plain fun. Produced by comic Robin Tyler, the First Annual Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival was held in northern Georgia deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Although she tried to limit the festival to 2,000 women, it extended slightly over the limit, as some 1,850 women attended. Aided by 150-200 work-exchange women and volunteers, Tyler gave the South a festival it will long remember.

Many of the performers are well known on the women's circuit--Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, Carol MacDonald, and Alix Dobkin among them, along with speakers Flo Kennedy, Kate Millet, and Rita Mae Brown. The festival also runs a day stage before the main stage events to give new performers a chance to be seen and heard. Along with the well-known acts were some local performers, such as the Scallion Sisters, a rock band from Atlanta. Main stage featured Teresa Trull and Barbara Higbie, Cris Williamson and Tret Fure, Linda Tillery, comic Kate Clinton, Margie Adam, rock band Carol MacDonald and Witch, Casse Culver, the Scallion Sisters, Meg Christian, Andrea Floyd, Alix Dobkin, San

Francisco comics Lea Delaria and Jeanine Strobel, and, of course, Robin Tyler.

I arrived at the festival site, a camp in northern Georgia complete with cabins, camping areas, and a huge lake, a week early to help with the set-up, and was joined by women from all over the United States--New York, New Hampshire, Ohio, Wisconsin, Washington, California, Texas, and many other states. They came to build the stages and ramps for wheelchairs, work in the kitchen, paint signs for the land, and even make beverage runs to the local town for the workers (this job was held by singer Carol MacDonald, one of the few performers who came early to help). There were several women who served as coordinators to make the work run smoothly. Tyler incorporated many local women as coordinators, such as on-camp nurses and medical staff familiar with local foliage and health problems, a twenty-four-hour AA cabin, and a special cabin for differently abled women.

One of the important things that became evident during the week was the feeling of working as a group with a common goal of setting up the festival for the 2,000-plus women who would be arriving on May 25. The individual needs disappear (and aren't really missed), and whether it's women pushing a van out of red

Georgia mud, hosing down the kitchen, or hanging and focusing the lights for the main stage, the feeling of comradery comes through and you become part of a working force of women together. When the festival began, workshifts were filled at such a fast rate that the coordinators were running out of sign-up sheets!

Robin Tyler, aided by Flo Kennedy (complete with stars-and-stripes boots and a very loud whistle on a rope), served as MC for performances. The performers were well received, and some of the audience members had never seen many of the artists live until the festival. Teresa Trull and Barbara Higbie opened the festival and set the mood for the weekend. They were followed by Cris Williamson and Tret Fure, who were so well received that they played and played for the appreciative crowd, who sang along (naturally) with the "filling up and spilling over" chorus of "Waterfall."

On Saturday, despite rain delays, Linda Tillery gave such an uplifting performance that it made the wait worthwhile. Comic Kate Clinton offered just the pick-me-up the crowd needed after enduring thunder and lightning. But even all the red Georgia clay turned muddy couldn't really dampen the spirits of this crowd. Margie Adam was wonderful, as usual. A definite hit of the evening was the electrifying sounds of



Carol MacDonald and Witch. Introduced by Tyler as the "Godmother of women's music," MacDonald, former leader of the legendary ISIS, and her new group Witch are an eight-piece, all-woman rock band who had the audience on their feet and dancing.

Sunday afternoon brought the return (after four years) of Casse Culver, and what a return it was. The crowd was so supportive that it seemed evident that her absence from performing was missed, not only by her fans, but by Culver herself. Following Culver was a local band from Atlanta, the Scallion Sisters. I expect that we'll be hearing about them a lot in the future.

Sunday evening opened with Robin Tyler and her own unique brand of humor. With mostly new material, Tyler had the crowd yelling "just kidding" in between the laughter. At the end of her comedy routine Tyler did her usual "We are Everywhere" rap--she's the person who coined that phrase, by the way. As a new ending to her act, she returned to her show business roots as a singer and did a rendition of "Over the Rainbow" that left the audience cheering and crying at the same time.

Tyler was followed by Meg Christian, who was in fine voice, with a great back-up band, and had several encores. On the last encore, Tyler led her out and said, "Go on, do another song." The crowd response was fabulous as she sang everyone's favorite, "Ode to a Gym Teacher."

The closing performances on Monday were by Andrea Floyd, Alix Dobkin, and the comedy duo of Lea Delaria and Jeanine Strobel from San Fran-

cisco.

There were also some surprise acts. Accompanying newcomer Kay Weaver was her co-writer and singing partner, Carol MacDonald, with their newly released single "Fired Up." MacDonald seemed to be everywhere, and the crowd went wild when she sang with Weaver.



Susan Lewis

Two of the Scallion Sisters

It must be mentioned that the sound was done by Woman-sound of Washington, D.C. Praise must go to Boden Sandstrom for an incredible job.

The featured speakers were well chosen. Kate Millet and Flo Kennedy, two veterans of the women's movement, were quite interesting--sort of a herstory before our eyes. Rita Mae Brown, well-known author, gave a humorous talk discussing everything from her own personal experiences to our self-images as women.

Producer Robin Tyler talked about the herstory of comedy. One of the nice things about Tyler is her accessibility and her easy shift from producer to performer and back again.

There were also many other workshops throughout the weekend, ranging from "Feminism and Non-Traditional Jobs" to "Incest/Sexual Abuse Survivors Support Group" to "Juda-

ism Without Patriarchy."

In addition, there was a crafts area with woman-made products, books, and records by women performers, many of whom were at the festival and signing autographs for all who asked.

As the festival drew to a close, it was evident that everyone had had quite an experience, whether it was putting up with the torrential rains or watching Casse Culver serve as lifeguard at the lake.

Tyler is producing the Fifth Annual West Coast Women's Music and Comedy Festival (over the Labor Day weekend). She is also planning the Second Annual Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival for next year. Given the success of this first endeavor, next year should be something to look forward to.

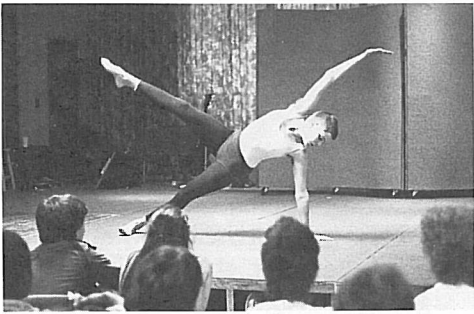
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Martha Leslie Allen, Editor

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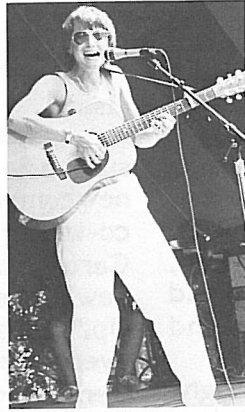


Erika Thorne



Vada Vernée

Rita Mae Brown



Susan Lewis

Hunter Davis



Toni L. Armstrong

Teresa Trull

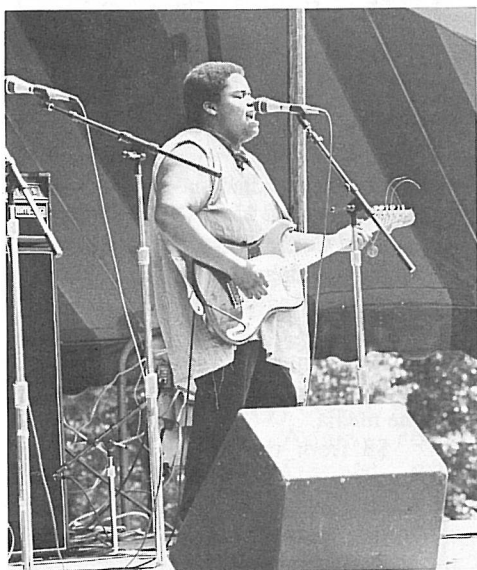


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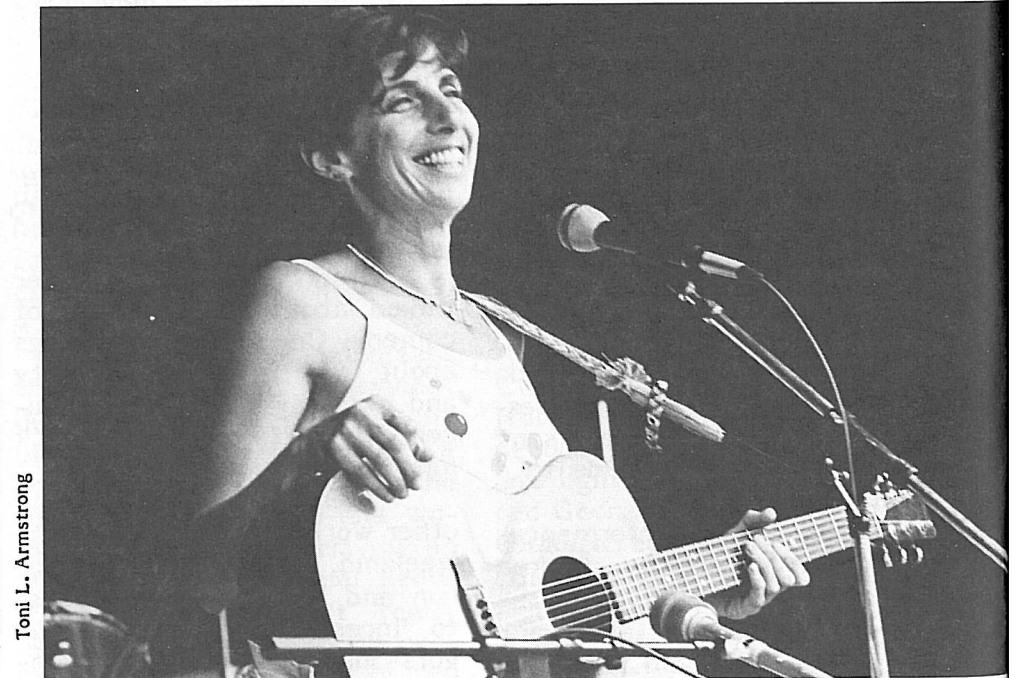


Vada Vernée

Adrienne Torf & June Jordan



Toshi Reagon



Toni L. Armstrong

Alix Dobkin

Toni L. Armstrong



Alpen Musikfest

Jane Vanderhoff



Holly Near

Vada Vernée

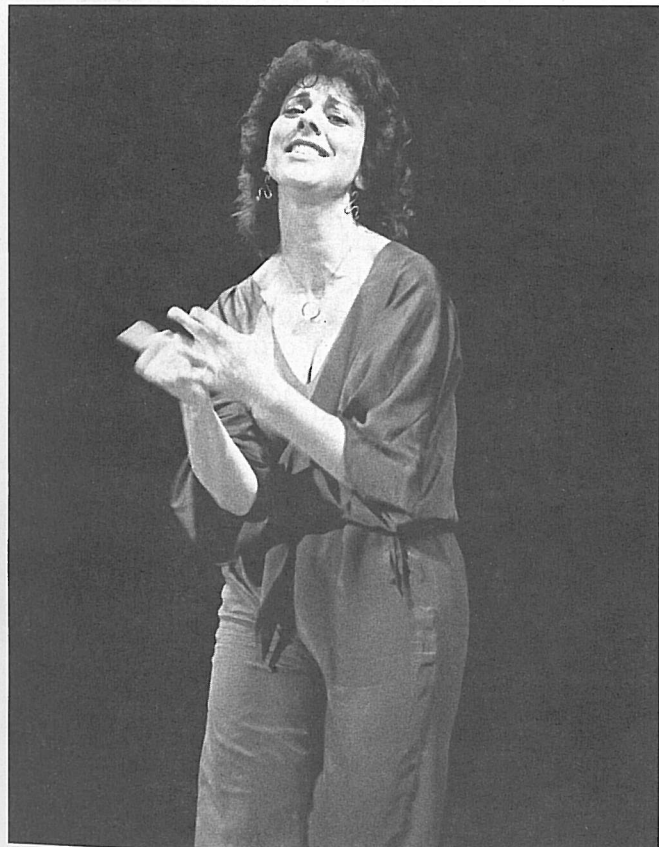


Henia & Dovidia Goodman

Vada Vernée

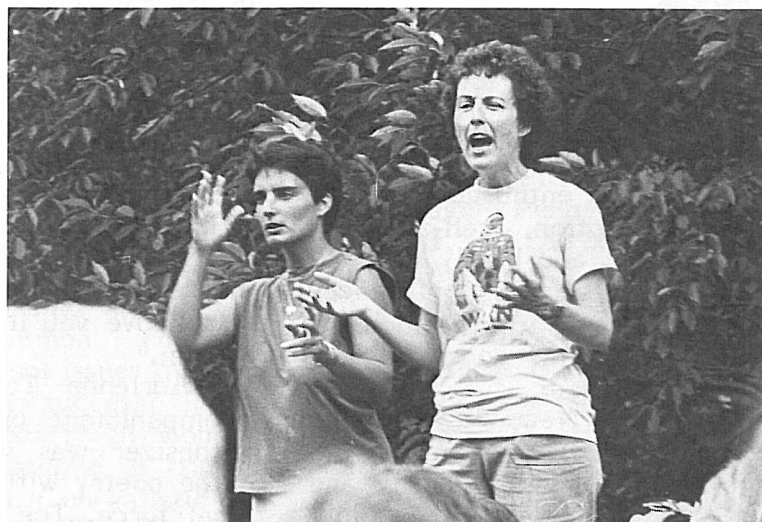
# *A Festival Album 1984*

Vada Vernée



Susan Freundlich

Vada Vernée



Sonia Johnson

Toni L. Armstrong



J. Casselberry & Jacque Dupree

Vada Vernée

# CelebraTen: NWMF's 10th

By Maida Tilchen

Only ten years ago, the first National Women's Music Festival (NWMF) was held because women were barred from performing at an Illinois folk festival. Memorial Day Weekend, 1984, was the tenth anniversary of the festival, and it was a showcase for the growth of skills, experience, and scope of women's music over just a decade.

Now held in Bloomington, Indiana, instead of its original site in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, the three-day event was characterized by excellent performances, enthusiastic audience reception, well-attended workshops, and highly successful accompanying conferences for writers and music industry workers. Some concert highlights included:

--The New Wave version of "Leaping Lesbians," performed by Diane Lindsay and the song's co-writer Sue Fink, complete with a very loud synthesizer and "Bonnie, the drum machine."

--Comedian Kate Clinton wowing the audience with her openly lesbian and blatantly sexual material. Kate's act proved that audiences do want topical, overtly lesbian content--something that many women's music performers have been moving away from.

--Kay Gardner's short opera Ladies' Voices, with libretto by Gertrude Stein, had a cast of six opera singers, elegantly costumed as if they

were at a tea party at Gertrude and Alice's in the 1920s. The experience of viewing an opera with words and music by lesbians was a unique and welcome one.

--June Jordan performed her poetry to music composed and played by Adrienne Torf. The most avant-garde and controversial of the festival's performances, the act was hard-hitting. June's poetry had many violent and repulsive images, from the opening poem "Bang Bang Uber Alles" to a later poem about "pieces of children." Some audience members were upset by such disturbing concepts. June also had some very tender love poems, such as "I still love you like a river in the rain."

Adrienne Torf's musical accompaniment on piano and synthesizer was well-matched to the poetry with equal emotional force. The performance included the song "You Cannot Say 'Death to the Klan!'" which was bone-chilling to hear in Southern Indiana, believed to be the place where the Klan originated.

It was inspiring to see an act that brought together a black woman and a Jewish woman for an anti-fascist, anti-Klan, anti-Nazi message.

--Boston's Betsy Rose gave an intimate, sparkling, and crowd-pleasing performance that included a rap about Mel King and her new song about the Seneca Women's

Peace Encampment.

--The Deadly Nightshade, which was the token feminist band on a mainstream label in the early 1970s, did a reunion performance to celebrate this tenth anniversary festival. Their songs showed the roots of women's music in the musical styles of the 1960s.

--Susan Freundlich premiered her new solo act, which combines interpretation for the deaf, dance, and theater.

--Dovida Goodman and her mother Henia Goodman presented their very effective performance about love, survival, and the Holocaust. The message took on special meaning in Bloomington, where the Jewish Center was damaged by arson last year, and harassment by the American Nazi party has stepped up in recent weeks.

--Casselberry and Dupree gave a performance that included rock and roll, reggae, gospel, and other musical styles. They thoroughly entertained in every style, and the wonderful clothes they wore throughout the festival were also a treat.

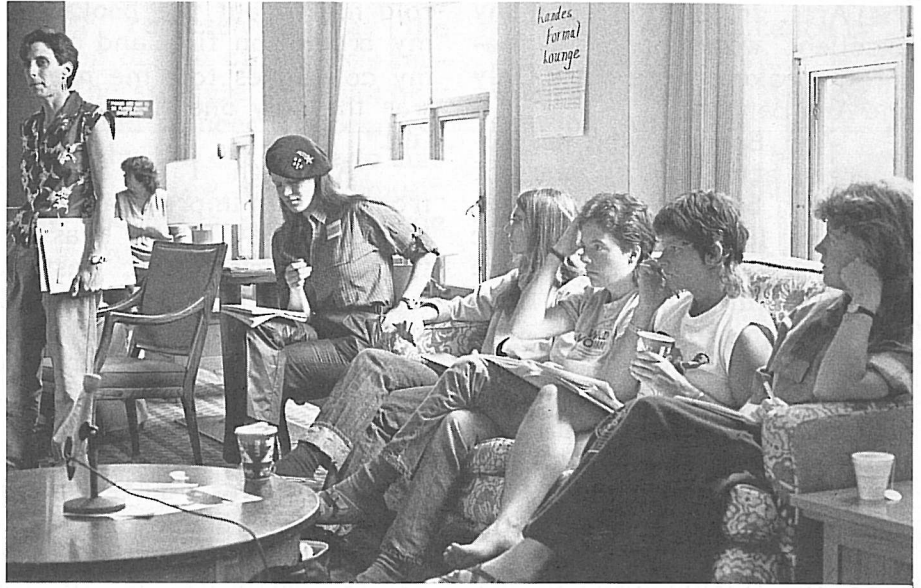
Holly Near gave the most woman-oriented performance I've heard her do in recent years. She startled the audience by stating, "I've heard that many of you have been discussing my personal life--I don't know how you have time to do that with so many serious things going on in the world." She went on to read a poem she

has written, the gist of which was that she has to keep "opening doors" in her life, and that if she had never "opened doors" in the past, she would have missed out on many wonderful experiences. Holly's set closed the festival with lots of high energy and good feelings.

The night stage was emceed by Nancy Brooks, an Indiana-based actress. Day stage highlights included a jazz and dance performance by Beth York and Erika Thorne, the music and comedy duo of Tricia Alexander and Lori Noelle, and several other fine acts. For me, the highlight performance of the festival as a whole was nineteen-year-old Toshi Reagon and the Agitones, a hard rock band from Washington, D.C. Musically, visually, politically, technically, and just plain dance-your-ass-off-ly, they are the hottest rock band to hit women's music that I have seen. It was the sound of a whole new generation, and this Tenth Anniversary Festival seemed the right time for the new wave to rip and shred the old beaches.

Women's music pioneer Alix Dobkin did a somewhat *ex officio* midnight concert. Alix has a lot of new songs, most of them about relationships. She has also formed a dance band with Debbie Fier and River Lightwomoon, which had early-arriving festie-goers rocking and rolling to songs such as "Let's Get Lesbian" (a take-off on "Let's Get Physical"). The concert and dance seemed to suggest a satisfactory solution to the ever-controversial issue of women-only space at the NWMF.

In addition to the concerts and music workshops, this year's NWMF included a Music



Vada Vernée

### Music Industry Conference Panelists

Industry Conference (MIC) and a conference for writers.

The MIC is the only national gathering for the women who perform, produce, and distribute women's music. Up to 150 women held dawn-to-dusk business meetings all week to discuss common concerns. Some of the hot issues this year were: what is success? how to keep the "heart" in women's music; the decline in concert audience sizes; unrealistic pay demands by performers; difficulties for newcomers; changes at Olivia Records; and the increasing involvement of men with women's music.

The theme that emerged from the MIC was that the success of women's music has provided more opportunities and options for the future. The two most discussed directions were: (1) going up "another dimension" into the mainstream entertainment industry, which will mean more involvement with men producers and the big capital risks they can take; and (2) working with other alterna-

tive cultural movements. Apparently, women's music is now the model for other progressive music around the world. As booking agent Penny Rosenwasser put it, "We are developing a cultural leadership, and others are looking to us, wanting to link up." Holly Near gave an example from her experiences touring with the Chilean group Inti-Illimani. The men thought that the tour went smoothly because of "magic"; Holly had to explain that lesbian and feminist networks and values were responsible.

The MIC was characterized by good feelings and trust, although many difficult issues were raised. A sense of pride, maturity, and identity emerged as the women who have made women's music took stock of the last ten years.

A writers' conference was held in conjunction with the festival for the first time, organized by Not Just A Stage and sponsored in part by the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for

the Arts. In addition to many excellent workshops, the featured speakers were Mary Daly and Ann Bannon.

Ann Bannon, who has re-emerged after twenty years of obscurity because of the re-issue in 1982 of her classic 1950s lesbian novels, spoke about writing and read from her work-in-progress. The new book, tentatively titled Motherpie and Applehood, takes her legendary character Beebo Brinker into the streets of San Francisco of the 1980s. Ann also talked about the changes in her personal life since the republication of her books. She has been a professor at the University of California for several years, and says, "I was jet-propelled out of the closet. People stared at me around campus, and the PE majors all waved. My chairman

told me to put the books into my promotion file, and one of my colleagues told me my file was the only one that was any fun."

Although I speak only from my own impressions, I felt that the 1984 NWMF was the first women's music festival I've been to in which the work and presence of women of color was integral to the occurrence and spirit of the festival. As is usually the case, the actual number of women of color participating was quite small. However, the black women artists brought high-energy, innovative performances to the programs.

The black women artists were so effective, so talented, and so present that they were leading the show. This happened because of a combination of factors: Casselberry and

Dupree appeared on night stage; they exceeded some of the day stage, played back-up at other performers' concerts, were very vocal at workshops, and generally put out tremendous energy, enthusiasm and devotion to what they are doing.

And Toshi Reagon's performance was riveting. Her physical presence--a huge black woman with massive shoulders and breasts that dwarfed that twentieth-century phallic symbol, the electric guitar--was a new image of women and music.

Casselberry and Dupree, Toshi Reagon, the Washington Sisters, June Jordon, and Brenda M. Williams (who played Gertrude Stein in Kay Gardner's opera) contributed to the dynamic energy that made this festival so lively and bar-

## Ninth Michigan Womyn's

### By Toni Armstrong

I admit it: I'm an avid member of the TV generation. As a child, I wasn't outdoorsy; I spent hours in front of the tube, thriving on the TV women: Lucy and Ethel, Carol Burnett, Louise Jefferson, and especially Annette's daily appearance on the Mickey Mouse Club. Now my tastes run more to Cagney and Lacey and Tina Turner music videos, but I still prefer to spend my entertainment hours with some sort of indoor activity.

Nonetheless, there is an annual August event that I rarely miss. It's all outdoors, with not a TV in sight.

Remember Password? Contestants would try to guess

#### A GATHERING OF MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS

##### THURSDAY

Alix Dobkin • Casselberry & Dupree •  
Cris Williamson

##### FRIDAY

Reel World String Band • Ferron •  
Debbie Saunders Band

##### SATURDAY

Jane Sapp • Tret Fure •  
Carol MacDonald & Witch

##### SUNDAY

Therese Edell & Betsy Lippitt •  
Mary Watkins •  
Teresa Trull & Barbara Higbie

##### DAYTIME PERFORMANCES

Karen Beth • Hunter Davis • Debbie Fier  
Mimi Fox • Mary Gemini • Sylvia Kohan  
Gail Marie • Toshi Reagon • Judy Small  
Kay Weaver

Advance Prices: 4-Day: \$85-\$100  
2-Day: \$65-\$75  
At The Gate: 4-Day: \$100  
2-Day: \$75

the correct word from verbal clues.

Let's play a modified version right now. Here are the hints:

*chem-free*      *DART*      *The Womb*  
*shuttle*      *night stage*

Another version of this game could use merely a series of questions:

*Did you buy anything in the Artisans area today?*

*Who's performing on day stage this afternoon?*

*Why do you still have your clothes on?*

*Couldn't we just visit them in Twilight Zone instead of camping here?*

*Are you going to brave the showers this year?*

*What do you mean, did I bring the tent stakes?*

rier-breaking. Now, if only the audiences weren't so overwhelmingly white, and if the record companies would pursue a more committed plan to put out more records by women of color, women's music might begin to realize one of its most overstated and underrealized ideals. At the MIC, the few women of color were principally performers and one festival organizer, Michele Gautreaux. I know that there are women of color producing, such as Women of Color Organizing for Action (WOZA) in Boston. I hope that the women's music industry will develop ways to include more women of color in the production of women's music.

The festival went very smoothly, and the participants, estimated at 3,000 including 100 men, seemed to be having a great time.

What the Tenth Annual NWMF represented was the coming of age of women's music. The struggle to break new paths and pioneer has been replaced by the challenge to survive. For a few, women's music may become a stepping stone to mainstream entertainment.

*Celebraten*

For others, it has become a way to realize their dreams of aiding oppressed women to improve their lives. And for some, it has become a part of their personal past. But for the hundreds of thousands of women and men around the world for whom women's music is fuel

and inspiration as they try to survive, the significance of the Tenth annual NWMF is that women's music is thriving and growing after ten years, and the future should bring many new talents and new changes into their lives.

Editors' Note: This article is an excerpted, slightly edited version of the one that appeared in Gay Community News (June 23, 1984).

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*Maida Tilchen's article "A History of Lesbians in Women's Music" appears in the anthology Women-Identified Women, edited by Trudy Darty and Sandy Potter. Maida has been writing on many aspects of women's music for Gay Community News, a national weekly for lesbians and gay men.*

## Music Festival

And for all but the greenest novice, even one phrase would be a giveaway: "We need ten women to work security midnight to 8 A.M."

Without saying any of the words (Michigan, Women, Music, Festival), it's obvious.

We arose at 5:30 A.M. on Wednesday, determined to arrive early and get a good spot. The three of us packed the bulky items into the rented car-top, and decided with some regret to leave the cooler behind (too much to lug from the shuttle to the campsite). Aside from one short detour onto the wrong "Business 31," the trip was pleasant and we were expectant: we'd left our urban lives and were on our way to five days of "women's land." It was as much fun as ever to play

the now-traditional guessing game: is that car over there going to the festival? (check bumper stickers, look for camping gear, are there all women in the car?). Some of our guesses are correct as we turn off near Hart, Michigan, onto the winding dirt road leading to The Land. It's as bumpy as we remember it to be, and we're thrilled to be there.

This is the Ninth Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and it's become a lesbian feminist institution. It's often called "the only four-day womyn's community in the world." Annually, thousands of women arrive on the 631 acres and pitch tents in camping areas with names like "Crone Heights" and "Mother Oak." We know the routine when we arrive: view

the slide show, sign up for a four-hour work shift and register, load our stuff (in more knapsacks, duffle bags, and Hefty bags than we care to contemplate--so glad we left that cooler!) onto the shuttle, and head for Jupiter Jumpoff (quiet camping). There we pitch the tent, hang our Spiderwoman towel in the tree as a landmark for our friends, check out the thirty-five-page brochure, and cruise the land.

Much is as we expect: an unbelievable lineup of performers Thursday thru Sunday on day stage and night stage, a comprehensive list of special services, the Womb healthcare area. Childcare is set up with Gaia Girls' Camp in the heart of the festival, and Brother Sun Boys' Camp near the front

gate. Well over a hundred artisans selling leather, glass, art, clothes, services, books, records, and on and on were in the tented and open Artisans' Areas. The food area looks organized, with the huge trucks and the long table rows awaiting the hungry multitudes. The cooks are busy with their open fires. The three-foot pile of watermelons is under the central tree. The outdoor shower on the hill is looking as "refreshing" as ever.

Reading even a partial list of workshops would tip me off as to where I was: Lavender and Old Lace (womyn over sixty), Lesbian Mothers and Lesbian Daughters Raised Poor/Working Class, a Gathering of Redheads. If I still wondered, my doubts would evaporate by the Menstrual Hut workshop, or Starting a Coven. The variety was magnificent: workshops for special groups (dyslexic dykes, Latinas, differently-abled women), about children and parents (preventing child assault, mothering without birthing, moms and friends of boys), and about relationships (communicating love, incest survivors in relationships, age differences in lesbian couples). Women's businesses and most aspects of women's creativity had their share of workshop time also.

Politics were on women's minds, as usual. The workshops (anti-nuke, civil disobedience, NOW, and lesbian rights) and the political tent provided opportunities to think and meet others of a like mind. Probably the most dramatic and unexpected political surprise was the presence of Sonia Johnson, radical feminist candidate for U.S. President. Her workshop was packed, and she got a rousing ovation from the night

stage crowd.

The variety of spirituality and healing workshops and gatherings emphasized the diversity of who we, the festival community, are: Shabbat gathering, Goddess Gospel Workshop, Daughter of the Moon Tarot, Sakti Secular Women's Religion, Crystals and Color-Healing, Lesbian ex-Mormons.

The Michigan festival commits maximum time, energy, and money into festival services. Few places are as concerned with and responsive to



Toni L. Armstrong

the individual needs of the many groups represented. DART (Differently-Abled Resource Tent) offers a wide variety of services, which are expanded every year. Interpreters for the hearing impaired are on stage; the old snowfence wheelways have been replaced by heavy carpeting; the shuttle system is new and improved; and there is increased access for sight-impaired women. We noticed more staff and more publicity about the area, which included a special camping section.

Oasis, the emotional-health-care center, obviously expanded on last year's suggestions. In addition to the usual available counseling and networking, there were more support groups (including groups for incest survivors, straight women, and young women).

The Women of Color tent was new, featuring workshops and connecting time. There was a stronger structure for non-English-speaking women, particularly the Francophone (French-speaking, organized by Quebec women) services. And, as always, the chem-free (no drug or alcohol use) spaces were clearly marked with painted signs.

The musical lineup for both day stage and night stage was impressive (see insert), and the pleasant weather helped the crowd to be enthusiastic for every show. For the first time there was an acoustic stage, planned for small audiences, featuring theater, dance, mime, and classical music. Also for the first time were late night movies under the stars. (Except for the mosquitos and the dew, it was almost like watching TV!) If all these didn't satisfy, musicophiles could go to the disco, the square dance, and the jam tent, listen to Open Mic, or find other musicians in the woods to make music with.

The 4,250 women who attended included performers, artisans, all workers, and the general festival-goers. At such a large gathering, people can feel isolated, overwhelmed; there's a need for more community building and personal participation. This year, the festival structured this in through "path performers" such as mimes and clowns, and campgrounds had camp counselors. At the day stage, there were noncompetitive New Games, performer round robins, and sing-alongs. The Oasis had support groups for novice festival-goers.

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# A Portrait of Mary Lou Williams

By Shanta Nurullah

When Mary Lou Williams sat at the piano she could trace for you the history of black music in America in three minutes or thirty. She lived and played through much of this history, and it was beautiful to hear her relate it. Her performances often began with a historical presentation, opening us to the strengths of the music and the strength of Mary Lou Williams in this music. Mary Lou's playing was smooth, exciting, subtle, swinging. Live or on record, hearing her was an experience to be cherished.

More has been written about Mary Lou Williams than any other female instrumentalist in black creative music. This is as it should be, for she wrote more music (hundreds of compositions), arranged for more bands, and was productive for more years than any other woman currently or previously working in the jazz idiom. Mary Lou Williams was a living history of this music, frequently credited with her ability to grow, develop, and change as the music was changing, rather than getting locked into the style of any particular era.

Born in Savannah, Georgia, in May of 1910, Mary Lou started playing the piano when she was three years old. "She first heard the Spirituals and Ragtime from her mother who played an old fashioned foot-pumped organ. While practicing her mother used to hold little Mary Lou on her lap to keep

her out of trouble. One day the three year old child's fingers beat her mother's to the keyboard and picked out a melody. By the time she was six years old she was known . . . as 'the little piano girl.'"<sup>1</sup> People would often pay her to play for their private parties, so that at a very early age Mary Lou Williams was making reasonably good money for her music.

Self-taught, this child prodigy was said to be professionally competent by the time she was twelve. As a teenager she toured in vaudeville with the band of alto saxophonist John Williams, whom she married when she was sixteen. In the early 1930s, Mary Lou joined her husband in a band led by Andy Kirk that played primarily in Kansas City. She very quickly became one of the most important members of that band--Andy Kirk and the Clouds of Joy. As solo pianist and arranger-composer for approximately nine years, she helped create the sound and style that would earn herself and the band quite a reputation. Tenor giant Dexter Gordon recalled that in writing parts for tenor saxophonist Dick Wilson, "She was about the first one I ever heard using the tenor to lead the section."<sup>2</sup>

Mary Lou Williams's arrangements came to be very much in demand. The bands she arranged for included those of Duke Ellington, Benny Good-

man, Tommy Dorsey, Bob Crosby, Earl Hines, Glen Gray, Louis Armstrong, Cab Calloway, and Jimmie Lunceford. In addition to arranging, she was composing as well, having already written over 100 songs by the early 1940s.

In the 1940s she left the Kirk band and embarked on a career as a soloist and leader of her own groups. During this period she was married to trumpeter Harold "Shorty" Baker, but was divorced a few years later. In 1945 she had her own radio show in New York City, "The Mary Lou Williams Workshop." During this same year she introduced her twelve-part composition, "Zodiac Suite," at a concert in New York's Town Hall. The following year this work was performed by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, at a time when such orchestras were simply not venturing into black creative forms.

This was also a time when black music was undergoing some very vibrant and significant changes through the innovative energies of musicians such as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, and Thelonious Monk. Mary Lou Williams was right in the forefront with these giants of bebop. She influenced these greats and was influenced by them. Of her New York home she said, "All of 'em used to come--this is a famous apartment. This is where Thelonious Monk, Bud

Powell, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles, and all the bop era musicians came . . . Oscar Peterson, when he first came here, used to hang out here. I had a white carpet on the floor and we'd sit around every night. Monk wrote a lot of his things here."<sup>3</sup>

Toward the end of the 1940s, musical activity decreased and consequently there were fewer concert and club appearances for Mary Lou Williams and other musicians. In 1952 she embarked on a very successful tour of several European cities. While in Paris during a very lucrative engagement she became totally frustrated with the corruption and decadence that she saw throughout the music business and abruptly quit the music life. She described the incident that precipitated this move:

"When I stopped playing, the queen's cousin had given a party for me. . . . I was there and there was one GI, a black kid. He says 'You seem to be nervous. Why don't you read the 91st Psalm. My grandmother always told me to read the 91st Psalm.' Well I read all the Psalms because I've never been able to drink. I had a couple of scotches and I got so high, I thought he meant read all the Psalms. From that day on, it was about 1953, I began praying and I dropped everything, stopped and prayed. I cancelled work and everything 'til I came back to America. And it's a good thing I did that because now I'm able to see more or less the truth of things. I think I would have been completely lost or in Bellevue crazy, because I'm highly sensitive."<sup>4</sup>

When Mary Lou Williams



Mary Lou Williams

returned to the United States in late 1954 she still "felt no desire to resume her career. Convinced that she could give purpose to her life only by helping others, she brought into her small New York City apartment demoralized and down-at-the-heels musicians, provided them with food and shelter, and helped them to find jobs."<sup>5</sup>

During this period Williams joined the Roman Catholic Church (her family had been Baptist). She says that the denomination of the church was not important at the time. "I felt good there . . . I felt at peace, like half the time I was in heaven. I used to go to 6

o'clock--in the morning--mass, and I made Bud Powell and Harold Baker and Thelonious Monk come with me."<sup>6</sup>

It was a Roman Catholic priest, Father John Crowley of Boston, who convinced Williams that because music was a gift from God, she should return to the music life, offering her music as a prayer. During the summer of 1957 she returned to the music scene, making numerous appearances and building up a large following once again.

After resuming her musical career, she established the Bel Canto Foundation in an effort to aid musicians suffering from alcoholism, drug

addiction, and other self-destructive traps. Her goal was to accomplish their recovery by encouraging and helping them to help themselves. This foundation was financed by benefit concerts given by Williams, royalties from her recordings, and funds from sales at the Bel Canto Thrift Shop which she opened in New York City.

Another very important move in the direction of self-help was Williams's creation of her own record company, Mary Records, Inc. For years it stood as one of the oldest existing musician-owned companies. Although she recorded on other labels as well, the Mary Records catalogue boasts several fine recordings by Williams.

The late 1960s seemed to bring another lull in this veteran musician's career. During this time she devoted a lot of time and energy to helping black children by going out on the streets of Harlem and teaching them about their cultural heritage.

In 1970 she says that Father Peter O'Brien, a young Jesuit priest she had known for a number of years, encouraged her to resume her performances. She recalls that "he said 'You better come out and do something about jazz.' I said 'Well, OK, if you go out with me.' So what happened is he came in from school, the Jesuit priests never stop goin' to school. He came in and says 'OK, let's go!' We started at The Cookery and in about three months, people began to open up jazz clubs. The musicians were dropping in and everything. Nobody was playing jazz . . . nor was there anyone on TV."<sup>7</sup>

Mary Lou Williams believed that the Catholic church

and the priests were responsible for keeping jazz alive and that she was one of the few people who could still play it. This appeared to be her singular opinion, for even Peter O'Brien, when asked if he agreed, said that priests "had a lot to do with Mary's career; but there are a lot of other people working too."<sup>8</sup>

In conjunction with her belief that younger musicians are unable to carry on the jazz tradition, Mary Lou Williams maintained that the evolution of this music stopped a number of years ago. Of the music she said, "There's four eras of it and each era became more modern than the other, than the last era. And when it reached bop, the Dizzy Gillespie era, it stopped. . . . That's the reason why the priest called me to come out and try to save it."<sup>9</sup>

Musical evolution was not the only thing Mary Lou Williams felt ended with the bop era of the 1950s. From the early days of jazz through that time there had been a very close, sharing, supportive network of relationships among musicians that can now only be found in isolated instances with certain individuals. There is no longer the constant exchange, the love that was so essential to the world of music. Williams felt an absence of love also in the music coming from younger musicians.

It is the musician's love that should be coming through the music at all times, said Williams. Music has a healing power, an ability to make people feel better and change for the better. She felt that younger musicians especially are not approaching the music from this perspective, thereby con-

tributing to the problems of the world, rather than helping to ease them.

In her efforts to increase the public understanding of jazz, Mary Lou Williams distributed hundreds of copies of two handbills. One was an impassioned appeal for people to save jazz by supporting it themselves and by contacting record stores and radio and television stations to urge their increased support. The other handbill was a tree tracing the history of jazz. In this diagram and in conversation Williams steadfastly maintained that this music is rooted in the suffering of black people.

Until her death in 1981, Mary Lou Williams was actively involved in music. During her later years she was artist-in-residence at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, often traveling on weekends to engagements throughout the country. In addition, she performed at music festivals in Europe and made television appearances in the United States, including a segment on Sesame Street and a thirty-minute special with some of her students at Duke, "Christmas Eve with Mary Lou Williams."

A very special honor was awarded this gifted woman when, in early 1978, a street in Kansas City was named after her. Mary Lou Williams attracted a lot of well-deserved

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*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Shanta Nurullah, musician and freelance writer, is a member of the band Sojourner. She writes and performs for children as well and has four children of her own.*

# Tour Booking and Promotion

The following information was originally presented in expanded form in two workshops given at the 1984 Music Industry Conference of the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, Indiana. We've all contributed bits and pieces to this entire article, but basically the authors are as follows: Why, Where, When--Penny Rosenwasser (Roadwork West); Who--Jill Davey (Redwood Records); How--Susie Gaynes (WhysCrack Records); Promotion --Trudy Wood (WhysCrack Records).

## WHY

So, you really think you want to book a tour for this fabulously talented friend of yours across town who's been begging you for months. Great! Just be very clear about why you're doing it. Let's hope you're not in it mainly for the money, because it's lots of hard work, with limited financial return, at least for a while (maybe a l-o-n-g while). Ideally, you believe in your artist--maybe you're booking yourself--and in spreading multi-racial women's and lesbian culture, and you'll get satisfaction out of doing that work. You might have other political goals too: ousting Reagan, coalition-building, or stopping the MX. Roadwork sees women as vital carriers of culture, and that culture has the ability to touch people when nothing else can. Once touched, hopefully we will move to fight the oppression that hangs over us--to

change our lives. And culture also gives us solace and healing strength in the process of our struggle. So don't think of yourself as a booking agent so much as a cultural organizer!

How you work is every bit as vital as the work you do. If you convey an attitude of mutual respect to the people you contact--production groups, the press, club owners, culturally diverse networks, students, other artists, techies--it will come back to you. That's why what we're doing is an alternative to the mainstream. (Remember the old "personal is political"?) And unless you're planning on booking Aretha Franklin, techniques of intimidation, rudeness, or power plays will not get you far. Consider it a challenge to do business in a new way--a fair, humane, and cooperative way that incorporates vision with integrity. No one ever said it would be easy!

The day-to-day work of booking is not mystical. It simply takes enthusiasm, attention to detail, good organization, comfortability with the phone, and a resourceful head. You also need to work well in a middle role amid artist, producer, record company, and press, and constantly be able to see yourself as part of a much larger picture, even though you may be all alone in your little office for hours each day. Use your imagination!

From the very start, have a clear understanding with your artist of why you are organizing this tour. To sell a product?

Gain exposure and reviews? Earn money? Spread political ideas? Work in coalition? Every other decision will flow from this focus. You can have more than one focus, but the priorities should be clear.

And as a booker, if you are into spreading the exciting alternatives women's culture has developed, then your work will involve much more than nailing down a concert date. You'll be teaching and encouraging producers in areas such as accessibility for the differently abled and hearing impaired, free child care, sliding scale tickets, work exchange, literature tables in the lobby, connecting cross-culturally, working in coalition with other groups, and working cooperatively within their own group, etc. This work is every bit as crucial to our movement as the two hours of performance that begin when the lights dim.

Remember that the connections you build can be lasting. Nurture your relationships with other bookers, the press, club owners, production companies, community and organizational leaders, record labels, and technicians. And almost most important, keep in close touch with the women's music distributor in your area. She is in a position to know the resources in her area well and can be an invaluable resource to you. Trust her, cooperate with her, and both you and your artist will have a much easier time of it. (See WILD in the Resource Section at the end of this article.)

The network we are all building is more than unique --it's a treasure. And just as any chest of gold may be deeply buried, or rusty, or a little moldy, of course there are problems. But in the past fifteen years, thousands of women have participated in building a new women's culture that has incorporated exciting new ideas, skills, and ways of doing things, and has in fact become a cultural model for some of the "mainstream." (Just ask some of the women's production companies about the over-ground male promoters who have approached them about co-producing together.)

We've produced concerts, booked tours, created festivals, formed record companies, raised funds, learned sound, lighting, stage, and graphic design skills, developed mailing lists, sold albums, written articles, legally incorporated, taken pictures, made albums, written songs, published magazines, attended concerts, sung, laughed, danced, acted--in short, developed a market that in many places exceeds the "folk" market. For example, did you know that current Women's Independent Label Distribution record sales exceed a quarter

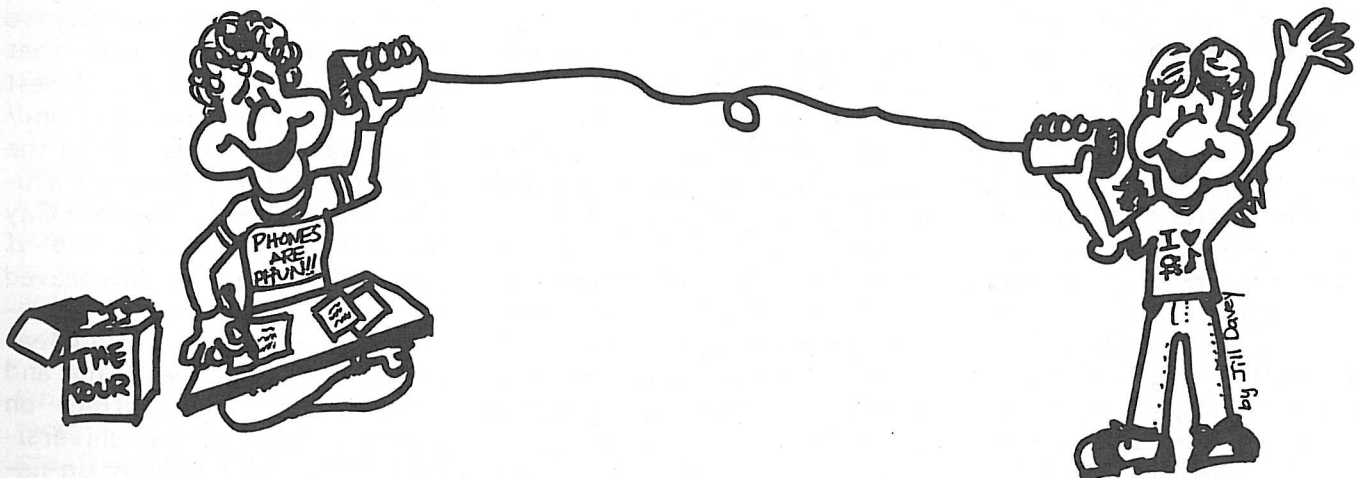
of a million annually? That these albums have a retail value of two million dollars? (The distributors at Midwest Music emphasize that women's music distributors do not make \$2 million profit.) Numbers are relative, though. In comparing women's music to the mainstream music industry, consider these figures: Cris Williamson's Changer and the Changed, generally acknowledged as the top-selling LP of women's music, has sold over 150,000 copies so far. Bruce Springsteen's recent Nebraska album was considered a "bomb" because it only sold 200,000. On the other hand, women's music holds her own when comparing and contrasting sales in the alternative music circuits such as folk, blues, and jazz. Arloco (Arlo Guthrie's label) considers a good year selling 50,000 records. Redwood (Holly Near's label) sells about 80,000 records a year.

And despite an economy where most of those below the poverty line are women, and a political movement fraught with in-fighting, somehow we've not only persevered, but are in a fairly healthy state overall. We have tremendous strides yet to take in terms of having this culture accessible

to all women, and having it truly represent women of color. But we continue to move forward. So please, as we build, feel free to criticize, stretch, and try new ideas--and, as with any treasure, let's still try to handle what we have with love and care.

## WHERE

Touring can of course be international, national, regional, or local, depending on your artist's time, money, contacts, talent, visibility, product, and luck. Where you go will determine which type of travel is most economical and vice versa. Our network needs more regional development--women who want to take on booking their whole region for various artists. This involves bringing together several schools, clubs, or groups to book one artist for a specific time period in return for a somewhat reduced fee, commonly known as a "package deal" or "block booking." Most artists will be more than thrilled to make such an arrangement if you are willing to put in the legwork to pull it together. There are so many places women's culture has barely touched!



## WHEN

Ah, the contradictions! Of course, everyone and her sister tours in spring and fall, which means competition is highest then. But in the summer, many people are on vacation, and in the winter, weather can be a problem. You just need to weigh all the variables and figure out what makes the most sense for your situation at the time--for example, summertime is festival time, February is Black History Month; in March many schools have women's weeks; etc. If you tour during peak times, do your best to find out from all the producers and club owners and other bookers who else will be around when, so you can try to work cooperatively (possibly do joint publicity, announce each others' gigs, and avoid booking on top of each other). Other ideas are just going out for selected weekends, or when the airlines, buses, or trains offer special package deals. Keep your eyes and ears open!

## WHO

Who produces you or your artist is directly related to the "whys" of touring. If you're touring to gain exposure as a new artist, you might seek a different producer than if you're touring to promote a new album or cassette, or mainly to earn money or to support a political cause or idea. The content of your act will also help you decide where to look for gigs. For instance, if your band plays bluegrass music, there are clubs and festivals that focus strictly on bluegrass. Or if your songs have feminist or lesbian content, there are festivals and a net-

work of producers who support that politic. The same is true for folk and rock music, political songs, jazz, country, rhythm and blues, gospel, comedy, theater, poetry, etc.

The first thing to remember when booking a tour is that anyone can be a producer, and that any situation can be turned into a potential gig. Below are some obvious and not-so-obvious places to start looking.

Overground producers and promoters: These are hard to break into unless you are a fairly established artist with significant press and/or a product (LP or cassette). But maybe you could open for one of their sets. It never hurts to try.

Clubs and cabarets: These are often very hard to break into also, but sometimes are specialized to a specific kind of music that may help you get in. Or, again, maybe you could be an opening act.

Coffeehouses: Usually coffeehouses tend to be more willing to take a chance on new artists, especially if the music or message fits the tone of the place. Often there is not a lot of publicity done by the coffeehouses (they tend to run on shoestring budgets), so you may want to supplement it with some of your own to insure a good turnout. The fee is usually a percentage of the door.

Alternative producers: These include women's production companies, other political producers, and many of the producers in folk music. In this case, "alternative" means that these producers do not necessarily support themselves solely through production, or they produce concerts in support of a political cause, group of people, or kind of music. Alter-

native producers are usually a good place for the new artist to look for gigs if her music fits within their more specialized framework or is supportive of their political cause. Sometimes the women's production company can help you get booked into a club; the women promote it, and the club pays you (we hope). It's a good place to begin getting your name out and getting reviews, etc.

### Colleges and universities:

There are a wealth of places to look within a college setting. Student activities offices are a good place to start. They usually will have a "concert committee" that uses school funds to bring in entertainment for the student body. The competition here is pretty tough, but it is still worth your while. Often there will be more than one committee that brings entertainment to college campuses. Look for coffeehouse committees, fine arts committees, arts and lectures series, and special events such as Black Studies Week, Women's Awareness Week, Peace Week, etc. Also ask if they book "nooners"--noontime entertainment; the fee is low, but it gets your foot in the door.

If the Student Activities Office doesn't work for you, don't give up. Go directly to the department or club that your music or act aligns closest with. If you're a feminist and/or lesbian performer, go to the Women's Center, Women's Studies Department, or the Gay Student Alliance, and see if your music can be integrated into some event they are planning. If you sing antinuclear songs, check out the Peace and Anti-Nuclear organizations on campus. Colleges and universities also depend heavily on na-

tional and regional entertainment conventions to book a lot of their entertainers. These conventions, like NACA (National Association of College Activities), are costly to go to, and the competition is very stiff; but if you break in, you can get a lot of work at colleges and the money is very good. The Student Activities advisor at your nearest college should be able to tell you how to hook into NACA locally.

Organizations and conferences: Many social service and political organizations produce concerts as fundraisers for their organization or political cause. If you are a new artist wanting to gain exposure, seek these organizations out and offer your services to them for a lower fee or as a benefit. Next time they may produce you for your regular fee or someone else who sees you may

remember, anyone can be a producer if she has enthusiasm and is well organized and responsible.

#### HOW

The only things you absolutely need to be a booker are a phone, a map, a mailbox, and a comfortable chair. That may sound obvious, but it points out that one can book from almost anywhere, and it does not require a large financial investment. What is needed is a willingness to invest numerous hours, a resistance to ear fungus (a dreaded booker disease caused by too many hours on the phone), and a love of your work and the work of the artist you're booking.

The first thing one must do in booking a tour (or even a gig or two) is decide if the artist will fly or drive, and where

have some suggestions about other contacts in the area. It is not uncommon that the person who ultimately produces the concert is the fifth or sixth call you make from tracking leads and picking everyone's brain along the way. Don't give up too easily!

One of the most important things to stress is that you do make that follow-up call. Letters are only a cheap way of getting people's attention. The real work is done on the phone. That's your best tool in making "the sale," and it's worth every penny. Letters don't book people; calls do. Some better-known artists don't even bother with a letter. It is a good idea when starting out, though.

Once you've got a "producer" (meaning anyone who will bring your artist to their city) listening, they'll want to know when and how much. If it's a

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## ***"Don't think of yourself as a booking agent so much as a cultural organizer!"***

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be interested. Examples include NOW, National Women's Political Caucus, Gay Task Force, Lawyer's Guild, Women's Studies Conference, and Festivals. Watch the papers, go to the library, ask club owners and schools about local or regional festivals, and even if you don't get paid much, it's wonderful exposure.

These are some ideas that will help get you started. The most important thing is to be creative and persistent; and

and when they want to go. Once you have determined that, it's time to send out introductory letters to potential producers, colleges, coffeehouses and clubs, etc. It should be a general letter stating the approximate time your artist will be passing through their area, with a description or flyer about her. You should also say you will be following up the letter with a phone call within two to three weeks to see if they're interested or if they

driving tour, the "when" will be a delicate juggling act that requires some give and take on everyone's part. You must make sure your artist can get from one city to another with enough time for emergencies. The cities must be in logical geographic order, and although you can plot out the ideal at the beginning, be prepared for some changes midstream. Common sense is your greatest asset here.

If it's a flying tour, there

is far greater flexibility, though you will still need to have some regional considerations. A good travel agent is essential. By the way, some airlines have a wonderful three-week unlimited-mileage fare that is perfect for tours. Ask the travel agent.

When the producer asks "how much?" there are several approaches to the question. One common way to handle it is simply to quote a price. The pitfall here is that you may ask for less than the producer had in mind and lose money. Another pitfall is that you ask for far more than the producer had in mind and she gets freaked out and uncooperative. It's good to be able to lay out some ballpark figures when needed, but sometimes getting the producer to suggest a price first can be useful. If she won't do that, then one can use another common slant--the "let's work backwards and see what you can afford" approach. Here, the booker and producer sit down together and figure out expenses, ticket prices, projected attendance, and the resulting budget. It then becomes clear in which ballpark the ballpark figure lies. It may even become clear that it's a dead end, and the producer can never afford what your artist needs to get. More often than not, though, it gives a realistic framework in which to bargain and work out a producer fee and to determine if working with percentages as well as guarantees makes sense.

The one term that should sum up the approach to negotiating is mutual respect. If this exists, there is no reason why this aspect of the process need be unpleasant. Booker and producer are not necessarily in

adversarial positions. After all, it is in everyone's interest that both the artist and the producer make fair money and the audience gets a good show at a fair price. This can happen when a spirit of cooperation exists, everyone is flexible within reasonable limits, and people do their jobs.

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***"Trying to get gigs from the local rotary club if you are a lesbian separatist is a waste of time and energy."***

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Once a fee is worked out and a date is chosen, it's time for the booker to tie all the loose ends. This can range from sending the contract, press kits, and posters to setting up interviews and finalizing travel arrangements. The most important thing is to be clear with both the artist and producer what you're doing and what you expect from them.

Booking can be a lonely job, but it's an essential part of the process that is women's music. It can also be challenging, rewarding, and fun. There's plenty of room for more of us, so jump in--the phone lines are fine.

## **PROMOTION**

When Trudy Wood first started promoting Kate Clinton, the best advice she got was from author Barbara McDonald, who said that if we didn't put out our own image of ourselves, in our own words, the press would make it up themselves. One of the crucial areas for artists, and often the thing that puts us on the map,

is the way we can creatively and effectively promote ourselves, our visions, and our directions. Promotion needs to be directed. An artist must know herself, what she's about, what she's doing and why, and what she wants to accomplish. As a promoter or advertiser, look at promotion being done by other artists who are doing well, getting a lot of jobs, selling a lot of records, and ask, "Why?" As women we have historically been warned about drawing attention to ourselves, but that is exactly what we need to learn how to do. There is not a performer around who is "making it" who doesn't have a clear, directed idea about how to do just that, and then what to do after that.

It is important in the beginning to identify who your audience is, whom you want to appeal to, and to target this group. Trying to get gigs or promotion from the local Rotary or Lion's Club if you are a lesbian separatist is a waste of time and money. Your promotional goals should be to know who it is you are initially appealing to and aim in that direction through advertising and publicity, get your name out as much as you can, and make yourself known to people within that group who would be in a position to hire you or advertise another performance.

Getting your name out when you target a city, usually around a performance date, involves contacting the mainstream and alternative press for calendar listings, interviews, reviews, or pictorial coverage; radio and TV targeting; posterage; paid advertising; and direct mailings. Create an event and make it newsworthy!

It takes concerted effort



by everyone involved to build an audience in a city. When you are not yet known, it is unrealistic to think that anyone (producers, colleges, the media) will spend time, or any money, promoting you. A rule of thumb at the beginning is "do it yourself." Provide producers with everything they'll need to do the kind of promotion job you want done. Invaluable promotional materials include the following: (1) a professional looking press pack; (2) an eye-catching flyer for producers to duplicate that has a space for their concert information; (3) your own posters; (4) black-and-white glossy photos for the press to use; (5) a camera-ready ad available for their use and yours. A good introductory book on basic design and graphics can be very helpful to you in laying all of this out, should you be doing it yourself.

The press pack does not have to be expensive or slick, but it should be tasteful, well-written, and to the point, and also convey very clearly who you are (clever? romantic? focused on a message?). It is better to have less material, but of high quality, than to have rambling quantity. Cheaper too. Make sure to include an engaging bio, places you've performed, at least one good photo, opening acts you've done, performers you've shared the bill with, and the best reviews you've gotten. You might also include a sample press release about your upcoming tour, concert, or album. (If you don't have experience writing these, off to the library! Remember that the first paragraph should include the most vital information.) And with all the promotion you write, the better written it is, the more likely it is

that it will be lifted intact and reprinted just as you wrote it. Who could ask for more?

When putting up flyers and posters, don't be afraid to use too many of them. Flyers are one of your cheapest forms of advertising. Create an interesting design on a wall or in a window with several flyers, encouraging people to look at the design and therefore the flyer.

Don't automatically rule out paid ads in major papers. Talk with the producer in that area and see if the audience you're trying to reach reads that paper. If so, it may be well worth your while to put an ad in it. First, however, you might try getting one of the writers of that paper to interview you --for a free article.

When you are publicizing at a college or university or in a small town, use banners across walkways or a small street, chalk the event on the sidewalk, or make "table tents" (cardstock cards with information on both sides sitting like a tent on the table) and put them in the cafeteria, student union, and in friendly bars or clubs. Also, on university campuses, word of mouth is very important. See if you can get several professors to announce the concert and/or talk it up some. Some have even given extra credit if a student attends and writes a paper on the views expressed.

Again, most important--be creative and persistent.

For people to take you seriously, you must demonstrate that you take yourself seriously. Initially this involves money: yours. Press packs, glossies, posters and flyers, phone bills, and money to live on in the interim must all be taken into consideration by the

artist as her own operating expenses. There are a lot of extremely talented women trying very hard in this circuit to bridge the chasm between the unemployed and the employed. To become one of the latter, you need more than talent; you need every intelligent thought and scheme you and your friends can come up with, dedication and direction in that belief in yourself, and GUTS!

Creativity is a key, whether in projecting yourself or your product, should you have an album out. It's always a good idea to learn the rules--then you can feel free to break them. One of the main reasons WhysCrack Records pressed Kate Clinton's newest release, Making Waves, on blue vinyl, besides the fact that it's beautiful and reminds us (and, we hope, many others) of the colored records we had as kids, was because it was different. No one else in women's music had done it, it draws attention to itself, and it's advertising in and of itself. The idea is to draw attention to yourself and what you're doing.

Look at other artists' promotional materials for ideas and interesting angles. Focus your promo on what you want stressed about yourself, what you want highlighted. You can put yourself out into the world in any way you choose, so think about how it is you want to be seen and then go for it! The more professional-looking your materials are, the more professionally you will be treated. Get stationery printed up, as well as business cards, and then start using them. Send out your promo to everyone on any list

*Continued on p. 62*

# Broadcasting in Corn Country

By Lisa Kuhn

You are driving through Champaign, Illinois, fiddling with the radio dial (searching for a station that isn't playing elevator music), and you're pleasantly surprised to hear a Margie Adam tune coming from the speaker. As the song ends, the announcer says that you've been listening to "Women Making Waves"—a program of women's music aired every week on WEFT, Champaign's community radio station. What the announcer probably won't tell you is that this has been happening almost since the station began broadcasting back in September 1981.

Many of us remember that Champaign was the original home of the National Women's Music Festival. It began here as a women's folk festival, and for seven years brought a rich and diverse mix of talented musicians, women's music, and culture to the area. Although Champaign was (and still is) home to fine local talent, the community was at a loss to fill the void created by the festival's departure in 1980, until WEFT started to close the gap.

Soon after WEFT went on the air, Laura Bordeaux asked the program director if she could work more women's music into her regular Saturday afternoon program. He agreed that women's music needed more airplay, and she started to program part of the three-hour airshift with a focus on



women's music. About a year later, a contest was held to name the program, and "Women Making Waves" became established as WEFT's women's music show. This program helped spark community interest in the possibility of producing women-oriented programming for radio, and more women became involved.

Unlike public radio, which must answer to some degree to its sponsors, to educational institutions, and/or corporate foundations, community radio is primarily listener-sponsored and answers only to its listening audience (and the FCC, of course). WEFT is a community radio station, and its existence depends on community participation. To that end, WEFT holds regular radio classes to help instruct novices in the proper use of broadcast equipment, station policies, and FCC regulations.

In February of 1982 I had finished just such a class and started to sit in with Laura during "Women Making Waves."

By the fall of that year, Laura and I were alternating airshifts week to week. In January of 1983 I assumed complete responsibility for the program, and I'm still producing it today.

The primary goal of "Women Making Waves" is to make the community aware that there is women's music and culture and that it is accessible to them. It is also important to let women know that their experience and choices are valid, and this is reflected in the program. I am fortunate not to have received any flak for playing blatantly lesbian songs or airing pro-lesbian attitudes on the program. Broadcasting in corn country can have its drawbacks. I did hear a story once about a radio station that played Alix Dobkin singing "Any Woman Can Be a Lesbian" and received so many negative calls from listeners that the station imposed a restriction that the word lesbian couldn't be aired more than once every half hour. I'm still surprised to receive calls from people who have never heard women's music before and want to know where to find it.

Every once in a while I'll do something totally unexpected. One day I announced that I would be playing a special chipmunk set in deference to some special listeners who were tuned in that day. Three songs by three different artists were deliberately chosen and played at 45 rpm (instead of

the usual 33-1/3). The telephones didn't stop ringing for an hour after the set was over. Some listeners asked me if I knew I was playing the records at the wrong speed. A couple of people called to say they hadn't laughed so much in years. One said if she could hear Holly Near at 45 rpm she would pledge a \$50.00 donation to the station (I honored her request). Others thought it was blasphemous to misuse recordings by women artists, claiming that such little time was devoted to women's music on any radio station that to use valuable air time in this way was terrible. I feel it's important, though, that we not take ourselves so seriously. It certainly generated discussion in the community for a while.

WEFT has always maintained that the Women's Music Movement is a significant and vital one. It is important to many women (and men) in the community. The radio station also feels it has an obligation to play women's music because no other station in town is playing it. The decision of what will be aired from week to

week rests with the producer of the show. Much of the program consists of recorded music, with particular attention to different styles, as well as playing lesser-known artists in the women's music industry. There is a commitment to incorporate spoken arts, interviews, and live performances into the format as well. One of the most popular temporary additions to the show was a series of Wonder Woman adventure stories. Local news items and information about upcoming events in the women's community are also featured.

In November 1983, "Women Making Waves" moved from Saturday afternoon to Sunday morning and expanded from one to two hours. Most of the Saturday afternoon fans followed the program to its new time slot, and many Sunday morning listeners discovered women's music. The additional airtime has given me the opportunity to present a greater variety of women's music and information. Knowing that "Women Making Waves" is an important resource for Champaign makes me feel good to be

a part of community radio. So, if you're ever driving through Champaign on Sunday morning, tune in to 90.1 FM. You might be delighted with what you hear.

**Note:** Community radio stations have sprung up all over the country. For more information about community radio or to receive a listing of these stations contact: National Federation of Community Broadcasters, 1314 14th Street NW, Washington, DC 20005

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**  
*Lisa Kuhn has been a cultural worker for the last seven years in the Champaign community. Besides doing the radio show, for the last three years she has published Lavender Prairie News, a lesbian newsletter connecting women throughout East Central Illinois. She works as an offset printer.*

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the edge of the horizon

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## *Speaking to Women through Fiction: Then and Now*

By Ann Bannon



Pat Gargaetas

In the late fifties and early sixties, my novels, which came to be known as the "Beebo Brinker series" after their outstanding character, were published. It was an interesting time in my life, a time of exploration and discovery, a time for spinning tales. The novels came flowing out of my typewriter almost like daydreams, and in fact they served the purpose of giving me an imaginative outlet for my fantasies.

All unknown to me, I was writing something more than romantic fantasy, however; I

---

Re:Inking consists of "thought pieces" on women's writing as a cultural phenomenon. It examines how women's writing enriches and influences our lives, the differences between "women's writing" and other writing, women writers as political advocates, and the interface between writing and the other arts.

was creating a sort of social history, capturing the flavor and style of lesbian life as I perceived it to be in Greenwich Village at that time. If the books have found a life of their own--and that fact delights and astounds me still--it is only in part because they speak as they do of the power of the bond between women who love one another; they reveal a part of our history, as well.

There are other factors which have earned them their place. When the books were new, I began to receive letters from women all around the country, and eventually, from around the world. Most of them shared a theme: "I thought I was the only one in the world who felt this way. I don't know another soul like me." "You have written my story; thank God I'm not alone."

Often, they saw the events of their own lives mirrored in those of the books. They wrote pages of intimate revelation, for the first time trusting their frustrations and fears to another woman. They asked for advice, because it struck them that I, who was a published author on the subject, must surely know the answers to their questions. I hadn't the heart to reveal my own naivete; that, for example, the word "lesbian" never appeared in my first novel, *Odd Girl Out*, because I didn't know it; that I had already made what I as-

sumed was a life's commitment to a conventional marriage.

Always, these correspondents wanted to hear from me personally, and I answered, to the best of my knowledge, all of them at least once. To my regret, the letters they sent me were lost during one of our frequent moves years ago; they would have made a fascinating anthology in and of themselves--a picture of the emotional isolation and need, the tender feelings checked and hidden, the unwelcome sense of "differentness," of deviance, the struggle to present a heterosexual facade, the dismay over one's own deepest feelings, of battalions of women.

Today, that feeling of desperate insularity has changed. I can see the transformation in the women I talk to now. Since Naiad Press reissued my books last year, it has been my pleasure to meet and get acquainted with many groups of women. Often, at the end of the evening, they come up to say hello and have me sign their copies of my books. Some--often women in their middle or later years, or young women who are history buffs--hand me the old familiar printings with their fifties and sixties covers, which still make me wince, well-worn and fragile, and tell me that in

*Continued on p. 63*

# Steppin' Out

## Deb "D. J." Adler

Jan.-March: "Building Bridges" tour. April-June: "Sisters in Sobriety" tour. Bookings: Ariana Productions, P.O. Box 18627, Cleveland, OH 44118. (216) 283-5563.

## Alive

Spring tour bookings: Helen Keane Management, 49 W. 96th, New York, NY 10028. (212) 722-2921.

## Allegra Broughton

Spring tour bookings: P.O. Box 733, Penn-grove, CA 94951. (707) 795-7287.

## Casselberry & Dupree

Spring tour bookings: 378 Pacific St., Brooklyn, NY 11217. (212) 625-1874.

## Ginni Clemmens

Spring tour bookings: 3721 N. Greenview, Chicago, IL 60613. (312) 935-2298.

## Kate Clinton

Nov.: Midwest. Dec.: West Coast. Jan.-Feb.: Florida/Texas. March: Southwest. Bookings: Susie Gaynes, P.O. Box 93, Cazenovia, NY 13035. (315) 655-3308.

## Hunter Davis & Julie Homi

March: East Coast. April: Midwest. Bookings: Hunter Davis Music, P.O. Box 7715, Berkeley, CA 94707. (415) 527-4894.

## Nancy Day

Feb.: Midwest. Touring through Spring. Bookings: Missy Price, 156 E. Gates, Columbus, OH 43206. (614) 444-2815.

## Alix Dobkin

Spring tour bookings: 3072 Fish Creek, Saugerties, NY 12477. (914) 246-8822.

## Ferron

Nov.: Texas/Florida. March: West Coast. April/May: East Coast/Midwest. Bookings: Roadwork West, P.O. Box 3505, Berkeley Sta., Berkeley, CA 94703. (415) 549-1075.

## Debbie Fier

Winter: East Coast. Spring: Southwest/West Coast/Canada. Bookings: Debbie Fier, RFD #3, Amherst, MA 01002. (413) 256-8029.

## The Jane Finnigan Quartet

Spring: West Coast. Bookings: Alexandra Swaney, P.O. Box 42, Basin, MT 59631. (406) 225-3770.

## Susan Freundlich

Spring tour bookings: Susie Gaynes, P.O. Box 93, Cazenovia, NY 13035. (315) 655-3308.

## Kay Gardner

March: East Coast/Midwest. Spring tour bookings: P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207) 367-5076.

## Ronnie Gilbert

April-May. Bookings: Jill Davey, Redwood Records, 476 MacArthur, Oakland, CA 94609. (415) 428-9191.

## Diane Lindsay & Sue Fink

Feb.: South. March: New England/Midwest. April: West Coast. May: Southwest. Bookings: Denise Notzon, 1450 Sixth, Berkeley, CA 94710. (415) 527-7545.

## Gayle Marie

Feb.-March: National album tour (Double Talk). Bookings: Doodle Smith, P.O. Box 755, Corvallis, OR 97339.

## June Millington

Spring tour bookings: Fabulous Records, 4246 Hollis, Emeryville, Ca 94608. (415) 652-2607.

## Musica Femina

Spring tour bookings: 1236 SE 34th, Portland, OR 97214. (503) 233-1206.

## Olivia Records Artists

Spring tour information and bookings: Tam Martin, Olivia Records, 4400 Market, Oakland, CA 94608. (415) 655-0364.

## Party Line Dance Band

Spring tour bookings: 3072 Fish Creek, Saugerties, NY 12477. (914) 246-8822.

## Janice Perry, AKA GAL

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## Toshi Reagon & the Agitones

Dec.: East Coast. Feb.: Midwest and special bookings for Black History Month. March: West Coast. Spring tour bookings:

Roadwork West, P.O. Box 3505 Berkeley Sta., Berkeley, CA 94703. (415) 549-1075.

## Ann Reed

Spring tour bookings: 788 Fuller, St. Paul, MN 55104. (612) 228-1152.

## Reel World String Band

Spring tour bookings: P.O. Box 1972, Lexington, KY 40593. (606) 259-1002.

## Betsy Rose

Spring tour bookings: 3½ Perry, Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 576-1066.

## Judy Sloan

Feb.-June bookings: P.O. Box 1867, New Haven, CT 06508. (203) 397-2187.

## Sojourner

Winter & Spring bookings: Shanta Nurullah, 8500 S. Vernon, Chicago, IL 60619. (312) 994-3302.

## Sweet Honey in the Rock

Spring tour bookings: Roadwork East, 1475 Harvard NW, Washington, DC 20009. (202) 234-9308.

## Linda Tillery

Nov.: East Coast/Midwest. Spring tour: March-May. Spring tour bookings: Roadwork West, P.O. Box 3505 Berkeley Sta., Berkeley, CA 94703. (415) 549-1075.

## Teresa Trull & Barbara Higbie

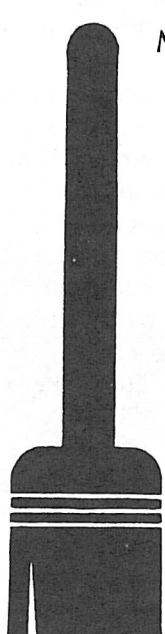
Nov.: Midwest. Spring tour: March-May. Spring tour bookings: Roadwork West, P.O. Box 3505 Berkeley Sta., Berkeley, CA 94703. (415) 549-1075.

## WomanShine Theatre/Nan Brooks

Spring tour bookings: P.O. Box 1568, Bloomington, IN 47402. (812) 339-9498.

## TO SUBMIT INFORMATION FOR THIS SECTION:

Send touring information that spans March-August to HOT WIRE, postmarked by December 15, 1984.



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## *Creating Your Image*

By Nancy Day

I need to perform for my living to be happy. I would not choose another profession. I not only perform four nights a week (with a double gig on Tuesdays) in Columbus, Ohio; I also tour on the weekends. I play for various political events, at lesbian and gay bars and coffeehouses, as well as music festivals and various straight lounges, restaurants, and banquets. This means I perform in settings that range from church basements to outdoor stages to the most acoustically correct of large concert halls. During the beginning of my journey in this (as in any other) career, I have had to be prepared to make key decisions—ones that will affect my career for a long time.

Deciding on what image I wanted to have seemed to be, at first, one of the most difficult decisions to make involving my career. I am not an artist who performs one or two distinct styles of music. I compose music from wherever I am within my cycle/process, not with a specific image in mind. To label me or to put me in a category just won't work, because I perform classical, ragtime, jazz, pop, folk, love ballads, and country. I'm different from many other performers in that I perform origi-



nal material, and my repertoire includes an eclectic collection of musical styles. Performers must all ultimately grapple with the question of "image." I think there is usually at least a partial answer, if you look carefully at who you are and what you do. What is your image already?

To me an image is more than just my appearance, the musical styles I perform, or the settings I perform in. It also includes the issues that I write about. I am not just talking about political issues, but emotional issues as well. These issues, for me, are not limited to the lyrics. They flow from the heart of the music.

With my music, I focus on a "heart-to-heart" delivery. This focus stems from the core of the music itself, which includes the melody line, the poetry of the lyrics, and the emotional energy. To me this is healing music. It allows one to feel deeply while traveling

through the release of feelings within the composition.

While I am musically preparing for an event, I must consider the age range of the audience, the city or town it is located in, and what part of the country I'm in. How many are expected to attend? What size room is it in? What group is producing and sponsoring me? What kind of instruments are available? Is it a formal or casual occasion? Chem-free or not? Is it a mixed audience (male/female/straight/gay and/or lesbian)? Depending on how much prior knowledge I have, I must do research to ascertain the nature of where and for what event I am performing. Then I must consider what would best communicate myself to them. I do not change my image from place to place, but I do handle each situation with care. I know that the audience will need to feel comfortable with me first in order for me to express myself freely.

I must always remember that it is most important to me to perform as best I can and at the same time get the audience's feelings involved. Too few entertainers really talk to the audience. I find the best way to break the ice is to let my dialogue flow without pre-planning it. If I have researched the situation, I already know what guidelines I want to set for myself. I have to trust my-

---

On Stage and Off addresses issues of interest to musicians and performers.

self and the audience, giving them the responsibility of feeling the songs with me. This does not necessarily mean active participation, but heart-to-heart communication. Audiences sense whether you are flowing or not at the outset.

The way I can most easily carry my image from place to place is to focus on my energy, feel good about my music, tune into the responses of the crowd, and let myself live my life on stage. Although some say it makes me seem extremely vulnerable to be so exposed, I believe it lets me live more comfortably with myself, knowing I have given what I felt at the moment. I try to establish a relationship with the audience and, with that in mind, I want to be honest and open with them.

Offstage I choose the ex-

trемities of my image. There are superficialities I need to think about concerning marketing and advertising--aspects such as the colors and design of my albums, brochures, flyers, and posters; the facial expressions, outfits, and poses for photographs; the promotional copy, including quotes from other artists and producers, press releases, biographical information, and reviews.

At first this seems overwhelming. No one can be summed up in a few paragraphs and photographs. However, it is possible to impart an impression of what I want others to see of me and what they can expect when attending one of my performances. Consistency is a necessity throughout the construction of promotional materials. Most of the work involves deciding what specific

qualities you want to emphasize and how you wish to promote them. You have to make sure that you don't make it too complex or you will create a new image that you will have to fit into rather than what you

*Continued on p. 62*

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*Nancy Day is a composer, performer, and arranger. She has been performing for over ten years. Based in Columbus, Ohio, she has recently played at the National Women's Music Festival, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and the New England Women's Music Retreat. She composes popular music as well as music for concert choirs, string quartets, children's songbooks, theater productions, and percussion ensembles.*

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## *The Politics of Positive Singing*

By Paula Walowitz

The word "politics" makes a lot of people nervous.

It makes some of them think about the three-ring circus of a presidential election, and others of somber-looking radical feminists espousing "political correctness." Many think about the snail's pace of changing the world through legislation and electoral politics. Too many think about the hopelessness of trying to change the world at all. These folks tend to say they're not interested in politics, that they're "apolitical."

Well, maybe it's possible for some people. Maybe a living, breathing, thinking person can really not care about how twisted up the world is, though I suspect it's just a feeling of powerlessness that makes such a person "disinterested." Be that as it may, I steadfastly contend that no artist is apolitical. All "creators," including deities, mothers, and bricklayers, have a tangible effect on the world. Conscious or not, it is a tangible, "political" effect, whether for revolution, reform, or upholding the status quo.

Personally, I've never been a big fan of the status

Mulling It Over is a forum for discussion of connections between art and politics. In each column, someone prominent in women's music and culture will discuss her personal politics as they influence her art.



Toni L. Armstrong

quo, and my music shows it. While some of my less artistically successful songs have been those that strive to be political ("Paula, for the rally next week, could you write a song about the ERA?"), every song that I've written has gone through a fairly intensive political analysis before it comes out of my mouth. I figure it's best to know what political effect I'm having on my audience. Otherwise, I might unwittingly be dragging them in the wrong direction.

Music and pop culture can do that. I know. After all, I grew up with a transistor radio under my pillow and a TV six inches from my nose. And I got myself dragged into passivity, powerlessness, and rampant heterosexuality. Luckily, the protest songs and political satire of the sixties made some dents in my culturally reinforced armor, and in the seventies, discovering women's music

shattered it. (Though I still find pieces of rusty chain mail in hard-to-reach places.)

Ever since I began performing my own material, I've been scrutinizing my songs politically. One of the first songs I ever wrote was about loving a straight woman. I performed it only once, at an open mic. Even as I sang it, I was aware of a compulsive, self-destructive quality about it, like the feeling of those old "beat-me-kick-me-I'll-always-love-you" torch songs. It wasn't a "bad" song. It reflected perfectly my feelings about loving this woman. But I had no wish to encourage that kind of feeling in other women. Hearing the wrongness of the song in a roomful of women helped me realize the wrongness of the relationship. I never performed it again.

Another example, perhaps less clear-cut, involved a song I wrote about my frustration and sadness at having to hide my lesbianism from my family and from my students at the high school where I taught. It was called "Shh," and the chorus was whispered with only percussive accompaniment:

Shh, it's a secret  
Shh, don't tell a soul  
Shh, keep a low profile  
Shh, we could lose it  
Shh, we could lose it all  
Shh, keep the truth inside

© 1978 P. Walowitz



It was a powerful song and it evoked powerful reactions. In a mixed audience, it did just about what I wanted it to--it made gay people cry and straight people think. But in a lesbian audience, it was just depressing. Some women continued to request it, but the sense of despair and futility that followed my performance of the song made me stop singing it to lesbians.

So, when my feelings about the subject mellowed a bit, I was able to write a better song, one I could sing anywhere that conveyed the same ideas without the despair. It's a bouncy tune called "Surprise," and the chorus goes:

Surprise, I'm a lesbian,  
And goodness, here I am  
again  
Dodging all the questions  
While staying on my toes.  
Surprise, I'm a lesbian,  
Explaining why there is no  
man in my life--  
"I'm a loner, I suppose."

It makes lesbians laugh for the same reason that "Shh" made them cry. And it reaches

past the anguish and hiding, all the way to the joy and relief of not needing to hide anymore:

I'm looking forward to the  
day  
When I can say, "Surprise,  
I'm gay."  
And the people at work  
will smile and say,  
"That's nice. . . where are  
we going to lunch to-  
day?"

©1979 P. Walowitz

So many women (and even a few gay men) have told me that they find themselves whistling or humming "Surprise" at work or at Thanksgiving dinner with their families or in other equally appropriate places. It makes me feel proud to have created not only a political statement, but a tool that lesbians and gay men can use to fend off the oppression of shame and silence. While making them laugh, no less.

Battling oppression, however, is only one part of my politics. My spirituality is another part, and it is the more revolutionary of the two. Women's spirituality is our best

bet for profound change in the world. Retelling the stories of goddesses from all cultures, reconstructing lost memories of reverence for the earth and our bodies, for our sexuality and our birthing, for our connection to the moon and the tides of the sea: in these things, I see our only real chance to turn back the hands of the doomsday clock and create a genuinely new age that rejoices in life instead of longing for death.

Writing songs and chants to and about the Goddess has been a heady experience. We are actively building a new religion (or rebuilding an old one), and it needs music. Kay Gardner has been responding to that need for some time, along with other members of the women's community and of the thriving neopagan community. Some of my songs have been circulating freely in neopagan groups for a couple of years, with the help of Starhawk and Alison Harlow. They've apparently distributed them so widely that a friend of

*Continued on p. 63*

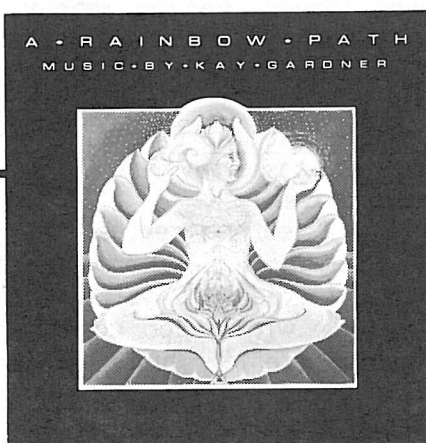
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## Making A Rainbow Path

By Kay Gardner

It's taken eight years, but A Rainbow Path is finally on vinyl. Can you imagine being obsessed by a single idea for eight years?!

The idea in its simplest form: a musical composition designed for meditation on eight energy centers, or chakras, of the human organism. Because clairvoyants and yogis see these chakras as clockwise-spinning wheels of colored light, each piece of the composition touches a different chakra, taking an ascending rainbow path through the listener/perceiver.

Fine. Receiving the vision is easy compared to bringing it to material form.

I had voluminous reading to do about the healing effects of sound, color, and music. Simultaneously, in 1976, I began presenting experiential workshops on music and healing nationwide and in Canada, putting theory into practice and gathering empirical evidence to support my intuitive feelings about music's healing powers.

Then I had to wait for each piece to come to me as inspiration. If I "tried" to write a piece, it didn't work. For example, the piece for the belly chakra was originally in the Lydian mode, and every time I played it I became nauseous. This clearly would not do! Three years later, sitting quietly at the piano and allowing whatever would come, the



piece flowed through me in its own form, in its own mode.

If I've learned anything from this project, it has been to be patient and to allow the creative process to take its own time.

Starting in 1980, having completed three of the eight pieces, I began actively seeking funding for A Rainbow Path. I got \$10,000 in personal loans but realized that there were some things I needed to learn about in the interim. So, with the permission of the women who loaned me the money, I founded my own label, Even Keel Records, and instead produced Moods & Rituals: Meditations for Solo Flutes, a low-budget cassette with a one-color cover.

I learned several things on this much smaller project: (1) The expenses involved when working with color cover art were extremely high; it took two years to realize enough profit from sales to put out a second M & R edition with both LP and cassette covers in full color. (2) It would take a very long time to pay back the loans

(still only halfway reimbursed). (3) There was just no way I could produce a project as big as A Rainbow Path by myself, much as I stubbornly held to my desire to be completely in control.

Not everything I learned was disappointing or difficult. I knew my music had potential marketability and appeal within the "new age" community where my work was not yet known. Beginning with classified ads and quality printed announcements for the first-edition cassette, I expanded later to placing regular display ads in "new age" publications for the second and more professional-looking edition. If M & R would bring my work name-recognition, then A Rainbow Path would have its market both in the women's and "new age" communities.

This tactic has worked. Not only has advertising boosted sales, but because of the ensuing reviews and articles, my work is being sponsored by more and more metaphysical organizations and holistic healing institutions, as well as by women, my basic and beloved supporters.

With sister healers, I founded a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, Healing Through Arts, Inc., through which to channel funding for A Rainbow Path and to which a large portion of album proceeds would go to further research on

the relationship of fine arts to healing. Fund-raising was a frustratingly slow and expensive process! Because of the required paperwork and sponsorship of activities, running Healing Through Arts became time- and energy-consuming.

In 1983 I began to lose heart. The music was almost finished, and I was exhausted, not from creating the music, a labor of love, but from trying to raise the thousands of dollars still needed to bring A Rainbow Path to the public. I just could not do it all myself. I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel, my energy was dwindling fast, I was gaining weight from obsessive eating, and I was getting so desperate to exorcise this project that I considered recording it for piano alone and being done with it!

Ladyslipper, Inc., a national women's music distributor, offered to help me raise funds and included an entire page about me and my work in their 1983 catalog. This support buoyed me for awhile, but I was still without a label or adequate funding.

In mid-January 1984, Laurie Fuchs of Ladyslipper called and said, "We've been thinking and talking about ARP [the nickname it became], and we've decided that we want to activate our Ladyslipper Records label and produce it!" (Gulp!) "When do you think you can be ready to go into the studio?"

"Gosh, the only months I'd be free would be April or August," I said, "and I've got to write the whole forty-minute composition down on paper, because at this point it's only in my head! We'd better plan for August."

I was in shock, but it changed to ecstasy within hours. Calling Karen Kane, a veteran Boston engineer, I asked her to book a studio for April, and the next day I called Laurie back saying that we were set for April.

"April! I thought you said August."

"Well, I did, but let's get this thing over with, OK?"

What went on from here could take three more articles to relate. I had to hand write the score, transferring the music from my head to paper and scoring for fourteen instruments and vocal choir. It took a month to write the 102 pages. The individual parts then had to be copied by a professional copyist; this took another full month (and cost over a thousand dollars). I had to book all the musicians. Miracle of

miracles, everyone I wanted was available in April, though times would have to be juggled around their other professional commitments. As soon as the copyist was finished I had to forward each part to each musician so she'd have a few weeks to practice before the recording began. This would save a lot of valuable studio time.

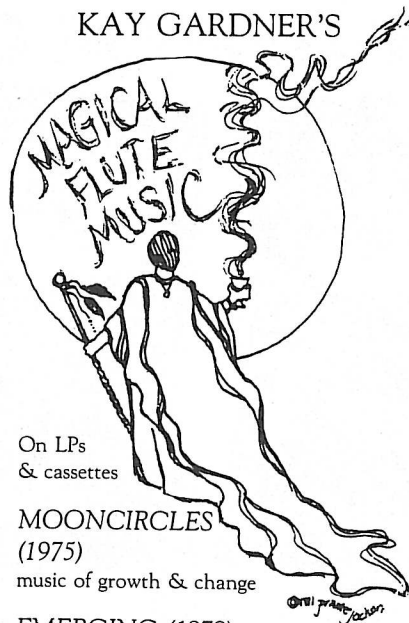
From here on Ladyslipper took over such chores as musicians' travel arrangements from Los Angeles, Toronto, Chicago, Bloomington, Grand Rapids, and New York City; studio arrangements; instrument rental and shipping (women-built tympani were air-shipped from Indiana!); musicians' and producers' housing; schedule coordination, etc.

The sessions went smoothly and were relaxed. (Maida Tilchen spent much time observing the studio process and wrote an excellent article, "Sitting on a Rainbow with Kay Gardner and Friends," which is in the 1984 Ladyslipper catalog.) Karen, Laurie, and I spent forty-eight hours mixing the results of the fifty-hour recording process, and A Rainbow Path was finished.

(At this point I want to mention that ARP's cover art is by Gina Halpern, who has been working with me for the past four years painting mandalas, circular meditation art, for each of the chakras and musical pieces. These beautiful 12" x 12" paintings are nearing completion, and Healing Through Arts is now raising money to print them. The packet of eight prints will soon be available to further enhance meditation with the music or to exhibit, framed, as healing art.)

Another frustrating wait

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began. Even though the recording process was finished, there would be months of waiting to complete all the stages necessary to reach the final product: mastering, or transferring the sound from tape to grooved metal parts; approving the resulting reference lacquer; getting cover art painted; approving test pressings; getting color separations made and approved for the art; having jacket and insert typeset, designed, and sent to the printer; shipping the thousands of covers from printer to pressing plant; and planning the promotion and advertising campaigns. All of these steps were supervised by Ladyslipper with my being advised of and/or having my approval of the many steps along the way.

As I write this column,

test pressings and color separations have been approved, jackets are printed, and pressing begins in a few days. Almost five months after the master tape was put into its cannister, A Rainbow Path will be in the record bins of the stores supplied by our women's music distributors.

How do I feel? I feel great personal relief. I feel gratitude to Ladyslipper for their never-ending support and dedication. I feel thankful to the women who supported my vision either financially or emotionally along the eight-year way. And I feel empty, not in a negative sense, but like a cauldron which has been emptied of a potent brew, and is being cleansed and prepared to receive the next musical concoction.

**Note:** How to Find a Name for a New Column: I went to a bible, the music dictionary, and randomly opened to a page, pointing my finger to the first word that caught my eye--"Free Style." In composition it means not sticking to traditional rules of theory and counterpoint. Well, that's certainly appropriate! Also, I'm a swimmer, and free style is a favorite stroke. And, I love being free, with style.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

*Kay Gardner, M.Mus., is a composer/performer and a teacher of the healing properties of music. She has been deeply involved with Women's Music since 1973.*

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## HOT LINE from p. 3

LPs, tapes, EPs, 45s, or whatever to Sue Goldwomon, WORT, 118 S. Bedford Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53703.

## THE WRITTEN WORD

**WomanShine Theatre** is seeking writing by women about their mothers, grandmothers, daughters, and other family and friends. WomanShine is a seven-year-old touring feminist theatre, based in Bloomington, Indiana, that specializes in dramatic performances of literature and "everyday" writings about women's lives. WomanShine is currently developing a dramatic anthology from oral histories and various types of writing, to be staged in spring of 1985. Manuscripts from unpublished as well as published writers are welcomed. WomanShine, 1600 N. Willis #200, Bloomington, IN 47401.

Sage Women's Education Press (SWEP) announces the publication of **SAGE: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women**, beginning in April of 1984. This biannual journal is edited by Patricia Bell-Scott, co-author of *But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Feminist Press, 1981), and Beverly Gray-Sheftall, co-author of *Sturdy Black Bridges: Visions of Black Women in Literature* (Anchor Press, 1979). **SAGE** is an interdisciplinary forum for the discussion of issues relating to Black women. Education, mother-daughter relationships, health, and Black feminist theory will be the focus of the first four issues. For more information write **SAGE**, P.O. Box 42741, Atlanta, Georgia 30311.

## GUITARISTS from p. 9

Catherina settled in London in 1838, where, with the aid of her patroness, Lady John Somerset, she established herself as guitar teacher to the nobility, including H.R.H. the princess Louise, and others. In 1854 she married the flutist Sidney Pratten, but he died in 1868 leaving her a widow. She refused to perform in public for three years after his death, but there are references to concerts given by her in 1871, 1873, 1876, 1883, 1888, and her final concert in 1893 at the age of seventy-two. In the 1871 concert she played the first movement of Mauro Giuliani's Third Concerto.<sup>4</sup> The difficulty of this piece tells us that Catherina was a superb player. It is clear that she was indeed a leading figure of the guitar, both from the reviews of her concerts and by the fact that leading guitar makers of the day used her name to endorse their instruments, much as famous sports stars are used today to sell everything from beer to insurance.

Madame Sidney Pratten, as she was called after her marriage, wrote several method books for the guitar, including one for the guitar in E tuning. (Joni Mitchell was not the first to use open tunings on the guitar!) She also wrote over 200 solos for the guitar, which are usually devalued by the history books by being referred to as "light pieces," if they are mentioned at all!

Marie Rita Brondi was born in 1898 in Rimini, Italy. Her father was not her only music teacher. She went on to study with the Italian teacher Mozzani, and later with the great Spanish master of the guitar, Francisco Tarrega in Barcelona. Tarrega wrote a minuet for Brondi


and dedicated it to "my favorite student, Senorita Marie Rita Brondi." Upon returning to Italy, Marie began a performing career that took her to Prague, Vienna, Paris, and London. She took up the study of singing while in London. In Rome she appeared before the royal family at the request of Queen Margherita.

Marie Rita Brondi wrote a book called *The Lute and Guitar*, which was published in 1926. She also composed studies and solos for the guitar. She died in 1929, at the age of thirty. One wonders what heights she would have attained had she not died so young.

Emilia Giuliani, Catherina Josepha Pelzer, and Marie Rita Brondi were all from musical families where they were encouraged in their musical endeavors. Both Emilia and Catherina later married musicians, and since they continued to perform in public after their marriages were probably encouraged by their husbands. All three were praised by critics and other musicians of their day; all were concert artists who toured Europe; all wrote methods and/or solos for their instrument—none of which is considered part of the "standard" repertory today;<sup>5</sup> and all have been virtually ignored in books on guitar history. Talented musical foremothers whose stories nearly disappeared from guitar history are only now being rediscovered and reclaimed by feminist scholars.

endnotes:

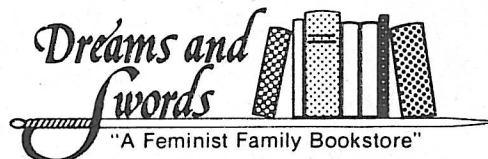
1. Thomas Heck, "The Birth of the Classic Guitar and Its Cultivation in Vienna, Reflected in the Career and Compositions of Mauro Giuliani (d. 1829)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1970), p. 145.

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2. Deborah H. Nolan, "The Contributions of Nineteenth-Century European Women to Guitar Performance, Composition, and Pedagogy" (Master's thesis, California State University, Fullerton, 1983) (available from University microfirms).

3. Frank Mott Harrison, *Reminiscences of Madame Sidney Pratten* (Bournemouth W., England: Barnes & Mullins, 1899), p. 22.

4. Maurice J. Summerfield, *The Classical Guitar: Its Evolution and Its Players Since 1800* (Saltmeadows Road Gateshead, England: Ashley

Marks Publishing Co., 1982), p. 168.

5. Janna MacAuslan, "A Catalog of Compositions for Guitar by Women Composers" (available from author at 1236 S.E. 34th, Portland, OR 97214; \$3.00).

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*Signs* seeks to act as "a steady reminder to the scholarly community that *all* the aspects of women's lives demand careful analysis." — Barbara Gelpi, *Signs* 8:1, 1982

## The Lesbian Issue

Summer 1984

### MAJOR ARTICLES

The "Thing Not Named": Willa Cather as a Lesbian Writer, *Sharon O'Brien* • Distance and Desire: English School Friendships, 1870-1920, *Martha Vicinus* • The Mythic Mannish Lesbian: Radclyffe Hall and the New Woman, *Esther Newton* • Sexuality, Class, and Conflict in a Lesbian Workplace, *Kathleen Weston and Lisa Rofel*

### REVIEW ESSAY

The Politics of Transliteration: Lesbian Personal Narratives, *Bonnie Zimmerman*

### VIEWPOINT

Ourselves behind Ourselves: A Theory for Lesbian Readers, *Jean Kennard*

### REVISIONS/REPORTS

Discrimination against Lesbians in the Work Force, *Martin P. Levine and Robin Leonard* • Homosexuality, Homophobia, and Revolution: Notes toward an Understanding of the Cuban Lesbian and Gay Experience, *Lourdes Arguelles and Ruby Rich*

### ARCHIVES

A Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy, *Judith Brown*  
The Military and Lesbians during the McCarthy Years, *John D'Emilio and Alan Berube*

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2/84

## KATE from p. 14

KC: When I first started writing and performing my humor in 1981 I liked calling it "making light" because it reflected my belief that women's humor makes light: light enough to see where we are going in our dark times and light enough to move through our heavy issues. Hence, *Making Light* in 1982. I wanted to call the second album "There's a Joker in the Menstrual Hut," but we decided to call it *Making Waves*. Like its predecessor, *Making Waves* urges women to use the old double reverse. Women have always been warned not to make waves. I encourage women to make waves, big ones, whatever it takes to turn the tide. *Making Waves* also signals the beginning of what I call fumeractivism, using feminist humor in action. In workshops I am now encouraging women to use the genius of our humor to reclaim the notion of practical jokes. I'm urging women to share snappy comebacks (for example, for the question "Why isn't a nice girl like you married?"—"I find it difficult to mate in captivity"). And I'm urging women to do things like appear as "lesbians for Reagan" wherever Reagan appears on the campaign trail.

## STAGE FRIGHT from p. 19

this way the beta blocker prevents the adrenalin from affecting the tissues. So propranolol decreases the heart rate, cardiac output, and blood pressure. In fact, the drug is widely used in the treatment of hypertension, certain cardiac conditions, and for migraine headaches, easing the constriction of blood vessels.

Dr. Alice Brandfonbrener, a staff physician at Northwestern University and Director of Student Health at the Aspen Music Festival, describes the effect of using beta blockers when you perform in this way: "You still have the sense that you're onstage and that something horrible could happen," but you don't have the physical symptoms. Clearly, if your hands don't shake when you play your instrument, this could go a long way toward keeping your mind at ease, too.

But if you decide your stage fright is extreme enough to warrant the use of chemical means to overcome it, use care and caution. Propranolol is not recommended for individuals with lung conditions such as bronchial asthma, chronic bronchitis, or emphysema, or for people with diabetes.

### CHANNELING YOUR ENERGY

Early in her career, Chicago singer and guitarist Tricia Alexander used hypnosis to rid herself of stage fright. She went to a hypnotist to cure her smoking habit, but before the treatment began the hypnotist asked her if there was anything else she'd like to have suggested while she was under, and Tricia told her about her stage fright. "So under hypnosis she gave me the suggestion about not smoking, and she also gave me this wonderful thing about channeling the nervous energy of my stage fright into actual vocal and instrumental power."

The suggestion to stop smoking didn't work, but the one to channel her stage fright did. "I came out of the hypnosis singing. I went out to dinner with a friend before my show that night and I was singing in the restaurant. I was singing to the waitress. I was rarin' to go. I just wanted to sing!"

The suggestion lasted about nine months. "I remember the first performance I did when it wore off," says Tricia. "I was getting ready to

go up onstage and it was that same old nervous feeling. But I hadn't felt it for nine or ten months, and I had been relaxed and working steady then for so long that it was easy to recall the good feeling and headset myself back into that state of mind."

The "fight or flight" response is reflexive, but it is one designed to boost your energy, to help you make a strenuous effort at something. Whether or not hypnosis, yoga, deep breathing, or some other type of mental suggestion helps you allay your initial fear trigger, if you can channel that energy into your performance, if you can direct that extra oomph your body is putting out into your music--that's a source of power. The adrenalin pumping in your veins is the same stuff you feel when you experience the exuberance of giving a great, zingy, powerful show, the same excitement as the excitement of accomplishment. If the goal of overcoming stage fright is to enjoy yourself onstage to the fullest, so the audience will get the most out of your performance, you already have the energy throbbing in you to give them the best you have, without reservation.

Kato Havas, who has seen thousands of cases of stage fright in her years of teaching, says, "If all our energies were channeled into giving people, through the medium of music, a deeper understanding of their own potential as part of the wonderful mysteries that the universe contains, we would not only do justice to ourselves as musicians, but stage fright would be banished from the face of the earth forever."

It's not something one learns to do overnight. But it can be done, and some of the greatest live performers you can see have learned how to train themselves to channel that energy into positive performance power. We'll never know how many great musicians are out there in the world yearning to share their talents with others but afraid to perform anywhere outside their attics. But the performers who are up there onstage are the ones who didn't give up trying.

Author's Note: The subject of stage fright interests me very much, and I'd like to begin compiling more information about it, possibly for a future book. Whether you are an active performer or not, if you've had some personal experience with stage fright, I'd appreciate hearing what it was or is, and how you dealt with or continue to deal with it. Please write to me c/o HOT WIRE.

### MATRISM from p. 23

the planet. We can inspire action from our listeners. We can heal deeply with insightful humor. We can reclaim the sacredness of woman, of the Earth.

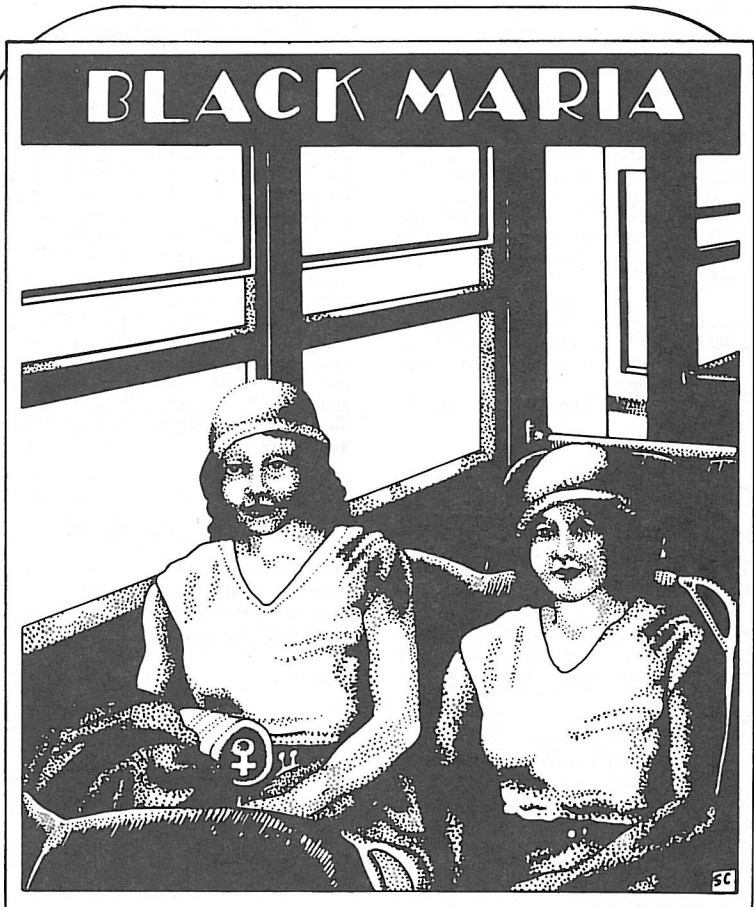
The women's music network is a powerful stage for planetary transformation. The dress rehearsal for our survival is over. Each of us is onstage . . . NOW.

The curtain is up! What does the audience see and hear of us?

#### Notes:

1. "Matrism" is more fully described in Starhawk's books Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics and The Spiral Dance.

2. In addition to Starhawk's books, books by Mary Daly and the book Moon, Moon by Anne Kent Rush outline the patriarchal takeover and the treasures of ancient matrism.



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### SISTERFIRE from p. 29

ments came from a dance company, Edwina Lee Tyler and Piece of the World. Though rain had driven them off the main stage to a smaller, covered stage, this five-woman group used African percussion instruments and dance to create a riveting performance that left the crowd filled with high energy.

There were also more poets than last year, including the widely known black poet June Jordan, who appeared in collaboration with pianist Adrienne Torf. Jordan's poetry is powerful, she performs it with a dramatic flair, and the inter-

weaving of music with the spoken voice created an unusual and striking effect.

Argentinian poet Alicia Partnoy read poems she wrote while a political prisoner in her homeland. In an interview, she described how the women's prison where she was interred had a writing group on each floor. Though such activities were punished, they circulated hand-made books of poems, and rehearsed plays in the restroom with someone on watch in case the guards came. They wrote stories for their children, whom they saw rarely and were not allowed to touch. "We were trying to keep ourselves whole against all of the destruction and

repression that we were suffering," she says. "All forms of art help to keep you a human being."

Along with the vitality and warmth of Sisterfire's performers, the pride and enthusiasm of the audience, there is this underlying seriousness—the sense that culture is crucial to our spirits' survival. Sharing with and learning from women rooted in different communities and movements is the way we each sustain our strength and feed our own vision. "I am less than the song I am singing; I am more than I thought I could be," Holly Near sang near the end of her set.

So come stand by my side where I'm going;  
Take my hand if I stumble and fall.  
It's the strength that you share when  
you're growing  
That gives me what I need most of all.

# #

Sisterfire has grown considerably from the one-day one-stage event of three years ago. New things have been tried each year as the festival experiments and finds its own form. In 1984 there were new efforts in the area of accessibility. While Sisterfire has always provided childcare, and sign-language interpretation is a strong part of the program, this festival also had recorded programs for the seeing-impaired and increased efforts to assist those in wheelchairs.

Another feature new to Sisterfire was a series of "Round Robins" on issues such as Women on Women, Working, and Peace and Liberation. The Round Robins were a good addition, letting small groups of artists interact more informally, and providing extra chances to see favorite performers. Unfortunately, several had to be canceled due to rain and difficulties with the sound system that the rain produced.

There were some other problems, too, as at any festival. The current site, for instance, is rapidly getting too small, and with three stages the sound from one performance sometimes intruded on another.

All the same, by late afternoon on Sunday the sun came out, stubborn and bedraggled festival-goers emerged from under blankets and ponchos, the main stage came alive again, and the third Sisterfire ended in an upsurge of energy. Hopefully that energy will be there to keep Sisterfire alive and growing in the years to come.

## MICHIGAN from p. 38

It wouldn't be Michigan without its annual controversies. In years past these have included male children on the land, the forcible removal of one woman from the land, and the sale of commercial beverages on the land. This year, hot topics were few but as provocative as ever: the solicitation of women to be hired to pose for pornographic pictures, and the presence of "men's music" at the disco and on the Sunday night stage.

Lisa Vogl and Boo Price, the festival producers, are committed to making the festival economically viable without compromising ideals. Here at Michigan they refuse to mimic the mainstream culture, which dismisses minority groups and their needs as not cost-effective (or simply unimportant), although service cuts would result in higher profits. The festival again has a deficit: \$90,000. This includes the 1983 festival deficit, the 1984 expenses, and this year's land payment (essential that it's made by October 15th so that the festival can continue). They are seeking women to buy lifetime mem-

berships at \$1,000 each, to buy festival T-shirts, and to make loans and donations of all sizes. (Mail to: We Want the Music, 1501 Lyons, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858.)

Sunday night the winners of the fundraising raffle were announced. We left immediately after the final thrilling concert. We had packed our gear into the car during the day, so waiting for the shuttle in the starlight wasn't so bad. There was work Monday morning, so off we went. Once outside the land and on the road, headed for the highway, we gave in to the urge to stop at an open gas station to buy pop and coffee for the many-hour drive still ahead. Outside the gas station was a large yellow sign, with flashing lights, reading "WELCOME BACK WOMYN." I still smile when I think of it; how pleasing to see validation and even welcome in the "real world." Meanwhile, back to the city and my TV. August will be here again sooner than we think. Maybe next year we will bring that cooler.

## WILLIAMS from p. 41

attention during several periods in her life. Her personal triumphs and numerous recordings and compositions can serve as a special source of inspiration for women in music.

endnotes:

1. "About the Artists," Intermezzo: The Magazine of Carnegie Hall (April 1977), p. 10.
2. Chuck Berg, "Dexter Gordon: Making His Great Leap Forward," Downbeat (February 10, 1977), p. 13.
3. Personal interview with Shanta Nurullah, May 28, 1976.
4. Ibid.
5. "Mary Lou Williams," Current Biography (November 1966), p. 43.
6. Hubert Saal, "The Spirit of Mary Lou," Newsweek (December 20, 1971), p. 67.
7. Personal interview.
8. Conversation with Shanta Nurullah, March 19, 1978.
9. Personal interview.

## IMAGE from p. 53

new image that you will have to fit into rather than what you are already.

I believe that audiences do not want to see the artist trying to fulfill expectations. Rather, the audiences prefer to see an artist actually being what she has promoted herself as being. So when you see me perform, you're really seeing me.

## MATEEL from p. 29

women who listen in on the grapevine. The Network also presents workshops during the year, varying from vocalizing and stage performance to sound engineering. The emphasis of the group is on giving stage and production experience to the members.

## BOOKING from p. 47

or directory you can get your hands on, and then follow it up with a phone call. You never know when you're doing promotion how it will come back to you, but eventually it does pay off somehow, someday. If you don't put it out there to begin with, nothing will ever happen. And what it is we want to have happen is for more of our voices to be heard, in more places, more often.

## RESOURCES

1. National Association of College Activities, P.O. Box 11489, Columbia, SC 29211.
2. Making a Show of It: a guide to concert production for the novice or the advanced. Redwood Records, 476 W. MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94609 (\$5.95, postage included).
3. Women's Music Plus: national directory of resources in women's music and culture, including producers, coffeehouses, labels, distributors, performers and writers, radio, publications, organizations, bookstores, etc. Not Just A Stage, 1321 W. Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660 (\$5.00).
4. Annual Index of Women's Media. Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross NW, Washington, DC 20008.
5. Guide to Women's Art Organizations & Directory for the Arts. Midmarch Association, P.O. Box 3304, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 (\$8.50).
6. Gaia's Guide. 132 W. 24th, New York, NY 10011 (\$10.00).
7. WILD (Women's Independent Label Distribution). c/o Denise Notzon, P.O. Box 7217, Berkeley, CA 94707.

## COMPUTERS from p. 27

tooth, triangle) has a particular harmonic content and a characteristic timbre.

## FURTHER READINGS

1. Akin, Jim. "Computer Software for Musicians," Keyboard (June 1984), pp. 34-40.
2. Bonner, Paul. "The Sound of Software," Personal Computing (June 1984), pp. 94-107.
3. Bonnett, Kendra. "From Bach to Rock: Music in Your Computer," Digit (June/July 1984), pp. 20-25.
4. Chamberline, Hal. Musical Applications of Micro-processors (Rochelle Park, N.J.: Hayden Book Co., Inc., 1980).
5. Haskell, Richard. Apple Basic (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982).
6. Milano, Dominic. "Turmoil in Midi-Land," Keyboard (June 1984), pp. 42-63.
7. Peterson, Dale. Genesis II: Creation and Recreation with Computers (Reston, Va.: Reston Publishing Co., 1983).
8. Spiegel, Laurie. "Macromusic from Micros," Creative Computing (May 1981), pp. 68-74.
9. Watt, Don. "Musical Microworlds," Popular Computing (August 1984), pp. 91-94.



## BANNON from p. 50

reading them, they came to recognize their own true sexuality for the first time. To learn that you have shared, even indirectly, in such a momentous self-discovery is a moving revelation; to find it even now among young women in their twenties and thirties is amazing. There is still a great need for information and support; the arts have a major contribution to make here.

Finally, I think my books, and those of other writers of the time--Vin Packer, Valerie Taylor, Paula Christian, and others--served as a sort of socializing force in an era when there were far too few institutions hospitable to women-identified women and almost no sense of cohesion, of community. Today we have women's bookstores and meeting places; political groups; art, writing, and music festivals; rugby teams and camping organizations; restaurants, coffee houses, inns, spas, resorts; feminist publishing houses producing the gamut of novels, poetry, scholarly studies, journals, humor. We have academic conferences, Women's Studies Programs in our universities. We have Hot Wire for women in music and other creative professions.

Yesterday, we had the books and the bars--the bars where Beebo Brinker went to be with other young women and to try to discover who she was. There were cheap novels by the hundreds, many of them giving a meretricious view of lesbian life, many written by men using female pen names. But a few, I think, came from the heart and helped and nourished women. I hope that, for many women, mine were among the few.

It is a wonderful thing to be "rediscovered," as it were, by a new generation of women with a lively interest in women's history and experience, those who want to know "the way it was." I'm grateful that it happened to me while I'm still young enough to enjoy it! And to write again. People have approached me after a lecture to exclaim, "I thought you must be eighty years old by now!"

Not yet, dear women! I was only twenty-three when Odd Girl Out was published. But I hope that when I am eighty, I will have given you another book or two that has the potential to say to your daughters what some of the ori-

ginals said to so many of you: that you--that we--are beautiful, wise, and bright; that we are, indeed, a community; and that we are just coming into our gifts and strength.

## POLITICS from p. 55

They've apparently distributed them so widely that a friend of mine in the Bay area had to argue with a woman who was singing one of them and who kept insisting that the song was a "folk tradition." I originally named the tune in question "Neo-Paganomics" for fun, but "folk tradition" has renamed it "Goddesses' Rage," which is, admittedly, a much better name for it.

The chorus describes the illness--the man-made split between good and evil--

We can do battle with demons and angels  
Our weapons--earth, water, fire, and air  
We are resisting the newest dark age  
With old witches' wisdom and goddesses' rage.

© 1981 P. Walowitz

and prescribes for healing the powers of the earth and the sacred magic of women who have had enough.

We are beginning, once again, to remember who we are. What could be more political? What could be more dangerous to the patriarchy than a growing community of witches, healers, and holy women? And what better way to keep our spirits high and our vision clear than with our songs?

Blessed be and blessed are the ones who  
work in silence  
Blessed be and blessed are the ones who  
shout and scream  
Blessed be and blessed are the movers and  
the changers  
Blessed be and blessed are the dreamers  
and the Dream.

from "She's Been Waiting,"  
© 1982 P. Walowitz



Singer Belinda de Nada with percussionist & coro singer Estrella Quiroga, from the 10-member salsa band Las Malandras (Mateel)

## IN THE MARCH ISSUE:

**Linda Tillery  
Hunter Davis**

on music as a career

**Ginni Clemmens  
Kay Gardner**

on being your own agent

**Gayle Marie  
Festivals:**

\*West Coast Women's Music & Comedy Festival

\*New England Women's Music Retreat

\*National Festival of Women's Theatre

\*Northwest Women's Cultural Celebration

\*Midwest Women's Choral Festival

**Alix Dobkin**

on the old girls' network

**Susan Freundlich**

on artistic interpretation

**Diane Lindsay**

on musicians: hiring & being hired

**Cindee Grace**

on music and peace

**Alexandra Swaney**

on women's music in Montana

**Anne Hills**

on women's radio

**Bands**

\*Sojourner

\*Toshi Reagon & the Agitones

\*Alive!

\*Reel World String Band

\*Swingshift

\*Sweet Honey in the Rock

\*The Debbie Saunders Band

**Ann Reed**

on making a record

**Lisa Tomoleoni**

on concert lighting

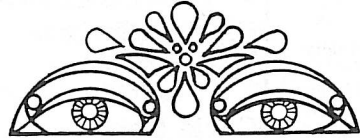
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AND MORE!

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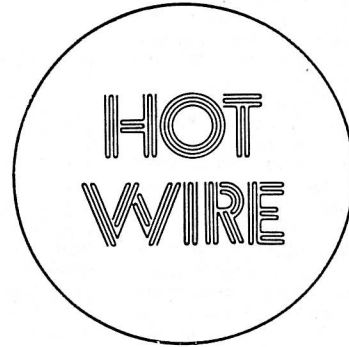


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# Classifieds

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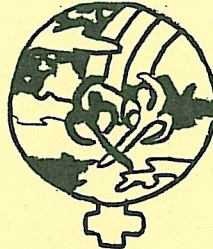
**The Midwest Women's Center Library**, located at 53 W. Jackson, Suite 1015, Chicago, IL is now open to the general public on Thursdays, 11a.m.-7p.m. The library contains 1,000 files on women's organizations and social service agencies. For information: 312-922-8530, Monday-Friday, 9a.m.-5p.m.

**The International League of Women Composers** is a professional organization devoted to expanding opportunities for women composers of serious music. ILWC projects include a Newsletter, chamber music concerts, an annual composition competition for student women composers. Membership dues \$20. For information contact Elizabeth Hayden Pizer, ILWC, PO Box 42, Three Mile Bay, NY 13693.

**Materials wanted** for an anthology of women's writings on body image: journal entries, poems, prose. Topics of particular interest include fear of fatness, relationship to physical fitness, conflicts with food or body size, and accepting and appreciating our bodies, although all material will be considered. Deadline February, 1985. Send with SASE to Sandy Handley, P.O. Box 2781, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.

**The 1985 Women's Music Plus Directory is available.** The Directory includes extensive listings of resources in women's music and culture including production, distribution, festi-

vals, publications, and much more. Directories may be obtained by sending \$5.00 per directory to Not Just a Stage, 1321 W. Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660.



**Mountain Moving Coffeehouse** of Chicago invites you to experience the wonderful feeling of being a part of the womyn's music family by joining our collective and working with the womyn's music performers to produce their concerts. We also encourage new performers to send us a demo tape and bio information for possible booking consideration. Call or write: Joy Rosenblatt, 828 W. Leland #2, Chicago, IL 60640. 312-769-6899.

**Studio Red Top, Inc.**, P.O. Box 6004, Boston, MA 02209. A non-profit, tax-exempt resource center organized to promote appreciation of jazz music while improving employment opportunities for women musicians. Activities include sponsored concerts and production of radio, TV, and print materials concerning women's contributions to music. Most services to musicians provided free. Donations are welcomed and are tax-deductible. Contact: Catherine A. Lee, Executive Director.

## ADDITIONAL ALBUMS RECEIVED

**FIRST DIBS**, by Robin Flower. Flying Fish Records, 1304 W. Shubert, Chicago, IL 60614.

**LOPIN ALONG THRU THE COSMOS**, by Ginni Clemmens. Flying Fish Records.

**ONE GRAND CONCERT**, by Katherine Kay. Greenbriar Productions, Route 2, Box 107, Guilford, IN 47022.

**SING TO ME THE DREAM**, by Holly Near and Inti-Illimani. Redwood Records, 476 W. MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94609.

**TAKE A LOOK AT MY PEOPLE**, by Jane Sapp. Flying Fish Records.

**WE ALL . . . EVERYONE OF US**, by Sweet Honey in the Rock. Flying Fish Records.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

**Amateur City**, by Katherine V. Forrest. Naiad Press, P.O. Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302, \$7.95

**'85 Lunar Calendar**. Luna Press, Box 511 Kenmore Sta., Boston, MA 02215, \$10.00

**The Young in One Another's Arms**, by Jane Rule. Naiad Press, \$7.95

**The Sophie Horowitz Story**, by Sarah Schulman. Naiad Press, \$7.95.

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Toni L. Armstrong

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