

HOT WIRE

A JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE



LINDA TILLERY

**WOMEN'S
BANDS**

ALIVE!
SWEET HONEY
SOJOURNER
SWINGSHIFT
REEL WORLD
SAUNDERS BAND
AGITONES

**PIONEERING
IN MONTANA**

**INTERNATIONAL
SWEETHEARTS
OF RHYTHM**

ALIX DOBKIN

RECORDING
ANN REED
GAYLE MARIE

FESTIVALS

**HIRING &
BEING HIRED**

OPERA

**BE YOUR
OWN AGENT**

**GINNI
CLEMMENS**

VOLUME ONE, NUMBER TWO, MARCH 1985

\$5.00

TO THE READERS

Guidelines For Contributors

Writings

All submissions must be typed double-spaced. Your writing should include verifiable facts and accurate dates; triple check the spelling of all names. All submissions must be accompanied by a few sentences about the author, and at least one black and white photo or graphic relating to your article.

Graphics

We have a perpetual need for good black and white photos and graphics of women performing, women with instruments, etc. Performance shots are highly preferable to promo shots. Graphics should include caption(s) and photo credit(s). We do use photos and graphics as "filler," so submit items even if they do not accompany an article.

Soundsheets

These floppy disk records provide HOT WIRE readers with an opportunity to hear women's music. Write for details.

Deadlines

For March issue: November 15

For July issue: March 15

For November issue: July 15

(Unless special arrangements are made in advance.)

Payment

Payments vary. Send article proposal for details.

Inquiries

HOT WIRE, 1321 Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660.



Editors Michele Gautreaux and Toni Armstrong with issue #1 which sold out in the first week.

My heartfelt thanks to our subscribers, readers, contributors, and friends for their enthusiastic reception and support of HOT WIRE. The commitment to community that moved me to be a part of HOT WIRE has been renewed and strengthened by the wonderful response of women around the country and overseas. I have a rigorous sense of HOT WIRE's responsibility to be a force for radical understanding of culture. I want HOT WIRE to move her readers to creation of and participation in woman-identified culture at all levels. My desire is that HOT WIRE move your heart and move you to action.

Michele Gautreaux

Special thanks to our friends Anne Dreibelbis, Sarah Lieb, Joy Rosenblatt, and Joel Carothers who volunteered advice and hours of labor to make this second issue of HOT WIRE a reality. HOT WIRE had a great "coming out" party, and we thank everyone who celebrated with us, or sent flowers and cards.

We are always happy to send HOT WIRE fliers to anyone who is willing to distribute them. Please write and tell us about what's shakin' in your hometown.

Toni L. Armstrong

Inquiring Minds Want To Know...

Please write and give us feedback on any or all of these:

About You

In what way(s) are you involved with women's music?

How old are you?

Are you a HOT WIRE subscriber?

What's your favorite thing about women's music?

What do you think the current trends/controversies in women's music are?

You & HOT WIRE

What do you like most about HOT WIRE?

- News
- Politics
- Interviews
- Soundsheets
- Artist coverage
- Festival coverage
- "How to" articles
- Women's music history

Other: _____

Who would you like to see interviewed/written about in HOT WIRE?

What else should we include in HOT WIRE?

How did you hear about the magazine?

Write to us at:
HOT WIRE, 1321 Rosedale,
Chicago, IL 60660.



"I just love women who keep up with women's music and culture."

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

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Not Just a Stage, Chicago, IL

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Subscriptions \$14 per year, U.S.
currency equivalents. Back issues
when available are \$5 each plus ship-
ping and handling.

Display and classified ads available;
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photos, and graphics.

**HOT WIRE: A Journal of
Women's Music and Culture**
ISSN: 0747-8887

is published three times yearly in
November, March, and July, by Not
Just a Stage, 1321 W. Rosedale,
Chicago, IL 60660. Unless otherwise
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Irene Young

Sweet Linda Divine

An Interview with Linda Tillery

by Michele Gautreaux

HOT WIRE: Linda, were you born a musician?

LINDA TILLERY: I believe I was born a musician. I think most gifted, creative people are usually, although not always, born with some kind of innate talent which has to be developed. You can't just sit around on it. I believe I was born with some kind of gift of musicianship, although I didn't know when I was younger that I would be a singer. I just knew I was really drawn to music and that music really excited me. It intrigued me even as far back as 34 years ago when I was two years old.

HW: Well, obviously you didn't sit around on it. How did your career begin?

LT: After graduating from high school, I read an ad in the San Francisco Chronicle placed by

a Berkeley rock band, The Loading Zone. They were looking for a female vocalist, as they had already signed a contract with RCA Victor and just needed a singer for the album. So I walked in with the stage pretty much set. We went to L.A., made the album, and started touring and doing a lot of major concerts.

HW: After that, did you stay with the band? What happened next?

LT: I stayed with The Loading Zone for about two years. Then I got an offer to do a solo album with CBS Records, which pretty much flopped. It was not a period in my life that I really enjoyed. I was about 20 or 21 and making the transition from teenager to adult. It was a difficult period for me. The album, Sweet Linda Divine, sold about 20,000 copies. And, having

left The Loading Zone, I found myself in the position of having to go out and hustle employment. Actually, that's the point at which my real training and real dues-paying began. I did a lot of "casuals." Casuals are when someone hires you for the night or two nights, you learn a bunch of different songs, and after that gig is over you go your own way and pick up more work. So I sang in a lot of different situations: wedding receptions, bar mitzvahs, debutante balls. I sang standards, rock, soul. I met a lot of different musicians and was introduced to many styles of singing.

HW: So, you're earning your living...

LT: I'm earning my living and I'm paying dues. This phrase "paying dues" is really apropos because there are times in a performer's life when certainly you contemplate college, suicide, and dishwashing. All three crossed my mind several times during the period between 1970-1976. There were times I'd play gigs with four sets and go home with \$15. I would wonder, "Why am I doing this?" I couldn't tell you why I continued to do it except I knew that it felt right for me to communicate with other people through music. I enjoyed it, other people seemed to enjoy it. I just didn't get paid very much for it.

HW: What do you try to accomplish with your music?

LT: When I first started singing I wanted to be rich and famous. That was it. It never dawned on me that maybe people have a purpose to their work. And one can have a purpose to one's work without proselytizing or being a political activist or coming out for a cause. I go on stage to perform because I really love the

interaction with people. My purpose is to bring as much joy, through music, to other people as I can. Joy, capital J-O-Y.

HW: You've certainly done that on the women's music circuit. Could you talk a little about how you got involved with women's music?

LT: I've been involved in the Bay Area music scene since 1969, and that means with music in the community here in general, of which I have always felt I remained a part. But there was a point in my life in which I became aware of the absence of other women who took an active role in the creation and production of music.

HW: When did this awareness begin? Was it because of a particular event, or was it some kind of consciousness-raising on your part?

LT: Well, first of all, in 1975 I got it into my head that I wanted to be a drummer. I love drummers. Musically, the part that a drummer plays in the band, I've always hooked into that. So I called up all the drummers I knew in town and asked them for spare pieces, and was able to put together a pretty funky but functional drum set. After I did that, I started practicing. One day I got a call from a woman, Peggy Stern, who had just moved here from Philadelphia. She was a pianist, classically trained. She had been a teacher and she was just beginning to play jazz. She wanted to know if I would like to get together. I thought, this is really weird. This is the first time I've ever gotten a call from a woman. It was the strangest thing that ever happened to me, a woman who played an instrument. The two of us got together one day and we jammed and we agreed there

were things we both needed to learn, and we made a commitment to work together. We got support from other musicians we knew, mostly males, and we started having jam sessions at her house. We got real into it, and even formed a band called Cats Cradle. It was the first mixed band I'd ever played in. The two of us were the leaders and we called the shots.



Irene Young

Olivia Records celebrated its tenth anniversary with a bash in 1982 at Carnegie Hall including Linda, Meg, Cris, Vicki Randle, and many others.

HW: So, starting out with Peg...

LT: Then I ran into some women from Olivia. I didn't know Olivia Records from Minerva Records in 1976, but I did know some members of a band called BeBe K'Roche. The BeBes had signed a contract with Olivia and needed a producer for their album. They asked me to do it, and I said yes. I already had some pre-formed ideas about women's music and Olivia Records, and I expressed to them my concerns.

HW: Then you had heard some of women's music.

LT: I had heard of it. I hadn't participated in it. What I knew

of it was there were no black women. When, in the United States of America, someone starts a record company and there's no black music there, to me that is the strangest thing on earth. So I had those questions and I put them out. I realized I wasn't signing my life away to Olivia Records. I was just going to produce this record and be on my way. What ended up happening was that I produced the BeBes album and was asked by Teresa Trull to produce her first album, which was going to be the next project. Teresa's music was a lot closer in nature to that which I was accustomed, so I agreed to do that project. Then Olivia asked me to do an album, which came out in 1977.

So I did three albums in a row in the studio, and mine was the first album recorded by a black woman on any feminist label, as far as I know.

HW: This got you into the women's music network and you have been connected to it ever since. What's it like to work in the network? What's good and what's bad about it?

LT: In the beginning I completely submerged myself into Olivia Records and women's music because the connection I had originally made with Peggy Stern was reiterated tenfold. Now I was in an environment where every job was being filled by a woman, and it was a very empowering experience. All other things set aside, it was a time when I discovered and came to believe that anything I wanted to do, within reason, and had the capability to do, I ought to try and pursue. That was not a commitment to or understanding that I had of myself or any other woman prior to that time.

HW: So your association with Olivia Records gave you a sense

of self. OK, what's not so good about working with the network?

LT: My involvement with and my attitude towards the women's music network has definitely changed. First of all, I am not a part of the Olivia organization, nor have I been since 1979. I do perform at a lot of women's music functions. I perform at the national festivals, and at concerts sponsored by women's studies groups. But I do not consider myself to belong to any one group of people. I am very grateful to have support from people from all walks of life. My focus has definitely been on feminist concerns, but I have never, musically, been a preacher of sorts. I've never, except for two songs that I can remember, really taken up any issues. "Don't Pray For Me" (a song written by Mary Watkins in response to a particular person, Anita Bryant, who at the time was causing a great deal of difficulty through the media for gay people) was addressed to Anita Bryant and people like her. I wrote a song called "Freedom Time" which basically says it's time for us as black people, black women to take our own destiny in our hands. Obviously, we are not going to be given very much, but that is no reason to be stuck in a rut. It just means that our work will be much more difficult than need be. The obstacles are not insurmountable, and while the church has been the most dominant force in the black community (and I certainly know that my years of involvement in the church were good years for me), I think that beyond prayers there has to be a time of action. So I was trying to say all that in the song.

HW: You perform at women's music functions, but you don't consider yourself to be solely

a women's music performer. Is there pressure to identify yourself that way and disassociate yourself from other types of music and musicians?

LT: I think earlier on there was certainly that type of pressure. I think the attitude which most disturbed me before and might possibly still cause my feathers to get ruffled is this term "women's music." What does that mean? I've asked people, what does "women's music" mean to you? Do you think of specific performers? Do you think of a certain style of music? Are you aware that there is not only a message to be given but a tradition to be passed on, and that tradition for each of us might be completely different? Do you understand that as a woman who is a performer and musician, I come from a real different place than Holly or Meg? And they're really OK, but I'd like you to hear me as I present myself and not as you think I should be. I'm not a folksinger, my background is not in country and western music. I grew up with jazz and gospel and rhythm

and blues. Those are the styles of music I feel most comfortable with. I don't ever wish or expect to change to accommodate any audience. I remember a shocking experience that happened when I was working with a woman at the Olivia office. I brought down some records that I wanted to listen to. I put on an album by the Commodores. There was a woman there who got very uncomfortable. I said, "What's wrong with you?" She said, "That music really makes me uptight; it's cockrock." I said, "Well, what do you mean it's 'cockrock'?" First of all, it's not rock at all. What are you saying? What are you implying?" She objected to it because it's speaking to my cultural experience, if not to my experience as a woman. I'm not just a woman. I'm a Negro, a Black woman. I need to hear stuff by other people like me.

HW: You said you haven't been associated with Olivia since 1979. You were involved, however, with the 1983 Carnegie Hall concert. Could you talk about how that concert felt and



Irene Young

"There are times in a performer's life when you contemplate college, suicide, and dishwashing."

what it meant to you?

LT: I had a great time. I got to sing with two of my favorite singers, Vicki Randle and Shelby Flint. We had a great vocal section. I also enjoyed participating in an event which commemorated ten years of survival for a real maverick movement. Whoever expected women to survive in business for that long, in an industry where all



Irene Young

Linda in 1978. She has played drums on several familiar albums, including those of Teresa Trull and Mary Watkins.

the odds are against you? It was so exciting to be a part of the celebration of the survival of women's music, of Olivia Records, Meg Christian, Cris Williamson, Teresa Trull, Mary Watkins, Linda Tillery. We've all been part of that. I feel that in certain ways I have served as a role model for other women who may have at times felt they really don't have what it takes to define their own lives, to take their power in their own hands and go after what they believe in. I think all of us have had an effect on many, many women. That's a wonderful thing. My life has been really changed by women I've met through the years. I've met some remarkable women, brilliant women.

HW: In discussing the survival of women's music, do you think we need to talk about the fact that overwhelmingly it's lesbian energy, creativity, and commitment that makes it all possible?

LT: It's understood. That's how I feel about it.

HW: You're making a new album and are very excited about the fact that you are financing the project yourself. What made you decide to do that?

LT: I think a lot of artists are choosing to produce their own records, because there's not a lot of money around. I decided that I wanted to raise the money for my next album, and I've been actively pursuing that goal for over a year. I'm going into the studio and my new album will be out in the spring. It will be distributed by Redwood Records, but the studio part is being produced and paid for with money I have raised from contributions and investments. It has been an exciting, frustrating, wonderful experience. I've learned a lot.

HW: How did you raise the money?

LT: I circulated a fund-raising flyer at gigs. I did a seven-week tour last fall during which I mentioned that the flyers were available. I talked to people on the phone. I had them call me collect, write to me.

HW: Ordinary people, people like me?

LT: Sure, if you were interested in donating to or investing in my album. I have developed a fund-raising packet that I send to anyone interested. It has as much information about my album as possible. I've gotten tremendous response. Even if not monetary response, I've gotten such great emotional support, I can't believe it. And I've made contact with many, many women of color who support my music.

HW: How much will it cost?

LT: It's going to cost about \$30,000 altogether. Which is maybe one tenth of what somebody like Rod Stewart spends on an album. I'm talking about the whole thing: musicians, artwork, studio costs. It's expensive. There won't be that many times in my life when I'll see \$30,000 flash before my face. But the end result is a record, called Secrets, representing where Linda Tillery is today.

HW: I would like to talk more in depth about the role of black women in the network. What is our history in women's music? What can we contribute? What is our potential?

LT: If you were to gather together all of the albums which have been released under the guise of "women's music," you would probably find there has been limited involvement on the part of black women. I know Sweet Honey in the Rock, Mary Watkins, and I have records. Very few black feminists have been recorded, which doesn't mean that there are not black women making music. That's exclusive of Casselberry and DuPree, Edwina Lee Tyler & A Piece of the World, Women of the Calabash, Toshi Reagon. There will be an album by a woman named Deidre McCalla. These women are out there and because of lack of money it's harder in the beginning for us to be noticed, to be recognized as who we are. Which is not to say that we need not try. It just means it's going to be harder. It's been seven years since I made Linda Tillery. That's a long time. Our history in women's music as black women I see similarly to the history of black women in music in general. It's impossible to discuss contemporary American

Continued on p. 60

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Michele Gautreaux is a singer, storyteller, and HOT WIRE editor.

Anne Hills "Midnight Special"

*Getting music
by women on the air*



J. Polaski

"I was surprised at comments that it was too feminist just because it featured women."

I have always been an avid fan of "The Midnight Special," a three hour long folk music oriented show on WFMT. It goes out from Chicago via satellite to countries all over the world and has a listenership estimated in the millions. It is broadcast on Saturday nights and repeated on Wednesday afternoons. So "The Midnight Special" has been a tremendous boon to up-and-coming artists, with its support of new and unusual, as well as more traditional, music. The program gave wonderful airplay to my first album, *The Panic Is On*.

Though the show usually has one of three regular hosts, the station management has recently started inviting special guests to host. I was delighted to do a special "Midnight Special" on August 11, 1984 that featured

women performers and writers.

Whenever I hear an artist I like, if they have a record, I make a point of buying it. They are usually records that are hard to obtain because they are on the artist's own label or one of the thousands of small labels that have little budgets for pressing, distribution, and promotion. Even if they are on a larger label like Flying Fish and they get to stations like WFMT, only a small number make it on to the air. Musicians passing through town tend to get more exposure, and women performers seem to travel less (thus less airplay).

So I began to put together a show for "The Midnight Special" that followed the usual format but featured only women. I had to narrow down my choices to about an hour and a half of music and commentary (about 35 songs), and this turned out to be by far the most difficult part of the project. There were so many more artists I wanted to include than time permitted.

The records I chose were almost all from these small independent labels (Flying Fish, Folkways, Rounder), women's co-ops (from Maine to New Zealand), and some put out by the artists themselves. I had met and heard most of these performers -- Ginni Clemmens, Faith Petric, Cathy Winter, The Harmony Sisters, Cathy Fink, Cindy Mangsen, and Connie Kaldor, to name a few. There were others that I knew only through the recordings like Mercedes Sosa, Judy Small, Rory Block, and Meg Christian. I made a point of getting in a few songs by women who opened up the country and folk scene for the rest of us, like Patsy Montana, Malvina Reynolds, and Ola Belle Reed. The show included a good deal of South and Central American influenced music or about the problems experienced in that area of the world.

Midway through the three hours is Folk Stage, a regular feature of half-hour concert excerpts, recorded live. For my show we used a concert by Sabia, an all-woman group from California that does South American and original folk music.

Putting my parts of the show down on tape in the studio went smoothly. It was done in about an hour and a half, leaving spaces for announcements, bulletin board, and Folk Stage. I was expected to comment every few songs about the artists or whatever the recordings brought to mind. Since I didn't have the records with me, I had to have notes to remind myself of special points about certain songs and particular transitions I wanted to make. Under pressure few of us can remember everything we think we can. I needed to be relaxed and conversational yet remain focused in order to deliver my information and commentary well.

The reactions to the show were mostly positive, with a few gripes that it was too feminist or too political. I was surprised at comments that it was too feminist just because it featured women. I had only used one or two songs that could have been called specifically "women's music," because most of these recordings were not folky enough for "The Midnight Special" sound. Only a short section dealt specifically with sexism and public harassment of women, and there was a wealth of subjects covered throughout the show.

All in all it was quite a rewarding and exciting experience, and I'd encourage anyone

Continued on p. 60

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Anne Hills has performed at folk festivals all over North America, as a solo act and in a trio (*Best of Friends*) with Tom Paxton and Bob Gibson. They played Carnegie Hall and will be touring Europe soon. She owns Hogeve Records and Hogeve Music store.

Musical Pursuit Puzzle

N E M R A C I A K I T A K Y O S
 A L C E S T R D A D O N E G A N
 I T F I H S G N I W S R E L L D
 R D D V B U A I S C H A Z E L W
 A L V E Y L E L E P I T A N I O
 M A R Y L O U N M C L E A L D N
 F R E E D O A U N A O T O N E I
 P U N O H R H O N E Y L S H I N
 L V R L T O N A L I V E S G B A
 E A U L E P E Z T O I U N U R C
 A L O A N E A D T A R E A A A B
 D C J O B B R A O O E L C V C E
 V R O A A L I C C K D I U A K W
 R E S A N D E R S O D N A Q E O
 O D O N E E G M P A T R V U E C
 S A N T O S H I K O S O W O N S

Circle the names in capitals from the list below. The names may read forward, backward, up, down, or diagonally in a straight line, never skipping letters. You will use some letters more than once.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 35

MARY LOU Williams
 MARIAN McPartland
 ELLA Fitzgerald
 LINDA Tillery
 CARMEN McRae
 Joanne BRACKEEN
 ALIVE
 Holly NEAR
 Dorothy DONEGAN
 Bobbie HUMPHREY
 SOJOURNER

Patrice RUSHEN
 VI REDD
 SWINGSHIFT
 Sarah VAUGHN
 Sweet HONEY in the Rock
 REEL World String Band
 JANE Ira Bloom
 TOSHI Reagon
 NINA Simone
 Valaida SNOW
 BU Pleasant

Dorothy ASHBY
 TOSHIKO Akiyoshi
 Shirley SCOTT
 Alice COLTRANE
 HAZEL Scott
 CLEO Laine
 MELBA Liston
 TANIA Maria
 UNA Mae Carlisle

HOT LINE

by Michele Gautreaux



Martha Stewart

ANNIVERSARIES

WALLFLOWER ORDER CELEBRATED ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY with a new show which toured California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Wallflower Order is a five-woman dance collective formed in 1975 to express social and political themes in women's lives through a unique form of dance incorporating theater, sign language, martial arts, humor, and music. For information contact: Pati McDermott (415) 644-0230.

WOMAN SOUND, INC. ANNOUNCES THE CELEBRATION OF ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY. Woman Sound is a concert sound reinforcement company, well-established in Washington, DC. It does shows in all the major concert halls in Washington, and is especially known for doing the city's festivals.

HOT LINE announces upcoming events in women's music and culture, and presents capsule reports of past happenings.

Woman Sound has also toured with such artists as Cris Williamson, Odetta, and Casse Culver. It will be holding an anniversary party in March in Washington. Look for the date and place in "Off Our Backs." The party will be a fundraiser for needed new equipment. Woman Sound is run by Boden Sandstrom. For information: P.O. Box 1932, Washington, DC (202) 265-9000.

CONFERENCES AND EXHIBITIONS

"WOMEN IN PHOTOGRAPHY" AND THE WOMAN'S BUILDING of Los Angeles are sponsoring a competition/exhibition of work by women photographers (fine art). This national event, funded in part through a NEA grant, will be at the Woman's Building Gallery, 1727 N. Spring, Los Angeles, California, April 7 through May 5, 1985. For information: (213) 222-2477.

"Lesbian Sexuality" and "Lesbians in Action" are the competitive categories in the 3RD NATIONAL LESBIAN SLIDE SHOW AND COMPETITION, scheduled for March, 1985. The show and competition, sponsored by Herizon, a women's social club in Binghamton, NY, will encourage exploration of lesbian images and offer lesbian photographers cash prizes. Judging will be by lesbian audiences in several U.S. cities. For information: Meg Glaser, evenings, (607) 724-9218.

Bay Area Women in Print is organizing the 3RD NATIONAL WOMEN IN PRINT CONFERENCE May 29-June 1, 1985 in San Francisco. The conference is open to all feminist women in the print trades. For information: Women in Print, P.O. Box 3184, Oakland, CA 94609.

A March tradition in Kansas City will be renewed this year when the SEVENTH WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL occurs March 21-24 at the Vista International Hotel and the historic Folly Theatre. The festival presents women who perform contemporary jazz, and has become a nationally-known event drawing participants and spectators from all over the U.S. and from foreign countries. The event will include concerts, student band performances, workshops, a jazz/film lecture, jam sessions in which dozens of male as well as female musicians participate, and a Sunday afternoon performance for the hearing impaired (and general public) in which a nationally-known sign language artist will interpret vocal jazz. Contact: P.O. Box 22321, Kansas City, MO 64113, (816) 842-4900/363-8246.

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ANNIVERSARIES

WALLFLOWER ORDER CELEBRATED ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY with a new show which toured California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. Wallflower Order is a five-woman dance collective formed in 1975 to express social and political themes in women's lives through a unique form of dance incorporating theater, sign language, martial arts, humor, and music. For information contact: Pati McDermott (415) 644-0230.

WOMAN SOUND, INC. ANNOUNCES THE CELEBRATION OF ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY. Woman Sound is a concert sound reinforcement company, well-established in Washington, DC. It does shows in all the major concert halls in Washington, and is especially known for doing the city's festivals.

HOT LINE announces upcoming events in women's music and culture, and presents capsule reports of past happenings.

Woman Sound has also toured with such artists as Cris Williamson, Odetta, and Casse Culver. It will be holding an anniversary party in March in Washington. Look for the date and place in "Off Our Backs." The party will be a fundraiser for needed new equipment. Woman Sound is run by Boden Sandstrom. For information: P.O. Box 1932, Washington, DC (202) 265-9000.

CONFERENCES AND EXHIBITIONS

"WOMEN IN PHOTOGRAPHY" AND THE WOMAN'S BUILDING of Los Angeles are sponsoring a competition/exhibition of work by women photographers (fine art). This national event, funded in part through a NEA grant, will be at the Woman's Building Gallery, 1727 N. Spring, Los Angeles, California, April 7 through May 5, 1985. For information: (213) 222-2477.

"Lesbian Sexuality" and "Lesbians in Action" are the competitive categories in the 3RD NATIONAL LESBIAN SLIDE SHOW AND COMPETITION, scheduled for March, 1985. The show and competition, sponsored by Herizon, a women's social club in Binghamton, NY, will encourage exploration of lesbian images and offer lesbian photographers cash prizes. Judging will be by lesbian audiences in several U.S. cities. For information: Meg Glaser, evenings, (607) 724-9218.

Bay Area Women in Print is organizing the 3RD NATIONAL WOMEN IN PRINT CONFERENCE May 29-June 1, 1985 in San Francisco. The conference is open to all feminist women in the print trades. For information: Women in Print, P.O. Box 3184, Oakland, CA 94609.

A March tradition in Kansas City will be renewed this year when the SEVENTH WOMEN'S JAZZ FESTIVAL occurs March 21-24 at the Vista International Hotel and the historic Folly Theatre. The festival presents women who perform contemporary jazz, and has become a nationally-known event drawing participants and spectators from all over the U.S. and from foreign countries. The event will include concerts, student band performances, workshops, a jazz/film lecture, jam sessions in which dozens of male as well as female musicians participate, and a Sunday afternoon performance for the hearing impaired (and general public) in which a nationally-known sign language artist will interpret vocal jazz. Contact: P.O. Box 22321, Kansas City, MO 64113, (816) 842-4900/363-8246.

MUSIC NEWS

KAREN MERRY, NEW OWNER OF PARADIGM, is looking forward to working within the women's music network. Paradigm distributes and promotes women's music in Southern California and Arizona. For information: P.O. Box 16982, San Diego, CA 92116.

NJB, INC. ANNOUNCES THE FORMATION OF MUSIC, ETC. PRODUCTIONS, a womyn-of-color controlled and operated production company. Music, Etc. is dedicated to producing and encouraging womyn of color artists (poets, musicians, playwrights, etc.). For information: Maude Joyner Bullock, P.O. Box 9323, Chesapeake, VA 23321, (804) 488-8247.

The eleventh NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL will be May 31-June 2, 1985 in Bloomington, IN, featuring three days of mainstage and showcase entertainment, the Music Industry Conference, Women Writers Conference, workshops, etc. Women interested in either the Music Industry Conference or Writers Conference should contact Toni Armstrong, 1321 Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660. Artists interested in reserving space for the Artist Promotion/Block Booking space should contact Michele Gautreaux, 1354 Catalpa, Chicago, IL 60640. All other inquiries: NWMF, P.O. Box 5217, Bloomington, IN 47402. (317) 637-2906.

WOMEN'S MUSIC ARCHIVES, founded in 1975, is an organization devoted to the collection/preservation of all types of materials related to women's music. The collection includes record albums, live concert tapes, songbooks, periodicals, concert programs and posters, record and concert reviews, etc. Kim Kimber, 208 Wildflower, Fairfield, CT 06430.

THE WRITTEN WORD

HOT WIRE VOL. 1, NO. 1 IS NOW A COLLECTOR'S ITEM.

We sold out of our initial run of 500 in the first week, and astronomical printing costs have made reprinting at this time impossible. Eventually we hope to be able to re-issue HOT WIRE's premiere issue, since demand is still great for it. Encouraged by your support, we ran 1000 copies of this issue. Thanks for all your kind words and womonenergy.

In business for just one year, BLAZON BOOKS of Chicago has published two novels: Paz and The Winged Dancer, lesbian-feminist books by Camarin Grae. The Winged Dancer is in its third printing. Paz has been selected as the February "Main Alternate" by the Century Book Club. Joel Carothers, 1934 Belle Plaine, Chicago, IL 60613.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Michele Gautreaux is a singer, storyteller, and HOT WIRE editor.

Festival Coverage
HOT WIRE is looking for women to photograph and write about this year's music festivals.
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KATHARINE KAY



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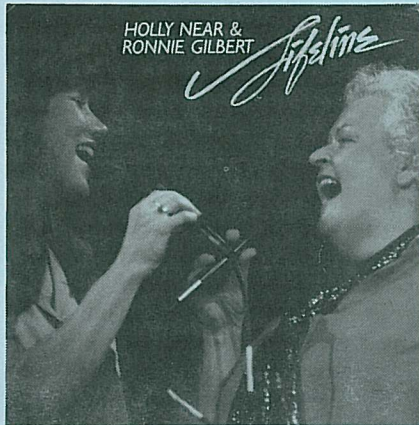
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NEW RELEASES

by Ann Morris



LIFELINE, by Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert. (Produced by Holly Near, Jo-Lynne Worley, and Joanie Shoemaker. Redwood Records, 476 MacArthur, Oakland, CA 94609. Distributed by Redwood Records.)

This live album was recorded at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco during the 1983 Holly Near-Ronnie Gilbert tour which followed the widespread delight and acclamation of fans of both singers after the release of the Weavers reunion film *Wasn't That A Time!* The excitement of these two women finding each other is evident on this album. The selection of songs is representative of their musical careers. The album includes songs from the 1940s and 1950s ("Beloved Comrade," "Goodnight, Irene"), and from the 1970s and 1980s ("No More Genocide," "Perfect Night"). It includes "movement" songs and fun songs, and of course it includes the song which has become the hallmark of this particular duo, "Hay Una Mujer Desaparecida."

Joining Holly and Ronnie on the tour and on this album were pianist Jeff Langley, electric bassist Carrie Barton, and sign

language artist Susan Freundlich.



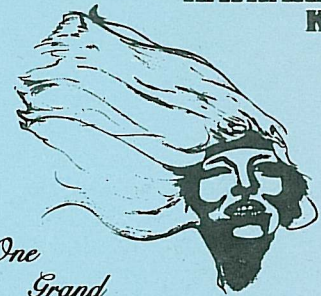
AS WE WERE, by Faith Petric. (Produced by Peter Kessler, Center Records, 885 Clayton, San Francisco, CA 94117.)

Faith Petric's third album presents songs of women's lives and experiences selected from the thousands of songs in her repertoire. The depictions of women in the songs on this album range from the "bride for sale" of the traditional "I Wonder When I Shall Be Married" to a variety of strong women and leaders in songs such as "Sojourner Truth," "Bread and Roses," "Little Red Hen," and "Amelia Earhart." The album concludes with Irene Paull's "Grandma's Battle Cry," the story of a woman who has spent her life in working for causes of peace and social justice, and who continues to do so; a woman who says, "I've marched since I was barely ten, and now I'm seventy-two."

This song could just as easily be about Faith herself. Born in a log cabin in Idaho in 1915, she grew up singing hymns and cowboy songs. During the Depression, her eyes were opened

to social injustice and inequality and she began a lifetime of radical organizing, travel, and singing. In 1980 she made her first album, *Faith Petric*, followed by *Sing A Song, Sing Along* in 1982, a cassette album of songs for children.

KATHARINE KAY



*One
Grand
Concert*

ONE GRAND CONCERT, by Katherine Kay, Greenbriar Productions, Rt. 2 Box 107, Guilford, IN 47022. Distributed by Ladyslipper.)

Katherine Kay has been influenced by many musicians and styles of music in her journey which has led to this first album. She spent several years in the "mainstream" music industry, learning the business of music. But it has always been the making of music which she has really enjoyed, and she finally realized it was time to put her full-time efforts into her music. *One Grand Concert* is one result of those efforts.

In the making of this album, Katherine made a "concerted" effort to employ first women musicians and then talented men who do not get regular opportunities to participate in album work. The songs on this album are in the folk style. "Sally

Rides" and "Madre" deal with women's issues and feminist views. "Jane Lee" is a true story about a woman farmer's struggle on Three Mile Island. Other songs are concerned with unifications, peace, and issues of prejudice and social justice.

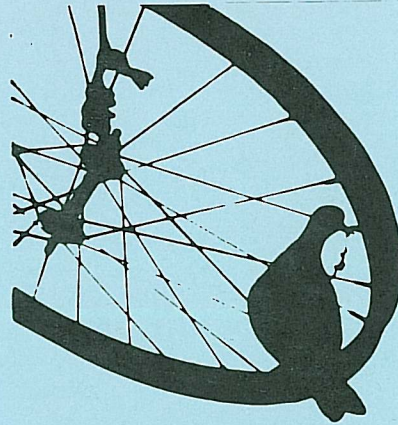


A RAINBOW PATH, by Kay Gardner. (Produced by Kay Gardner, Ladyslipper Records, P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705. Distributed by Ladyslipper.)

This album was conceived as early as 1976 as Kay began to discover the integrated healing properties of tone and color and their correlation to the seven chakras (energy centers) of the body. The compositions which comprise this album literally follow the "rainbow path" of colors associated with the root through crown chakras. Through research and experimentation, Kay discovered the particular tone and vowel sound which would cause each chakra to vibrate. The piece for each color or chakra is composed around that tone.

A Rainbow Path draws upon the musical talents of over 20 musicians and artists. The compositions are scored for flutes, plucked and bowed strings, wind instruments, small percussion, and harp. Members of Libana, a women's chorus, provide the vocal drone on the syllables associated with each color-tone-

chakra. Cover art is by Gina Halpern. The album and liner provide a wealth of information on music and healing in the composer's notes, bibliography, discography, and the meditation guides for each chakra.



TAKE HANDS: SINGING AND SPEAKING FOR SURVIVAL, by Honor Moore, Margie Adam, Susan Griffin, and Janet Marlow. (Produced by Margie Adam, The Watershed Foundation, 420 7th St., P.O. Box 50145, Washington, DC 20004.)

This collaborative effort on the part of four artists "takes the heart of feminism into the heart of the nuclear arms race." Its November 1984 release was timed to contribute to the national debate on nuclear arms control. The cassette album was released by the Watershed Foundation, a non-profit organization which produces poetry on tape.

The album begins with Margie Adam's "Who Among Us," a song which urges listeners to "find another way," to preserve a future for the children. Susan Griffin's spoken piece, "A Woman Thinks About War," is taken from a work-in-progress. Honor Moore reads her piece

Continued on p. 60

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ann Morris is a Chicago librarian who is involved in choral singing and dabbles in graphic design. She was a founding mother of *Not Just a Stage* and *HOT WIRE*.

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In Search of Dykes and Divas

by Janna MacAuslan
and Kristan Aspen

Opera! Why would anyone in her right mind want to write about opera? All those sexist plots and stereotypical characterizations of women? And isn't opera designed for the rich? Why would feminists be interested?

But what an all-encompassing medium. Singers-actors, dancers, instrumentalists, set designers, and more, all working together to make up what we call opera. And isn't opera starting to be presented at our own music festivals -- with Kay Gardner's Ladies' Voices at the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington and Patsy Roger's A Woman Alive at Alpenfest in Colorado?

Let's examine the history of women's involvement in this larger-than-life musical form.

Opera had its beginnings in Italy around 1600 when groups such as the Camerata of Count Bardi experimented with the reconstruction of ancient Greek dramas. The Camerata, which consisted of artists, writers, and intellectuals, had determined that Greek dramas were sung, so they chose to imitate this form. Giulio Caccini, one of the musicians associated with the Camerata, was an innovator and developer of pre-operatic musical style. His daughter, Francesca, was the first woman known to have written an opera, which proves that women have been participants from the start. Her opera was called The Liberation of Ruggiero from the

NOTE WORTHY WOMEN is devoted to reclaiming and celebrating the talent and accomplishments of our lost and denied musical foremothers.



Tee A. Corinne

Musica Femina

Island of Alcina, and was first performed in 1625. It was republished in a modern edition in 1946 by Smith College Archives.

The early Baroque operatic style (c. 1600) aided the rise of virtuoso singers, and today we remember many 17th century women as being great soloists. But they were limited, at the time, to performing chamber music in court rather than in church or opera on the stage. Among these courtly singers were Vittoria Archilei, and the three ladies of Ferrara: Tarquinia Molza, Lucrezia Bendidio, and Laura Peperara.

The attitudes that barred women from the stage were longstanding and deeply entrenched:

"The disapproval of female theatrical performers and the coupling of their names with that of prostitution and licentiousness was an ancient tradition, going back to the

*days of St. Augustine and even earlier...So strong was the prejudice that when in one country of Europe after another the drama began to flourish again, it was taken as axiomatic that women should be kept off the stage."*¹

To compensate for the lack of high voices in opera, the castration of young males became popular. There were also Church dictums prohibiting the castration of males, but the Church saw the use of women singers as more of a threat, and chose to look the other way concerning the castrati. France was one country that was appalled by the use of castrati and stubbornly stood alone in resisting the importation of Italian opera.

As the practice of writing for castrato singers began to fade, women were eventually allowed their proper place on the stage. There was actually a transition time when women and castrati could be seen together on the stage, sometimes the male soprano having a higher voice than the female. The general restructuring of musical concerts in the late 18th and 19th centuries gave women more opportunity to perform. Up until this time music was performed for a few elite members of princely courts and chapels. The new rising middle class created a demand for public concerts, which anyone with the price of admission could attend. This new audience was not as conservative as the nobles of court

or church, and was more willing to accept women as performers. The adoration that before had been lavished on the castrati was now turned on the prima donnas of the late 18th and 19th centuries.

Many of these women were idolized with the same type of hysteria that the Beatles inspired in the 1960s. They were called "divas" and often were paid huge fees over which they rarely had any direct control because their husbands, lovers, or male managers were their legal financial guardians. The myth of the temperamental, demanding, and high-strung prima donna emerged as some of these women began to assert themselves, and to exert more control over their earnings.

One of these singers was Maria Malibran (1808-1836). She received her music training from her father, a tyrant, who caused her to be deathly afraid of him. She finally rebelled, after singing in public for a few years, and married a man who soon went bankrupt. When he fled to America, she was forced to retire from the stage for awhile, in order to keep her husband's creditors from claiming her earnings to repay his debts. Finally, with the aid of an old childhood friend, Countess Merlin, she was able to secure a compromise from her husband that protected her earnings. The Countess used her influence to obtain Maria new engagements, and the young singer rose to the pinnacle of fame and commanded the highest fees. After her performances, crowds went mad. She was even injured when her carriage was overturned by the fans pressing forward to catch a glimpse of "The Great Malibran." Although it is not documented that she was a lesbian, she did create quite a scandal by dressing in men's clothing to go horseback riding in the country. Her passion for horses

led to an injury which, combined with exhaustion and overwork, caused her untimely death at age 29.

Francesca Caccini was just the first of a long line of composers of opera. Others include Elizabeth Claude Jacquet de la Guerre (1664/65?-1727), who was a harpsichordist and composer in the court of Louis XIV of France, Maria Theresia von Paradis (1759-1834) in Austria, Anna Amalie, Duchess of Saxe-Weimar (1739-1807), and Luise Adolpha Le Beau (1850-1927). Amalie, Princess of Saxony (1794-1870), is said to have written 14 operas! One of the most interesting composers of opera was Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), who had to fight with her father to be allowed to study music at all. Later, her rebellious nature carried over to feminist activity. She was arrested for her involvement in militant suffragist actions and placed in prison. While there she conducted her feminist anthem, "The March of the Women," from a window in her cell, using a toothbrush for a baton. A gathering of women sang in a courtyard outside her cell. Her opera, "The Forest," was produced at the Met in 1912. Dame Ethel Smyth, who was a friend of writer Virginia Woolf, also wrote many autobiographical books, in which she freely discusses her love for women. Currently, musicologist Elizabeth Wood is preparing a book about Smyth.

The first American woman to write, stage, and conduct her own operas was Mary Carr Moore (1873-1957). She lived in San Francisco and L.A., and incorporated western American themes into her work. Musicologists Cynthia Richardson and Catherine Parsons Smith are collaborating on research about this overlooked musical foremother.

Several women throughout

history have prepared their own librettos for opera. Gertrude Stein collaborated with composer Virgil Thomson on several operas, including one about Susan B. Anthony called The Mother of Us All. It was premiered at Columbia University in 1947, but was not performed by a professional opera company until the Santa Fe Opera's bi-centennial production in 1976. It has been recorded on New World Records by this same company.²

So much for personalities. Let's take a critical look at the subject matter. Most opera plots would turn the stomachs of even middle-of-the-road feminists. The female characters nearly always die, go mad, or cause the downfall or salvation of the hero. These stereotypical themes continue to be touted by high society as "Great Art." However, with operas like Kay Gardner's Ladies' Voices, there is beginning to be hope for the medium. The setting is Gertrude Stein's and Alice B. Toklas's parlor in Paris in the 1920s. The action centers on the act of overhearing bits of conversation at a party while walking through a room. All of the characters are women. Gardner says she tried to represent a wide variety of women including Gertrude and Alice, Bo (from Ann Bannon's lesbian novels), a society matron, an elderly woman with a tendency to "preach," and an ingenue. Musically, it is full of rich melodies, and is based on the "Saraswati Raga" of India, which combines the intervals of the lydian and mixolydian modes. According to Kay, the mixolydian mode is attributed to Sappho, and was banned by the

Continued on p. 61

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen make up the flute and guitar duo *Musica Femina*. The group has raised eyebrows from coast to coast with their concert/informance and lectures about women's contributions to classical music. The duo has also produced a cassette of classical women's music, available from *LadySlipper Music*.

MULLING IT OVER

by Ginni Clemmens

with Linda Wagner

In the street outside her Wrigleyville apartment, on a sunny autumn day, Ginni Clemmens leans over the open engine of her 1979 Datsun.

"I'm going to learn to do everything myself," Ginni says as she sprays cleaner on her carburetor. It's as if she's demonstrating why "Wild Women Don't Get the Blues" (they don't have to wait for a man to get their motors running).

When you mention politics, Ginni speaks of that song. She first heard Ida Cox sing "Wild Women" in the late 1950s. Although she thought of herself as tame compared to her pot-smoking friends at the time, she started singing it as she made her way in the folk music circuit. "More women of more kinds have asked for that song, from the ladies' clubs to the right-on radical separatists."

In those early years, Ginni was a closeted lesbian. "My father used to tell me I should not own a car if I wanted to get a man. I knew I wanted a car."

By the late 1970s, she could no longer reconcile hiding her sexual preference, and her rendition of "Wild Women" developed a new meaning in the women's community. Ginni suspects that coming out curtailed her opportunities to perform for children. Yet Ginni thinks women respond personally and politically to the song for simple reasons.

"It means go ahead and take your power, to be a person, to be creative, to be independent.

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 discusses her personal politics as they influence her art.



Carolyn Ford

From the ladies' clubs to the right-on radical separatists, women want to hear 'Wild Women'.

For most women, even today, that's wild."

As the women's community began to solidify, many feminists saw Ginni as a role model: an independent woman who had survived alone as a folk musician.

She herself finds it difficult to pin down her school of political ideology. "I'm not political by intent, but my friends tell me I'm very political. I have to live with labels because they are put on me, but I tend not to initiate them too much. Rhetoric is too left-brain for me. I just try and live my life in as integrated and caring and happy a way as possible."

Ginni does establish boundaries when putting art and politics together. That's a difficult task for a singer whose best love is the blues.

"I won't sing any song that is sexist, and it's so hard to find non-sexist blues. I've taken to adapting old blues. Bessie

Smith sang, 'I'd rather my man would hit me than if he up and quit me.' My version of 'Tain't Nobody's Business' eliminates the lines that accept woman-beating, and replaces them with lyrics that say 'To heck with all this beauty queen stuff.'"

*If I have an ugly lover
Make everybody run
for cover
Tain't nobody's business
if I do*

Sometimes Ginni will sing that song with the original lyrics, using a proper introduction: "...so we can hiss and boo together, and we can see, historically, where we've come from." To Ginni, this type of political action, presented in a musical context, is more effective in helping think about things in a new way than sermonizing about feminism or strong women.

Another goal Ginni has as a songwriter and performer is to "open up choice." She is uncomfortable with rigidity, no matter what its shape. "What I look for in my personal life is a balance of head and heart."

Despite criticism from some feminists, she'll sing songs by men, like "Let the Woman in You Shine Through," written by Peter Alsop. "I think it's possible for a man to be a feminist. I'm into coalition and building bridges. Growth is pointless if it just puts you into another closet."

Continued on p. 63

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Linda Wagner is a Chicago-based freelance writer and public radio producer, a member of the Feminist Writers' Guild and the National Writers Union, and a great admirer of women who write and perform music.

W.I.L.D. WOMEN

by Denise Notzon

WILD women do get the blues. They get the blues, jazz, folk, pop, rock, classical, new age, new wave, Latin, reggae, gospel, and comedy into every major record store, chain, and alternative record outlet in the nation. WILD (the Women's Independent Label Distributors) is a network of nine individual woman-owned companies that sell and promote over 100 labels of primarily women's music throughout the country.

FROM THE CURIOSITY FILE...

Originally in PAID MY DUES, Fall 1979.



Women in Label Distribution (W.I.L.D.) is the newly formed association of distributors of women's music. The association emerged as a result of the first national conference of women's music distributors and women's recording companies, March 19-24 in Kansas City, Missouri.

The intensive six-day conference covered political discussions, skill sharing, graphics design, in-store promotion workshops, and meetings with women's recording companies. A major project of the conference was working on a proposed contract between distributors and Olivia Records, which may be offered to other women's record companies. A bi-monthly newsletter has been initiated as the main communication link between association members. The second national conference is scheduled for next spring in Nashville, Tennessee.

WILD presently includes eighteen of the more than fifty women's music distri-

butors both in the United States and abroad. Most present members represent the East Coast and Midwest.

WILD, recently featured in Billboard Magazine, has grown from a seat-of-the-pants movement into a powerful network of independent distributors who, according to Bruce Kaplan of Flying Fish Records, are "an invaluable source of salespeople getting product into places it would otherwise not be marketed." WILD distributors have earned the reputation of being hard-working, innovative, and dependable. Each year their individual and combined sales figures climb as a result of high level promotion and service.

The association hopes to strengthen the entire women's music network through an improved distribution system. Present goals include skill sharing, the publishing of trade information, coordinating bulk materials and record buying, contract negotiation and cooperative national advertising. Any distributor wishing membership information should contact

Mary Farmer, 1224 Maryland Ave. N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002 or Sight and Sound Women, 20 W. 22nd St., New York, NY 10010.

Many women's music distributors have retail catalogues or listings of their available music. For the name of the distributor in your area write Carole Powell, 2006 20th Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37212.

by Helma Morris

WILD originally formed in the mid 1970s to distribute the feminist music of Olivia Records. Distributors were recruited at coffeehouses and local concerts to sell records, usually by consignment, in their areas. These early businesses often consisted of several record boxes under the distributor's bed or in her closet. But with increasing numbers of labels, new releases, and women making music, audiences grew steadily and distribution companies expanded out of the closet and into the professional business world.

"There was a need for WILD that, along with hard work, talent, commitment, and insight, turned a small group of well-intended women's music lovers into a powerful and highly organized distribution network," says Holly Near (Redwood Records).

In the early days of women's music, distribution territories were often just one town or several cities. But through a natural process of attrition, elimination, and long-range stamina, nine distribution companies evolved which now service the entire country. These multi-state territories developed and expanded based on geographical practicality and volume of sales necessary to sustain a business. When a distrib-

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Continued on p. 59
Denise Notzon has worked as promotion director for Pleiades Records, Margie Adam, Goldenrod Distribution, WILD, and as consultant to independent artists and labels. She currently runs CommuniCadence, an album and tour promotion/publicity service for women.

Making Music: Hiring and Being Hired

by Diane Lindsay



"I can't stress enough the importance of saying clearly what you want."

We all know we have a Primal Need to make music to feed and soothe the raging Muse writhing deep within our tortured souls...so whether you're hiring or being hired, the main idea in "making music" is to do it as often as possible!

If you want to be the ideal (i.e. first call) employee, determine what the ideal employee is from the employer's point of view. What is considered desirable?

Your reputation is your prize possession. First impressions count more than they should, and you don't generally get second chances. Since this field demands intimate working conditions, it's not uncommon for people to be hired on the basis

of how they are to work with, often over playing ability. Dependability is critical -- do you show up on time? Do you do what you say you're going to do? Do you accept criticism without being defensive, and can you take direction? Are you cooperative, friendly? Do you have something to prove? You might give your phone manner some thought, as well as your appearance. Often "look" is very important in an audition. I was once supervising an audition for an established act who did not hire the best player who came to the audition that day, but hired the player who came the best dressed. Generally be neat and clean, but be sensitive to theatrical considerations where

Nels

appropriate. Before your audition, find out what the act looks like and dress to the act. Just ask yourself, "Do I look like I fit in?" You may also be judged on your "sound" -- the sound of your instrument and any accompanying equipment. If you're not sure what the possibilities are, educate yourself at the local poor musician's college (your music stores). If there is a stage attitude the group has, fit in with their moves (overdone for rock & roll, pretty sedate for folk), facial expressions, etc. Sometimes people just want you to be yourself, but what we're talking about is stage presence. Whatever you do should be all your own and out there. If there is a contact involved (someone who has referred you), find out who. That is your best lead into any job and it also gives people a way to place you ("oh, that's Edith's friend"). Since nearly all freelance work is obtained by referral or previous work, especially if you're just starting out, get your name out. Breed contacts, particularly other musicians, engineers, producers, and writers. Put your business card up at music stores, tape duplicating houses, studios, and the A. F. of M. Advertise in local music and/or buy-and-sell papers. Go hear all the local bands you can and introduce yourself. Give them your card and hang out. Keep a file, send Xmas cards, call periodically to catch up, and let people know you want to be told about jobs/auditions. Your best bet for visibility is, of course, playing out. That's

where you will establish your identity as a player.

By the way, are you good? What DOES that mean, anyway? It's true there is a certain amount of relativity at play here (heh heh). One person's playing may be perfect for one employer's needs and awful for another's. We're all different, with differing standards, tastes, and directions. But that all comes after the basics. Do you know your instrument? Do you have your scales down cold? How's your reading? Are you comfortable with -- do you genuinely have a feel for -- a breadth of styles? You play who you are, and though it may not come out in other ways, it will come out in your playing. Do you have difficulty being able to listen to (not just hear) others' playing while you are playing? Do you leave space for other players? Do you play **MUSICALLY**? Music to me is not about how many notes you can play how fast how often. Musicality in playing resides in intent, which is born of "feel" and something to say. That means playing with **EXPRESSION**. It is part of your basic study to know, in any given situation, the "correct" way to play a passage. Now, to give you that creative reputation and satisfaction edge, go a step further and make it your own. Express something that is uniquely yours -- don't just fill space. The whole object is to play so that each note and each rest has **WEIGHT** (significance and meaning).

"Professionalism" is a book in itself. Overall, it's important to know and remember that it's not your gig if it's not your gig! When someone hands you a part to play, and she knows that's what she wants you to play, and you know you could come up with something better playing with your little toe, you don't. If there is the least bit of openness on the part of who

ever is in charge, your "professional attitude" is what will furnish you the opportunity to offer suggestions. A good start is "May I suggest an option?" How you present your ideas is significant. If you wrote a song that was a piece of your heart, how would you want someone to approach you about changing it? And what if you're asked to play something you're not comfortable with? When I'm the employer, hired players save me time and help me make more informed decisions (and therefore get what I want) by answering me honestly about their abilities. It increases my respect for them and trust in their truthfulness. On the other hand, I have worked with some employers who would rather fall for a good con job than to have



Holly Hartman

Diane in 1977 as she appeared on the Linda Tillery album.

someone working for them admit to weaknesses. Certainly always lead with your strengths (but don't bullshit). And regardless of what you play, especially if it is something you're not particularly fond of, play it with **CONVICTION** -- like it is the greatest work of art ever written -- and **MEAN** it. Always be sincere in your playing, and play with your fullest intent. It will come back to you in more ways than you know.

When considering payment, the player needs to figure roughly how much she'll be making per hour (why it's important to establish the total amount of time you are expected to give). At least find out the parameters -- the least

possible total and the maximum possible total time. Then you can give cost estimates or use that information, along with the quality of exposure and potential contacts, to determine whether you can do the job at the price quoted. If the pay is low, you need to ask yourself, "Is this investment or is it exploitation?"

Scarcity of jobs and inadequate pay places an unfortunate slant in favor of the employer. I say "unfortunate" because in some cases that becomes the reason to further underpay and to cut the budget first at musicians' pay. There aren't the natural checks and balances of supply and demand. I'm not addressing those who will take advantage of that situation and rationalize further exploitation because of it, but those who are interested in building a creative climate in a positive, professional atmosphere. When push comes to shove, and it usually does, there are simply those who know we're all in it together and those who don't. The example you set speaks louder than promo.

What makes you desirable to work for? What's at the top filters down, as they say. You are responsible for creating the working environment. Know what you're asking someone to do for you. It can be tricky for people to be "under" you, and that's just how some will view the situation. Nevertheless, I find it almost always true that people will go to the moon and back for you if they feel they are genuinely respected. But be insensitive and you risk grumbling at the least. The more assertive players might respond by upping the ante or quitting. Even little things count. Whenever possible be attentive to human needs. It doesn't necessarily cost money. It's an attitude you communicate. If you have nothing to do while you're

waiting for the drummer to set up, help her carry drums. Have tea/coffee at rehearsals. You can't pay enough? Then offer a trade. I am convinced that people should have breaks (at least fifteen minutes every two hours). It is definitely cost effective, as it elongates focus, attention span, and endurance.



Diane has become a familiar face through touring, especially with Meg Christian (this photo from Meg's *Turning It Over* album).

The golden rule of hiring is: don't waste people's time! If you want to maximize rehearsal time, have all the necessary equipment already set up, and make sure you get players tapes and charts ahead of time. It is your responsibility to have charts for players from that first rehearsal. It is not their responsibility to make them, unless they are paid for their time to do so. If you don't know how, learn or hire someone to do them. It is simply unprofessional not to have them ready. Also, your ability to give direction is as important as the players' ability to take direction. And where you don't know what you want, be open. Hear other ideas.

I have assumed you have hired pro players. Perhaps the most important factor in "getting a sound" is who you hire. It is not the time to give your friends jobs just because they are your friends. Referral is all. And not just one, especially if you don't have time to audition or hear someone play live. Ask around about people, call the people these musicians have worked for before. I'm more

leery of overestimating a player than of underestimating. Sometimes live situations can be misleading in that regard -- a product of too little or too much rehearsal. Yes, there is such a thing as too much rehearsal. The analogy that comes to mind is chewing food -- the same bite over and over and

of performances, sessions, rehearsal times, and a complete budget. These will continue to change, but this preparation gives you the tool you will need to establish the sequence of events, and will make juggling everyone's schedules easier. Working from a master list (and daily lists) keeps you organized

Nancy Bovee

“And what if you’re asked to play something you’re not comfortable with?”

over until it is tasteless, lifeless pablum. You can exhaust any energy people might have had left for performance.

I can't stress enough the importance of learning to say clearly what you want. It is a skill. I've seen so much time wasted here. Be aware that whenever you know what you want, you are not as open to other ideas. There's nothing wrong with knowing what you want. Just be sure 1) you take the responsibility of communicating it, and don't waste time by putting a player in the position of "guessing" what's the only acceptable option in your head, and 2) knowing that it is part of a player's job to present you with several options. Be sure she doesn't have a better idea than yours.

Do your homework. Go to other rehearsals. Learn how to lead one, or hire someone else to lead yours. It does require special skills. Communicating the "feel" you want is really all that's necessary. That and hiring the players who can give it to you.

Before you call anybody, make out a complete schedule

and able to know what's going on at any moment.

Many of the things that apply to players apply to employers as well. Your reputation will precede you. Do what you say you're going to do when you say you're going to do it. Show up on time, be prepared, quit on time, pay on time, be fair. And be upfront.

When it comes to money, the problem facing the employer is usually underfinancing... and you're constantly on the edge of spending more than you have. The problem facing the employee is usually not enough time or money. That means both parties need to say what they want and set limits. Especially in this business, where most are not salaried, negotiation skills are a must for all. There are several books out on the subject. Read them.

For the mutual protection of both, do not begin work

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Diane Lindsay, best known in the women's music circuit for her bass and piano playing, started playing the piano at four. Fourteen years of classical training later, she added electric bass to her repertoire and has since performed and recorded with many women's music and mainstream artists.

WOMEN'S BANDS

by Toni L. Armstrong

The December issue of Rolling Stone magazine lists the top 100 albums of 1984.* A quick scan reveals what I already know: in terms of sales, male performers dominate the music scene.

Male bands comprise 38% (ZZ Top, Duran Duran, Ratt, Huey Lewis & the News, Van Halen, the Jacksons).

Male solo acts account for 33% (Lionel Richie, Billy Idol, James Brown, Julio Iglesias, Bruce Springsteen).

Male-only acts had 71% of the top-selling 100 albums.

Add in mixed bands that are predominantly men (Prince's Revolution, Thompson Twins, The Pretenders) with 7% of the sales, and the total rises to a disheartening 78%.

12% of the sales were records by women: women's solo acts were 10% (Cyndi Lauper, Tina Turner, Madonna, Laura Branigan), and women's bands comprised only 2% (the Pointer Sisters and the GoGos).

2% of the top-selling mainstream music is by groups of women, and only one of those two visibly play instruments. Why is this? And how does it affect women's music?

It's never easy to "make it big" in popular entertainment. The huge but tight music industry is difficult to break into. Expenses are high, a situation aggravated by the music video explosion. Labels in the mainstream, as in women's music,

*based on nationwide survey of record stores. Each store provided a list of its best-selling albums January-October 1984.

are extremely selective about recording new talent. Economics is the name of that game; talent must sell. The powers-that-be read statistics, and 2% is not exactly a hot trend. With radio stations and TV stations using programmed play lists, airplay to the masses remains a dream unless the artists have the impressive marketing which record companies provide.

We're witnessing and participating in an interesting cultural time, where music and images are being broadcast into millions of homes daily. The outrageous appearances and sounds of many artists initially lead many viewers to believe they are seeing something new and revolutionary. In many ways they are. But the ubiquitousness of male domination is never questioned; in fact, it is aggressively reinforced. In this way, it's just another dose of "the same old thing."

From the sweetness of Lionel Richie to the sneer and studded leather of Billy Idol, videos make demands on the performers: be not only musical, but be as visually stimulating as technology can make you in three to five minutes. How have women fared?

Women are certainly present in videos. The celebrities range from the ultra-femme Madonna to the mighty Grace Jones, with women like Pat Benatar, Tina Turner, DeNeice Williams, Bananarama, and Laurie Anderson filling the middle of the continuum. Significantly, we see a wide range of female images projected; this is a major step

forward.

Still, overall the images of women projected by mainstream music are not helping feminists win the war against sexism. Even Rolling Stone comments that videos have "enhanced the popularity of androgynous types like Boy George and Annie Lennox, thus loosening restrictive gender bonds. But it doesn't take Susan Brownmiller or Betty Friedan to cringe at the non-stop video parade of pouty cuties wearing low-cut leather bikinis or skintight skirts, their bodies sometimes chained but always concupiscent. While heavy metal groups are special offenders, even the most cursory survey of mainstream rock video clips will reveal as many lingerie shots as in a Bloomingdale's catalog. It's not even so much that they are sexual stereotypes (why would MTV be different from the rest of civilization?), but that videos offer nothing but sexual stereotypes. If the term 'role model' has any meaning at all, this is not a good sign." (Kenneth Turnan, Rolling Stone, December 1984.)

While this analysis refers primarily to MTV-type mostly-white rock, viewing the latest Jacksons videos provides no encouragement. It is standard to use scantily-clad, adoring, willing-to-be-abused women as props. For every strong appearance by an Annie Lennox or the ZZ Top "rescue women" (from the "Legs" video), there are dozens of subservient women being objectified, if not sexually and/or physically violated.

And where are the images

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Alive!

Barbara Borden

Alive!, celebrating its eighth year as a jazz ensemble, has perhaps as its most unique attribute the ability to grow and change and have this constantly be reflected in the music. The original members, Carolyn Brandy (congas, percussion), Rhiannon (vocals), and Susanne Vincenza (bass and cello) met at a jazz workshop for women in San Francisco given by Michele Rosewoman. There they were sparked by each other's creativity and music, so decided to get together once a week as a trio and explore where the music would take them. At first, it took them to women's coffeehouses in the San Francisco Bay Area (the band's home base) where they were very enthusiastically received. They made their first national appearance at the National Women's Music Festival in Champaign (U of IL), in 1976,

followed by a short Midwestern tour. In February of 1979, Janet Small (piano) and Barbara Borden (drums) joined the group. From its beginnings to the present, Alive! has toured the U.S. and Canada from three to eight months a year. Currently, four months seems to be the average, with a good-sized tour in the fall and spring of each year.

Alive! has appeared at most of the major women's music festivals, some jazz festivals, and many jazz clubs and concert halls, as well as colleges, hotels, and conferences. The band has double billed with Meg Christian, Terry Garthwaite, Flora Purim and Airto, Edwina Lee Tyler, Casselberry and Dupree, June Millington, Joanne Brackeen, and in September of 1983 did a concert with Paquito D'Rivera as special guest saxophonist funded in part by

the National Endowment For The Arts.

Recently, there have been a couple of major changes in the group. One is that upon the release of their third album, City Life, they formed their own record company, Alive! Records. They now also have their second album, Call It Jazz, under their own auspices. Alive!, album number one, is currently being handled by Ladyslipper. The second change that has occurred is that Carolyn Brandy has taken a leave of absence from the group in order to be home with her son. Trumpeter Stacy Rowles from Los Angeles has been performing with Alive! for the past nine months. Needless to say, this change has made quite a

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(Left to right) Rhiannon, Janet Small, Barbara Borden, Stacy Rowles, Susanne Vincenza.

Irene Young



Sharon C. Farmer

Standing (left to right): Ysaye Barnwell, Yasmeen Williams, Evelyn Harris, Aisha Kahlil. Seated: Bernice Reagon, Shirley Johnson.

Sweet Honey in the Rock

Junette Pinkney

The drama is understated: six grey steel folding chairs arranged in a semi-circle on a stage lit from the rear in rich pastels. The applause begins as the first woman emerges from the wings. It builds as the other five follow. Their outward appearance gives little hint of what is to follow. But the moment the women of Sweet Honey in the Rock open their mouths, the power is unleashed.

Sweet Honey in the Rock, a quintet of black women singers (plus a sign language interpreter who performs at many concerts), began in Washington, DC in 1973. Bernice Johnson Reagon was the vocal director of the D.C. Black Repertory theater company and began a singing group as an outgrowth of the vocal work at "the Rep."

"I thought the music we were doing for theater would

stand on its own," she reminisced recently. Eight men and women came to the first rehearsal.

"As soon as they learned the first song ('Sweet Honey in the Rock'), I said, 'That's the name of the group.'" But when the group didn't gel after awhile, Reagon decided it was an idea whose time had not come.

Some time later, one person suggested that they get together again, and Reagon called another rehearsal. Only three other women showed up and "I was disappointed," she recalls. "But I had this dictatorial law that if I called a rehearsal, we rehearsed. So we started singing and we looked around at each other, and I knew that this was the group."

In the more than 11 years since Sweet Honey in the Rock first came together as an

a capella ensemble, 19 women have lent their voices to the lyrics and melodies that speak to the myriad of their experiences and responsibilities: as women, mothers, children, lovers, builders of community, as well as fighters against racism, lynching, slavery, rape, occupational dangers, nuclear energy and weaponry, sexism, discrimination, hunger, and unfair housing.

"We try to give, sometimes, a special emphasis to the love songs," says Evelyn Harris, who joined Sweet Honey in 1974, "because we want it to be known that in order for us to continue the work as fighters it's important for us to be loved, as well." Continued on p. 59

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Junette Pinkney is an independent television producer and writer who lives in Washington and is a member of *In Process*, a vocal workshop founded by Sweet Honey in the Rock in 1980.



Standing (left to right): Kafi Patrice Nassoma, Sherri Weathersby. Kneeling: Chavunduka, Rita Warford, Ahsia Hill. Sitting: Elreta Dodds, Shanta Nurullah. Not pictured: Gayelynn McKinney, Barbara Huby.

Sojourner

Shanta Nurullah

Since conversations differ according to whether they take place between a group of men, a group of women, or a group of women with men, I thought that musical conversations might reflect similar differences. It was this curiosity about female musical conversation, stimulated further by an idea from Rita Warford, that prompted my husband and I to produce a concert in November of 1979, "Black Women Making Music," at the Institute of Positive Education in Chicago. We pulled together a group of women -- three from Chicago, three from Detroit, one from New York. That first concert was such an enjoyable experience for the musicians and received such a tremendous audience response that we decided to form a group.

Thus began SOJOURNER, now a group of eight Black women, four from Chicago and four from Detroit. All of the women from that first concert (vocalists Rita Warford and Chavunduka, harpist/flutist Kafi Patrice Nassoma, reed specialist Elreta Dodds, and sitarist/bassist Shanta Nurullah) are currently in the band, except for Bunchy Fox, New York percussionist. Added to the group have been Gayelynn McKinney (Detroit drummer), Sherri Weathersby (Chicago bassist), and percussionist Ahsia Hill, who was replaced in 1983 by Barbara Huby (both of Detroit).

SOJOURNER performs primarily original compositions (all of the members write music) in a variety of styles from the Black musical experience. Jazz, blues, gospel, reggae, avant-garde, and Latin music all come alive with the high energy projected through our unusual combinations of instruments and dynamic voices. We burst on stage with vibrant colors and, alternately or simultaneously,

excite, soothe, surprise, and inspire our audiences.

We are women of conviction deeply concerned about the condition of our people and the troubles of the world. Our music reflects our concerns. We are not feminists but we appreciate the support and the encouragement we have received from the feminist community.

Many of us are mothers, having ten children between us. Although we would all like to work totally in music, for survival's sake we are also librarians, electronic and fingerprint technicians, salespersons, social workers, and counselors.

SOJOURNER has performed throughout the Midwest at colleges, festivals, and community centers. A highlight of our early time together was winning the Combo Contest for the 1981 Women's Jazz Festival in Kansas City.

Our most pressing needs are for a record and expanded exposure through performances in the South and on the East and West Coasts. We are looking either for a record company interested in working with us or the money with which to produce our own recording. We would ultimately like to be known and performing throughout the world.

We hope you will hear our music and share our musical gifts from God.

We are SOJOURNER, a group of Black women making beautiful music together. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Shanta Nurullah, musician and freelance writer, is a member of the band Sojourner. She writes and performs for children, and has four children of her own.

Photographers

We are very interested in your black and white photos of women musicians and performers. Action shots, especially from festivals, are needed. Send to HOT WIRE Graphics Department.

Swingshift

Swingshift

A passion for jazz, a well-rooted lesbian identity, and an active commitment to building a left political movement give Swingshift a unique personality. We've maintained a steady performance schedule throughout our five-year history in the San Francisco Bay Area. Long-term members are Susan Colson on bass, Bonnie Lockhart on piano, and Naomi Schapiro on alto sax and flute. Frieda Feen joined us as lead vocalist just after our spring '82 Northwest/Midwest tour, and Danielle Dowers took over the drummer's seat in the fall of 1983.

Band members write about half of our material, treating themes such as U.S. military intervention, apathy, nuclear power, and women's rights. In addition, we perform an a cappella set, which allows us to work quickly and simply in the benefit/rally circuit. Equally

important, it allows us to share our love of singing and to present another facet of the peoples who gave birth to jazz (their songs of struggle and liberation).

We're drawn to each other by a common vision of ourselves as cultural workers. We believe that the power and the beauty of our art is intimately connected to the political movements that fight to empower all of us. We've always taken heart from the small but determined cluster of musicians who share our perspective. This fall we had the good fortune to perform in Nicaragua, where that vision was not the "alternative" but the national outlook on cultural work.

In November of 1983, Swingshift performed at a San Francisco program of Central American trade unionists. In thanking us for our work, the Nicaraguan

delegate invited us to "spend your next vacation in Nicaragua." We took his invitation seriously and spent the next year fund-raising, studying Spanish (with varying degrees of success), going to meetings and more meetings, and trying to remember that we were still a musical group. We eventually raised enough money to purchase a sound system, electric bass and bass amp, drum set and electric keyboard, all of which were donated to the

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

The members of Swingshift wrote this article collectively, a feat with which many readers may be familiar. It is a reflection of the way we do a lot of our work — arranging, eating, and decisionmaking. We were accompanied on our trip to Nicaragua by Melinda Basker, our translator, who did a wonderful job of opening people's ears and hearts to us, and by Sharon McCorkell, sound technician par excellence, who met each new playing situation with calm and humor. We also want to acknowledge the Friends of Nicaraguan Culture and the Sandinista Association of Cultural Workers.



At the military school in Managua, where we performed our first day.



Barbara Dumesnil

(Left to right) Bev Futrell, Sue Massek, Karen Jones, Sharon Ruble.

Reel World String Band

Cathy Lee Davis

Women singing lullabies and ballads to their children. This is the way Appalachian Mountain women have passed their music heritage from generation to generation. Traditionally, women have been vocalists and men instrumentalists. The Reel World String Band began making music and breaking tradition in 1977 when they formed as an all-woman revivalist band.

Sharon Ruble, a Kentucky native trained in woodwinds, became a self-taught bass player after Reel World was formed. Speaking about the group's history she says, "Our first emphasis was on fiddle tunes. We tried to draw vocals from them, but it was difficult to find lyrics to fit our woman's consciousness. Although we wanted to keep the emphasis on the old-time tradition, we weren't willing to sing sexist or racist lyrics. Through the experience of performing for very diverse audiences, from striking miners and textile workers in Eastern Kentucky to Lincoln Center in New York City to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, we realized that the struggles of people go on, and contemporary songwriters are

writing and singing about them. We began to draw from these writers, and the band members started writing their own songs. As we grew together in experience and as musicians, we were able to make a definite political commitment. Women's point of view and Appalachian issues became the political thrust of our music."

"I really like the Traditional Music form," says Sue Massek, who plays banjo and guitar. She is from Kansas, and began performing folk music at 16. "It is both simple and complex, a kind of music everyone can relate to. The melody line is clear and the lyrics are very upfront. Some people who would never read a political poem will listen to the same words when put to a familiar form of music. They might catch themselves singing the lyrics of 'Crank's Creek' (a song by Bev Futrell on Reel World's *In Good Time* album), and find themselves enjoying a protest song. The music can be a way of sneaking up on some people with our political views. I feel the best songs I've written come the easiest. The music more or less gushes out. The

tune might be written in five minutes while I have to struggle a little more refining lyrics. For instance, I was interested in writing a song about women miners, but it wasn't until I went to the First National Women Miners Conference that I wrote 'What She Aims To Be' (on our *Long Way To Harlan* album). The song is those women's story being told through me."

Texan Bev Futrell, who plays mandolin and guitar, picked up her first instrument when she was thirty, and it was another four or five years before she started writing songs. "I can't write about something foreign to me. The experience must in some way touch my life. There might be a parallel between my life and other people's lives, with a feeling of understanding about what is happening to us. I am very much a censor of my own creativeness; sometimes I stop myself before I can even write something down and look at it myself. Sometimes, too, I'm frustrated with the music

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Cathy Lee Davis is co-editor for EMERGENCE—Feminist Women's Press in Lexington, Kentucky.

Toshi Reagon and the Agitones

Toshi Reagon

When we first got together, we had no idea that we'd still be together a year and a half later.

I had been asked to perform at Sisterfire '83, an outdoor festival in celebration of women in the arts. I was working as a solo artist at the time, but the people at Roadwork, the producers of Sisterfire, knew I had some interest in putting together a band. They asked me to put one together for the festival.

I called on Barbara Lewis as drummer, who had been playing for about eight years in the Washington, DC area, performing with many local artists. She was also in Hysteria, one of the first all-woman bands in Washington, DC. Barbara seems to have an endless amount of energy. She is definitely a driving force in the Agitones. On bass we had Kris Koth, who has only been playing for about four years but has learned very fast. She has mastered many different styles of bass playing, although I think she likes rock & roll the best. At least she dances like she

does. Kris is currently also playing in Lifeline, a musical trio that emphasizes political issues in their music. Tiik Pollet, lead guitar and vocals, started out in the Bay Area where she helped form the women's band BeBe K'Roche. Tiik eventually moved to DC and is a solo performer in her own right. She's also a fabulous songwriter, and two of her songs are featured in the Agitones' repertoire.

All of these women agreed to play with me at Sisterfire. I had worked with each of them before, so we knew we were gonna have fun doing this gig. And we had a blast. I really mean it. We had all played in bands before, but this one had a special feel to it. It was so exciting.

So we kept on playing together. We are now billed as Toshi Reagon and the Agitones: A Rock Wave Band from Washington, DC.

I feel very good about our material. The music is rock & roll with influences in reggae, funk, and new wave. We have been working really hard to find

a balance between the music and the lyrics. It is very important to all of us to speak out on certain issues through our music, like South Africa, women's oppression, violence against women, anti-nuke, and anti-war. One of the compliments we get the most is, "I never really liked rock before, but I like you all because your lyrics are so positive." It wasn't rock that bugged them, it was the negative, oppressive lyrics.

Some people come up to a show and say, "Golly, their music isn't that political." And on the other side of the same room, someone else is saying, "Golly, their music is too political." But everything we do is a political message, no matter what the song is about. Whether it's "I love you," or "You make me so blue," or "Stop messing with the world," it is a political statement in that we are the ones who are saying it. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

In addition to being a musician and songwriter, Toshi Reagon has also worked at Roadwork, Inc. since 1980 as an on & off staff member. Her cassette, Demonstration, is on her own T & R Tapes label. It's available through Ladyslipper.



Sharon C. Farmer

(Left to right) Kris Koth, Toshi Reagon, Tiik Pollet, Barbara Lewis.



Debbie Saunders Band

Linda Jacobson

In school, math was always my weak subject -- so I kicked ass in spelling. We all compensate for a lack in one area by excelling in another. Debbie Saunders developed an amazing sense of hearing to compensate for her lack of sight. And she makes up for a lack of family life by finding love through music.

The Debbie Saunders Band was put together for the sole purpose of doing the album A Shot in the Dark. It took eight months to put together the band, which played together for the first time in January 1984.

Before the album could happen, there was magic helping Debbie and Kimbyl Edwards, her manager, achieve their goal. Space for a fundraising performance was donated by Baybrick Inn, San Francisco's leading women's nightclub. Debbie was invited to play at the SF Cable Car Awards, where Bar-

THE DEBBIE SAUNDERS BAND

Debbie Saunders: lead vocal, acoustic and electric piano, bass, guitar. **Rita Lackey:** supporting vocals, acoustic and electric piano, important emotional resource for Debbie. **Mary Watkins:** producer, arranger, acoustic and electric piano, synthesizer, and major creative force behind the project. **Jan Martinelli:** bass, mini-Moog. Jan's a studio musician who has recorded with Linda Tillery, Holly Near, Margie Adam, Gayle Marie, and others. **Bonnie Johnson:** drums. She worked with Jan as a rhythm team in many recording sessions. Bonnie could not go to Michigan, so **Jake Lampert** (formerly with BeBe K'Roche) sat in on drums at the festival. **Suzanne Shanbaum:** guitar. An old friend of Debbie's, she's a blues-lover who has performed on or produced several women's music albums. **Rebecca Franks:** 21-year-old Rebecca has several women's music and mainstream recording sessions under her belt. She wasn't present at the festival because of gig commitments. **Carolyn Brandy:** percussion. Formerly of Alive!, she also wasn't in the Michigan band. **Sapphron Obois:** alto, tenor saxes. She's recorded albums with June Millington, Barbara Higbie, Teresa Trull, and more, and gigged with the Berkeley Symphony and Frank Zappa.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Linda Jacobson is a freelance technical writer, associate editor of the San Francisco magazine Music Calendar, and newsletter columnist for the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences. Her articles have appeared in various audio technology publications.

bara Price (a Michigan Festival producer) was impressed with her voice. Barbara attended the fundraiser to hear Debbie and her newly assembled group, and that's how the Debbie Saunders Band ended up on the Michigan nightstage.

In 1955, Debbie was born somewhere in the middle of Texas, on Stevie Wonder's birthday (May 13th). Blind since birth, Debbie grew up in a variety of foster homes and institutions. Upon entering the work force, she found herself sorting Coke bottles. The green-eyed, blonde Debbie began hanging out and singing in the street with a gang of teenage black women. Soon R&B and gospel music were Debbie's emotional sustenance; she took up tenor sax and received a piano in lieu of a support payment. She learned guitar and performed with a band at the Texas State School for the Blind.

Debbie took up electric bass in the mid 1970s and performed with an all-woman's (mostly lesbian) rock group called Airhart, playing at Midwestern Holiday Inns. Life on the road took its toll, and the band split up. She figured California was the place to go. How to get there? Hell, just stick out a thumb.

Debbie hitched to Oakland and ran into musician Woody Simmons. Woody had heard Airhart play in Michigan; Debbie now began gigging with Woody and she played bass on Chris Gannon's and Nancy Vogl's albums, plugging right into the "network."

In 1981, Debbie met Maureen Sansing, who helped Debbie emerge from a period of drug and alcohol abuse. A stable relationship motivated Debbie to begin a solo act, singing the blues to her own piano accompaniment.

In April of 1982, Debbie met Kimbyl Edwards. Kimbyl, who had no knowledge of the mur-

Continued on p. 61

of compelling, exciting women musicians masterfully handling musical instruments and technopop gadgetry? Dazzling live performance videos by women musicians are glaringly absent. I did see Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders with a guitar once, and I've noticed Sheila E can toss a drum stick in the air. And, in fairness, the GoGos do play their instruments.

Gradually, women have made dents in the expectation that they are on the stage solely to front the male band by being the "chick singer." What a thrill it was to see Cynthia Robinson of Sly & the Family Stone play that trumpet! And Suzie Quatro with that bass! Even Karen Carpenter played the drums. What a relief to see Fanny!

Compared to the pop mainstream, women's music audiences have had significantly more opportunities to see women musicians in action together. To name a few: The Chicago and New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Bands, Isis, Deadly Nightshade, Izquierda, Berkeley Women's Music Collective, New Harmony Sisterhood, Lilith, BeBe K'Roche, Jerene Jackson's big band, Hysteria, Airhart, the Clinch Mountain Backsteppers, Family of Woman, and Baba Yaga. Countless other groups have come and gone.

The problems faced by mainstream bands plague women's music groups, too: the expenses of promotion, recording, and equipment; getting gigs; the rigors of touring; the fierce competition; the interpersonal strugglings; selecting and marketing an image; creating the music and the performance. The audience for women's music, while dedicated, is too tiny to be able to afford to pay groups enough for them to live in the style to which they are accustomed (i.e., they like to pay rent and eat occasionally).

In addition, there are deci-

sions to be made which heavily influence the course of a musical career. One crucial consideration is whether to try to become successful in the mainstream (play local weddings? shoot for national fame?) or to try to make it in the women's music circuit. Or do both. Are we good enough? Do we have the talent, connections, and general appeal to make it in the mainstream? How much artistic control and political integrity are we willing to sacrifice to "make it"? Will anyone even listen to our demo? But if we go with women's music, is it an economic and artistic deadend? Few producers or festivals (let alone coffeehouses/clubs) can afford to pay even basic expenses like travel and fees for an entire band. Will our music stagnate if we don't stay sharp by competing in the fast-lane of "real world" music? Does association with women's music build audiences? Will we be limited in what we can express with our music on the basis of the whims of "political correctness?"

There are no easy answers.

And yet, women making music -- all kinds of music -- together is a constant. Bands form and dissolve, most without ever having made a professional recording. Women's bands are a fascinating branch of our women's music family. When the genealogists of future generations go in search of what their pop-music foremothers did, let's be sure we've left them plenty to learn from and enjoy.

HOT WIRE happily features a sampling of bands that have established their popularity in the women's community, from the familiar faces of Alive! and Sweet Honey in the Rock to the new-generation Agitones. We salute all women who have been, are, and will be in bands. Some day we may yet see Party Line, Edwina Lee Tyler & a Piece of the World, and Carol

Current Women's Bands

Abyss, 741 N. Prairie, Kalamazoo, MI 49007 (616) 343-8879. Mellow rock & roll trio.

Alive! P.O. Box 911, Fairfax, CA 94930 (415) 456-2732. Jazz quintet.

Bougainvillea, 80 Paul Gore Terr., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130 (617) 524-2119. Latin & Jazz quartet.

Boy Trouble, P.O. Box 496, Penngrove, CA 94928 (707) 795-6577. Rock/new wave quintet.

Carol MacDonald & Witch, 400 W. 43rd, New York, NY 10036 (212) 947-2690. Rock & roll, jazz (5-8 women).

The Fabulous Dyketones, P.O. Box 12333, Portland, OR 97212 (503) 249-0422. 50s rock & roll (6 women).

Fallopian Tubes, 2333 Lake Dr., Tampa, FL 33612 (813) 935-3652. Rock, new music. R & B trio.

Haresuite, 2206 Indiana, Columbus, OH 43201 (614) 268-9844. Folk, country, bluegrass quintet.

Holy War, 444 W. 54th St., New York, NY 10019 (212) 586-6663. Rock power trio.

Jane Finnigan Quintet, P.O. Box 42, Basin, MT 59631 (406) 225-3770. Jazz & pop quintet.

Marathon, 1601 15th So., Birmingham, AL 35205 (205) 933-9516.

Party Line Dance Band, 5173 Clint Finger, Saugerties, NY 12477 (914) 246-8822. Dance music: disco, etc. (trio or quartet).

Reel World String Band, P.O. Box 1972, Lexington, KY 40593 (606) 259-1002. Bluegrass traditional quartet.

Robin Flower Band, 2022 Paraval #511, San Francisco, CA 94116 (415) 655-5774. Bluegrass, electric traditional.

Software, 5653 E. 62nd Pl., Indianapolis, IN 46200 (317) 255-8800. Acoustic rock & roll quartet.

Sojourner, 8500 S. Vernon, Chicago, IL 60619 (312) 994-3302. Variety of styles from the Black musical experience (8 women).

Sunwomyn Ensemble, P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681 (207) 367-5076. Instrumental, spiritual. Trio, works with local musicians.

Sweet Honey in The Rock, 1475 Harvard NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 (202) 234-9308. A capella political and traditional Black music. Quintet.

Swingshift, 2138 McKinley #1D, Berkeley, CA 94703 (415) 821-7360. Jazz, Latin, political pop quintet.

Tommie, 80 Larkspur #10, San Rafael, CA 94901 (415) 456-9806. Rock quartet.

Toshi Reagon & The Agitones, P.O. Box 3505 Berk. Sta., Berkeley, CA 94703 (202) 726-0749. Rock, new wave quartet.

Womanart, P.O. Box 10872, Tampa, FL 33679 (813) 259-1378. Classical, jazz, pop fusion (6 women).

No Address Available: Edwina Lee Tyler & A Piece of the World. Ibis. The Harp Band. Deuce.

MacDonald & Witch on videos. If not MTV, then through video distribution networks of our own. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:
Toni Armstrong is a special education teacher, publisher, musician, avid "Sinistar" player, and Gumby fan.

Remember, Vinyl is Permanent

Ann Reed



So you've been singin' your heart out for years and people have been saying, "You're really good. Why don't you make an album?"

Well? Why don't you?

There are usually two types of record-making hopefuls. Those who say, "Making a record is a snap. No problem," and those who say, "Aaarrggghh! It's too hard! Too confusing! I could never do it!" Neither of these statements is absolutely correct, although after producing two albums I would say the truth is closer to "Aarrgghh!"

Records are a creative endeavor, but they are also big business and worth doing right. The first thing you will need (I assume you already have tal-

ent) is money. Bucks. Cashola. To make a good, solid product you will need at least \$6,000. Now, put your eyes back in your head, lift your jaw up off the floor, and keep in mind that many of the albums coming out today cost \$40,000 or more to make. The two albums I have put out cost about \$10,000 each. I'll give you some suggestions about funding your record:

(1) Find one or more wealthy people who have more money than they know what to do with. Convince these people that your project is worth investing in. You will probably have to arrange to give your investors a percentage of the profits, unless they are true philanthropists. Be sure you have a written contract with investors stating the terms (how much money is being invested, if/how the money is to be repaid, etc.) and do not allow investors to have the final say in what does or does not go on the album (unless, of course, someone happens to be a producer or knowledgeable about recording. Then think about it).

(2) Raise the money yourself. This might take a little longer. For example, at every concert you give, tactfully announce your plans for an album and add that there will be a table in the lobby where people can place their donations in a can or box. Stress that no donation is too small.

(3) Borrow \$400 or so, go to a four- or eight-track studio, and make a demo tape. A demo is a high-quality tape of three or four songs demonstrating what your music is about, dis-

playing your talent. It should take you four to ten hours to do a demo. If it takes any longer, you're wasting time. Take that marvelous tape to labels (i.e. Olivia, Flying Fish, Alligator, Warner Bros.). Hopefully, one of the many labels out there will say "Wonderful! We must have you!" Then negotiate a contract saying how much they will give you to do the album, along with who owns the master tape, who has the final say about what goes on the album, distribution, promotion, etc.

Finding an investor or raising it yourself means that you are the producer and, for now, the label. This gives you not only artistic control, but control over selection of musicians, distribution, promotion, and so on. This may sound great to some people; to others it may sound like the ton of responsibility it is. You have to be very organized to pull this off all by yourself. If you aren't an organized person, I recommend hiring someone to be your co-producer. I have worked with a co-producer on both of my albums, and it helps to have someone else say, "Don't worry. I'll take care of that." Of course, your co-producer should be responsible, dependable, wonderful, and knowledgeable. And she/he may have contacts that you do not have. If you decide that you just want to be creative and not worry about the album cover, which pressing plant to go with, or where to find a zither player, hire a producer. They are out there. Check out their credentials, talk

with other people who have worked with them.

Next on the list is song selection. Usually albums have ten songs on them, but you will want to have twelve selected. You may find out after recording a favorite song that it does not work well, that it isn't strong, that it doesn't fit in with the feeling you're trying to get. Be flexible enough to change your mind.

Where will you find other musicians? You probably already know some, and in every city there are professional musicians whose work you respect and who would love to be paid to play on your album. There are also "studio musicians" who can walk into a studio, be handed a lead sheet, and get the job done in an amazingly short amount of time. They usually belong to the musicians union,

than happy to show you what they've got. Call and set up an appointment to visit them. If you are an acoustic musician, be sure the studio has done acoustic music. If you don't know that much about the technical aspects, bring someone who can tell you if the microphones, mixing board, and tape machines are adequate. Then think about this: How does the studio feel to you? The studio

If you are hiring the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, better check out a large studio.

There are two things that make boring albums: boring songs and boring arrangements. When you are choosing your songs, make sure they are different in style and tempo. They don't have to be glaring differences. But if you record an entire album of songs that have basically the same tempo and similar chords, it's going to put people to sleep.

You will probably be adding instruments to your songs, and I will admit at this point that I'm rather conservative when it comes to this. I have heard too many recordings where a beautiful song withered and died because of the added instrumentation. Synthesizers are nice and very effective, but not on every single song. Let me be cosmic and visual for a moment. Think of your song as a Christmas tree and the other instruments you are adding as decorations. Now, the tree is beautiful and strong all by itself. Put a few decorations on and you enhance its beauty. Put too many decorations on (whether it's all tinsel, or a bunch of different stuff) and you lose sight of the tree completely. It's called overkill.

too, which means union wages.

A word of caution about using musician friends. It may take more time than a studio musician. Be careful.

Okay. Now you are ready to choose your own studio and get to work. What kind of studio do you need? If the recording will be you and your instrument, a vocal, a bass, an additional instrument and vocal, an eight-track studio might do the job. These are usually \$35-\$50 per hour. If you want room to do more, go to a sixteen-track studio (\$50-\$175 per hour). If you are hiring the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, better check out a large studio. Aside from the hourly cost that starts when the tape starts rolling (you do not have to pay for set-up time), there's the cost of the tape you will record on. This is not a typical reel-to-reel tape, which is called "quarter inch." This is a big sucker, approximately two inches wide, and it costs around \$125. You will probably buy two of these for an album, and you usually buy them from the recording studio. Again, in choosing a studio, talk to people, get recommendations. Studios are more

will assign you an engineer, as few studios will let you bring in your own engineer and leave you to play in their studio. If the engineer rubs you the wrong way, you'd best find someplace else to work. After all, this is the person who sits behind the board, sets levels, and will be there every session. If you're not comfortable with the studio space and personnel, you'll be edgy, and you don't need that.

Be prepared when you go into the studio. Rehearsing with the other musicians ahead of time will save you time and therefore money.

Another thing that will save you time and money is knowing when a song has had enough. On my first album, there was a very fine musician who came in to do what I considered a fairly simple part. He kept on being slightly dissatisfied, and soon we had six tracks of his part. We liked the first one he did, and used it. Learn when to say, "I'm happy with that." It's your album.

After the recording, you will have your songs on the two-inch tape, and you need to finally have them on a quarter-inch stereo tape. How you get there

is called "mixing." Mixing is placing everything where you want it to be. It is also where you set the volumes of all the different instruments. Mixing is incredibly important, and what you must do most of all is listen. You want to be able to hear everything you have recorded. Pretend for a moment that you are going to mix your song, "Rutabaga Salad." You have two tracks of guitar, a bass, a piano, a lead vocal, and three-part harmony. First, you want the lead vocal to be "out front" where it will be the most prominent part of the song. Next, when you are sitting between two speakers, where do you want everything? Do you want the vocal to sound like it's coming right down the middle or off to one side? Should the piano be a little off to the left, or way over to the right? You have the ability on the mixing board to place everything where you want it, but make sure it's balanced. How you mix your songs is how they are going to sound on your album; remember, vinyl is permanent. Mixing is an intense listening experience, and you will probably want to take some

Learn when to say "I'm happy with that."



time to allow your ears to recover between sessions. Otherwise, you lose perspective.

When your album is all mixed, and your album cover designed (pressing plants want camera-ready art), you will send your cover, lyric sheet, and tape to a pressing plant that will manufacture your cover and transform your tape into vinyl.

Don't forget: Be flexible. Be willing to change your mind. Keep in mind that this is your album. Your name is what people will remember. The recording should be satisfactory to you. Be open, ask questions. Welcome to recording! ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Ann Reed has been nominated three times for the Minnesota Music Award for best female vocalist, and denies that she was abducted by Amazon gypsy kossacks.

ann reed
room & board



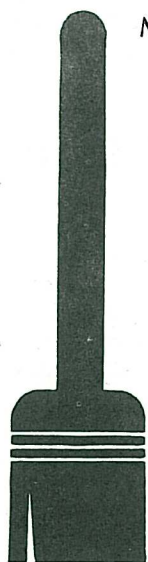
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Johnnie Mae Rice Graham

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm

Rosetta Reitz

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm was the hottest all-women's jazz band of the 1940s. It was the first racially integrated women's band and it lasted for over a decade. Many people have not heard of the Sweethearts because it primarily played for black audiences and it was practically ignored by the white media.

The women's bands we remember today were the white groups covered by the white media -- Ina Ray Hutton and Her Melodears, and Phil Spitalny's All Girl String Orchestra. In spite of the fact that the women were trained, serious musicians, the media saw them as gimmicks, never treating them with respect. These groups made records and films which were distributed widely. The Sweethearts cut only three 78rpm records, and they had little distribution.

Dorothy Donegan, the hottest living jazz pianist, told me she had been booked as part of a women's package with the Sweethearts at the Howard in 1943. Ms. Donegan was playing solo piano. Jackie "Moms" Mabley was the comedienne and the Sweethearts were the big band. Her description of how much the group was loved and of the audience's clapping and stamping and yelling made me wish I had been there.

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm was organized in 1937 by Laurence Clifton Jones, an educator who started the Piney Woods Country Life School in the Mississippi Delta in 1910. It was a school for poor and orphaned Afro-American children, set up primarily to teach them a trade. The girls were taught cooking, sewing, laundering, and teaching skills. In exchange for their

education, board and keep, the girls worked for the school. In the tradition of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who traveled to raise money for the Fisk University, Mr. Jones sent out groups of singers to raise funds in 1921. It was a modest beginning. The children sang, and donations were collected. Gradually it became a more organized venture with bookings and several groups of singers. The number one group was called the Cotton Blossoms and there were Orange Blossoms and Magnolia Blossoms too. They performed for civic, church, and fraternal organizations. In 1927, Mrs. Laurence Clifton Jones led the first group on an eighteen-month tour across the country, netting thousands of dollars for the school. For fifteen years, groups of Blossoms were a significant income source for the school.

In 1937, Mr. Jones saw Ina

Ray Hutton and Her Melodears in a Chicago theater and heard Phil Spitalny's girl orchestra on the radio. This stimulated the idea of an orchestra of "girls of tan and brown." He selected fifteen of the most talented Piney Woods girls and had Consuella Carter, a former Cotton Blossom, teach them syncopation. The young women, aged 14 to 19, became a dance band. In the fall of 1938, already dubbed the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, the girls began making forays across the state, playing popular music from stock arrangements in school gymnasiums and small dance halls. The "International" was easy because it was apparent in the looks of Willie Mae Wong (Chinese saxophonist); Alma Cortez (Mexican clarinet player); Nina de LaCruz (Indian saxophonist); and Nova Lee McGee (Hawaiian trumpet player). They were all children of mixed parents; the rest were Afro-American.

The Sweethearts was unique; it carved out its own place. It had a cohesion bigger than the sum of the individual women. Many of the original members remained from 1937 and the camaraderie and real sense of sisterhood was never duplicated in any other women's jazz band. Nor did any stay together as long.

You see, most of the Sweethearts at that time did not really belong anywhere else. Piney Woods School was a foster home, and while they were out in the world having adventures, the girls belonged to each other. The Sweethearts developed its own identity, and with it, a powerful dynamic. The band remained special. Although many came and went, a core of key women remained. Many elements contributed to this uncommon association. The women ate, slept, and rehearsed together in their live-in bus, not only because it was cheaper but



The band that ran away. Chaperone Rae Lee Jones is top, third from left.

Johnnie Mae Rice Graham



Tiny Dav., star soloist, sporting an Afro long before it was stylish. She was America's #1 female trumpeter for 30 years.

Johnnie Mae Rice Graham



Saxophone choir as they appeared at the Apollo in 1942.

Johnnie Mae Rice Graham

because segregation laws and racial prejudice did not permit them to enter restaurants and hotels without harassment. This insidious and constant annoyance from the outside brought the women closer together. The group was also united by a common goal: to play the best swing music possible. The women were an early example of harmonious communal living on a cross-cultural basis. In a short time, the group became even more diversified, but it maintained the same sense of sisterhood.

Still, the band had numerous problems. There were questions about the girls' academic progress. Eight of them expected to graduate in the spring of 1941, and they weren't sure they could. However, Laurence Clifton Jones liked the way things were going, and he didn't want to lose any of the girls or disturb the \$3,000 a month they were bringing into the school. After one of the girls died, the school insured the Sweethearts' lives, naming the school itself as beneficiary. The girls wanted proper salaries, graduation guaranteed, and the right to choose their own beneficiaries. If conditions did not improve, they said, they would strike. In reply, Mr. Jones dismissed Vivian Crawford and Rae Lee Jones, and sent school officials to collect the 17 rebellious musicians. Instead, the young women fled to Washington, DC with their manager and tutor. A house, which became known as Sweetheart House, was waiting for them in Arlington, VA.

Life changed for the Sweethearts. The girls' commitment to the music became even stronger and they readied themselves for the big time, practicing many hours a day. Eddie Durham, a real professional, was hired as musical director. His chief qualification was his experience with the Ina Ray

Hutton band. The Sweethearts aimed for her kind of success. Durham, with his background in the bands of Benny Moten, Count Basie, Jimmy Lunceford, Artie Shaw, and Glenn Miller, was also a successful songwriter. He was a positive influence on the Sweethearts, who flourished under his direction. He wrote arrangements and solos in the style of the Basie band, and he worked the band hard.

Eddie Durham did his job so well that soon the young women were good enough to book into the Apollo Theatre in Harlem. Their first engagement (in September, 1941) was a huge success, as was their next date -- at the Savoy Ballroom, the hottest and most demanding dance floor in the world.

The band built up its section work and integrated its solos. It was also getting the bookings it wanted. The fact that male bands were breaking up because of the draft and the gas shortage did not hurt. In 1942, the Sweethearts got the gas and the tires they needed to make two coast-to-coast tours.

The first white musician, Toby Butler from Richmond, joined the band in 1943. She doubled on trumpet and bass. Rosalind Cron, alto sax from Boston, a long-time music student and former member of Ada Leonard's band, joined in 1944 because she wanted to be part of their swinging style.

Since the mulattos in the group were already wearing dark makeup in response to the local Southern police who were trying to figure out if they were white, the white women did the same. When asked, they said that their mothers were Negro. The irony was that after the decades of blackface in the world of entertainment, masks were still necessary for survival; instead of burnt cork, dusky pancake was used.



Publicity montage in USO outfits before going overseas, 1945.

The groups was invited to participate in the Armed Forces Jubilee Programs aired over short-wave radio to camps in every theater of war. The band was so hot in the spring of '45 that when it played the Rhumbogie in Chicago, people were turned away. Each of the three nightly shows were sold out. The domestic black troops (the American Armed Forces were not desegregated until April, 1949) sent in heavy requests for Sweethearts appearances at their camps. The band made a few film shorts, and a "LOOK" magazine crew travelled with

them for a week. The biggest thrill was an invitation from the USO to play for soldiers in Europe. Seventeen zealous young musicians sailed for Le-Havre in 1945. It was arranged so that each woman would get her pay directly from the USO, and the women came home with more money than any of them had seen before. When they returned, some of the women left and new ones came. That summer the Sweethearts cut three records. The women made a couple of short films and were featured in one, That Man of Mine, with Ruby Dee.

In March, 1980, a "Salute to the International Sweethearts of Rhythm" was held in Kansas City as part of the Third Women's Jazz Festival. Fifteen Sweethearts attended.

By 1947, key players like Tiny Davis and Vi Burnside left to form their own women's groups and Anna Mae Winburn, the leader, also left. Musicians came and went, some lasting for as little as two weeks. Rae Lee Jones fell ill and was 49 years old when she died in September. The band dispersed in 1949 and Sweetheart House in Arlington was sold. The women didn't get any of the money.

Anna Mae Winburn reorganized the band in 1950 and she called it Anna Mae Winburn and her Sweethearts of Rhythm. She was shocked to discover that the band grossed \$52,000 in six



Vi Burnside, premier tenor sax player.

**To Read More About
The Sweethearts:**

The International Sweethearts of Rhythm by D. Antoinette Handy, Scarecrow Press, 1983.

American Women in Jazz by Sally Placksin, Wideview Books, 1982.

The Untold Story of The International Sweethearts of Rhythm by Marian McPartland, 1980 (pamphlet from forthcoming book *Jazzwomen*, Oxford).

Stormy Weather by Linda Dahl, Pantheon, 1984.



Plantation Club ("California's Largest Harlem Nightclub"), 1944.



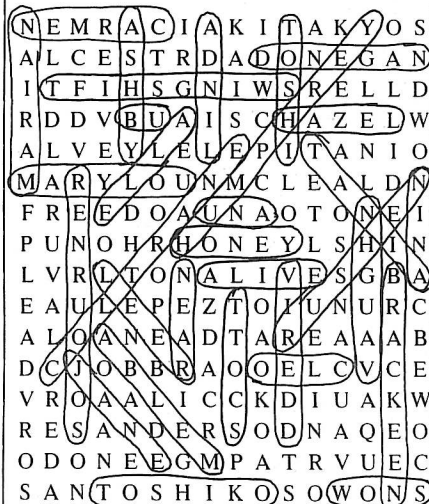
Vi Burnside, Anna Mae Winburn, and Tiny Davis in a rehearsal hall in Detroit, 1944. Their admirers are newspaper delivery kids.

months. She kept her Sweethearts together until 1955, having babies (four in five years) as the culture instructed. Contrary to the culture, she continued to work while pregnant, only taking time off when the babies were due. After the fourth delivery, she couldn't keep up the pace. The band now had only eight players and its bookings had dwindled. Women musicians were now out of favor. This chapter of the Sweethearts was over. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Rosetta Reitz owns Rosetta Records which has released numerous albums in the Women's Heritage Series. She is producing a documentary film about the Sweethearts.

**Answers to Puzzle
From Page 7**



**Hunter Davis
with Julie Homi
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Susanna J. Sturgis

LADYSLIPPER

Meeting the Challenges of Feminist Business

Most U.S. feminists probably know Ladyslipper by its astonishingly comprehensive mail-order catalog of women's music. That's hardly surprising, since 150,000 copies of the current catalog are now in print, and the organization's mailing list is fast approaching 50,000 names, of whom over half are individuals. The rest are radio stations, libraries, and stores.

For me, the book and periodical buyer at Lammas, DC's feminist bookstore, Ladyslipper is much more than a catalog. My office shares Lammas's cramped second floor with that of Flo Hollis, one of Ladyslipper's five full-time employees. Flo, who is also a member of Squeeze Louise, the all-woman rock band, services Ladyslipper's many store accounts in the DC area, Maryland, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and Delaware. In the fall of 1984, Philadelphia-based Justine Kilkenny was hired part-time to work with accounts in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.

With the exception of Denise Notzon of Berkeley, who was recently hired as a part-time publicist and promotion consultant, the rest of the staff work out of the "home office" in Durham, NC. They are full-timers Laurie Fuchs and Liz Snow (co-directors), Kathy Rudy, Sue Brown, and part-timer Barb Lewis. The work is so varied and so intense that attempts to create formal job descriptions quickly collapse into nonsense.

As co-directors, Liz Snow and Laurie Fuchs share respon-

sibility for administration, long-range planning, and financial decisions. Laurie coordinates production of the famous catalog. Sue Brown is in charge of ordering; she also oversees accounts receivable, shipping, and some of the bookkeeping. Kathy Rudy, the newest full-time staff member, is in charge of the mailing list; she supervises the work-study students and also the retail shipping operation.



Kathy Mary Flo Liz Sue
Laurie

Though best known as a retailer and wholesaler of albums and cassettes, Ladyslipper is involved in every aspect of the women's music industry with the single exception of performing. It is also an active presence in its home community, producing or co-producing six to eight concerts a year and

regularly sharing production experience with student organizations and other local groups.

In 1982, with its rerelease of fiddler Marie Rhines's second album Tartans and Sagebrush, Ladyslipper became a record label as well as a record distributor. The company had not been seriously planning to get into the recording business. The album's original (woman-owned) label was going out of business and offered Ladyslipper the opportunity to buy the master tape. They were enthusiastic about Rhines's virtuoso traditional fiddle playing, and reluctant to let such excellent music disappear. Ladyslipper took the plunge.

Tartans has been a slow but steady seller, but some of the most important benefits from the venture have not been financial at all. Says Sue, "A lot of radio stations take us more seriously as a record label than as a distributor. We are a kind of oddity because most distributors don't do promotion. Usually the labels do." Once Ladyslipper became recognizably a label, the stations were more apt to pay attention to it as a distributor.

Kay Gardner's latest album, A Rainbow Path, is the first that Ladyslipper has handled from the beginning of the recording process. Laurie and Liz were the album's executive producers. "We didn't really know what we were getting into," says Laurie. "We learned it as we did it." They raised money, managed financial details, negotiated contracts, handled travel and housing arrangements for

the musicians, and saw that the necessary supplies were in the right place at the right time. When the recording was complete, they oversaw the complex process of pressing, jacket production, and distribution.*

A Rainbow Path is a marvelous achievement both technically and artistically, yet Ladyslipper has no plans for future recording projects. "We're not into being a label in the sense of having a new record

to women writers looking to get their work published. Not surprisingly, Ladyslipper plays a similar role, but on a national scale. A Ladyslipper staff member may be the first to guide a songwriter through the whys and hows of copyright. What advice do they have for more experienced performers who are looking for a recording company? "Save your money and do it yourself." Few labels are actively recruiting artists, and

books and periodicals, published by the DC-based First Things First.

After moving to Durham, Laurie eventually joined up with Kathy Tomyris, then the Olivia Records distributor for North Carolina. They produced the first catalog in three days, to have it ready for the 1977 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. At that time, Liz was producing concerts and distributing Olivia records in South Caro-

They produced the first catalog in three days, to have it ready for the 1977 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

every year," says Sue. "It's not something we are expanding into." One senses, however, that if the right project came along, if the requisite enthusiasm and energy were there, they just might do it again.

The Ladyslipper women agree that one of -- if not the -- fastest growing aspects of their business is subdistribution. "Subdistribution" is a word they use to describe a function that has no counterpart in feminist publishing and may well be unique in the music industry. Many self-recorded artists, because of touring and other commitments, are not able to deal with the business end of being a record label. For them, Ladyslipper serves as a business manager, doing not only distribution but also ensuring that albums are re-pressed and covers reprinted when stocks run low.

As a feminist-bookstore worker, I often furnish counsel, encouragement, and addresses

those few have only limited resources.

Say an artist has already raised the money, found a studio and women to work with, and produced her own album. She wants Ladyslipper to distribute her new record. How does Ladyslipper decide which records it will handle? A primary consideration, naturally, is the quality of music and the musicianship. Can Ladyslipper provide what the musician wants in terms of money and/or exposure? Is the musician touring or otherwise promoting her recorded work to her prospective audience?

When the women of Ladyslipper counsel would-be recording artists to do it themselves, they know whereof they speak, for Ladyslipper itself began with far more enthusiasm than experience. The company began as a "fantasy of a comprehensive catalog of records by women" in the mind of Laurie, who had no experience in the music business. Isolated in South Georgia from other feminists and lesbians, she was inspired by her own lifeline to feminist culture: the country's first mail-order catalog of feminist

lina. Since there were few gathering places for lesbians and feminists in South Carolina, Liz devised the "listening party." Women in each area would find a space and do the publicity, then Liz would come with records. She had met Laurie through sister Olivia distributor Kathy, and one thing led to another. Taking a 75% salary cut, she moved to Durham and on Labor Day 1978 she became a full-time staff member.

In its earliest years, Ladyslipper handled only retail catalog orders and the wholesale distribution of records on the Olivia label. Book and record stores made it absolutely clear that they wanted Ladyslipper to do wholesale distribution of women's music on other labels as well. They tried to dissuade the retail outlets. "But," says Laurie, "the stores would not take 'no' for an answer."

Ladyslipper has been in the wholesale business ever since. As part of the Women's Independent Label Distributors (WILD) network, it wholesales music from the larger feminist labels (Olivia, Pleiades, Redwood) in the mid-Atlantic area. It wholesales women's music on

*For more details about the making of A Rainbow Path, see Sitting on a Rainbow Path With Kay Gardner and Friends, by Maida Tilchen, in the 1985 Ladyslipper catalog, and Making a Rainbow Path, by Kay Gardner, in HOT WIRE, Volume 1, Number 1, November 1984.

other labels throughout the U.S. and internationally.

What may be the most difficult aspect of Ladyslipper's work is the part rarely considered by the organization's admiring public. Working closely together over time in a feminist business is quite possibly the most physically and emotionally demanding endeavor ever attempted by womankind. Ladyslipper is not the only feminist organization to have faced serious interpersonal problems. What makes Ladyslipper special is the way in which they have dealt with them.

By the winter of 1982-83, the Durham staff had reached a point where communication among the then three full-time staff members had completely broken down. What often happens in such situations is that one person leaves, and the level of tension drops for a while. At Ladyslipper, though, according to Sue, "everyone was too stubborn to leave."

After considering several possibilities, they decided to go into counseling as a group. In retrospect Liz describes the experience as "shocking." They were not prepared for the speed and intensity with which issues came to the surface. The three continued in counseling for about ten months.

What exactly were the problems Ladyslipper was confronting? Two critical issues were power and responsibility, or, as Laurie puts it, "who was going to decide what, and who was going to decide who was going to decide what." Sue adds that a key problem was "not knowing how to communicate," and Liz agrees: "In therapy we learned to really listen. Before, we were so busy fixing blame and getting our defenses ready that we didn't really hear each other."

The Ladyslipper women speak frankly about what was obviously a very difficult as well as

rewarding experience. Any of us can name many alternative organizations that have exploded or collapsed because of blocked group dynamics. And, as Sue Brown comments, "You never hear the success stories." Asked if she believes that Ladyslipper's example can be used by other feminist organizations, Liz responds: "It had better be. You have to deal with feelings and dynamics openly."

Asked what challenges she sees coming up for women's music in general and Ladyslipper in particular, Sue immediately says, "Money!" There are

Taking a 75% salary cut, she moved to Durham.

Ladyslipper, P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705, (919) 683-1570. The Ladyslipper catalog is available on tape for blind or physically disabled women for \$2 from Womyn's Braille Press, P.O. Box 8475, Minneapolis, MN 55408.

few, if any, feminist businesses for which cash flow and lack of capital are not constant concerns; more than one (notably Boston-based lesbian publisher Persephone Press [1976-1983]) has collapsed from the financial demands of its own stunning success. Liz comments that Ladyslipper "must decide what directions we're going to go in, what our focuses are going to be. We have to learn to deal with our own growth."

For the industry/network in general, Laurie sees a marketing problem arising as some artists and companies long associated

with women's music begin to record more music by men and music without specific lesbian or feminist content. Women's music distributors have, after years of effort, managed to educate record store managers and buyers about what "women's music" is and how to market it -- and now the definitions are changing. For the most part the changes are signs of good health, but like other kinds of growth, they present challenges as well as cause for celebration.

Liz notes that "women's music" was once a code word for "lesbian music," and that too is changing. The performers and their music now deal with a wide range of issues; there are more men involved in all levels of the network. While she emphasizes that "no single way is the right one -- we need the whole spectrum," she believes that maintaining an "out" lesbian presence in women's music is a major challenge for the entire industry, from performers and recording artists to distributors.

The women's music network is growing in both size and strength, and Ladyslipper is an essential part of it. From its beginnings, Ladyslipper has demonstrated the best qualities of feminist organizations: sensitivity to the needs and desires of women, political commitment, the courage to strike out in new directions and improvise the necessary skills and tools along the way, the capacity to look within and make changes when changes are called for. Its example stands today as one that can encourage and inspire feminists working in many fields. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Susanna J. Sturgis is an idiosyncratic lesbian pagan poet and essayist who recently completed work on her first book, *Leaving the Island: Writings on Love and Change*. She bakes bread, commutes by bicycle, loves science fiction, and sings alto in the *Gay and Lesbian Chorus of Washington*.

The Second National Women's Theatre Festival

Wilma Marcus

The Second National Festival of Women's Theatre was held in Santa Cruz, California, October 4-14, 1984, drawing theatre artists, writers, scholars, directors, and audiences interested in the progress of women in the contemporary theatre. It was ten full days of workshops, performances, lectures, discussions, and general networking. Santa Cruz was home to the First Festival in May, 1983. That event was historical in its impact on women's theatre in the U.S. At that time, 45 theatre companies composed solely of women performers, directors, technicians, and writers gathered for a week-long festival, the first of its kind in this country.

The festival is dedicated to expanding the general public's awareness and understanding of women's lives, and to promoting the support and development

of their efforts in theatre as a significant and distinctive cultural movement. It seeks to foster an atmosphere in which all people can appreciate women's concerns, respect the creativity and talents of women in theatre, fairly represent the viewpoints and visions of women of different ages, ethnic and social backgrounds, and create national awareness of the potential of theatre as an effective source of entertainment, social change, and diversified unity.

The Second Festival again brought together artists from all parts of the country, and drew scholars and critics from Europe, England, Australia, and New Zealand as well. The aftershocks of all the energy, good will, and creativity are still being felt by all those who came to Santa Cruz, and the reviews of the shows have been

excellent.

The next Festival is being scheduled for 1986. We are a grassroots movement, and we invite everyone to share in the ongoing work necessary to keeping it alive. The coordinators will be travelling, planning, seeing theatre, and talking to performers in all areas of the country. We want to hear from actors, singers, storytellers, dancers, musicians, writers, and theatre craftswomen about their involvement in theatre, in life, in the issues that change and create our individuality and our unity. The Festival welcomes everyone to become a part of the most comprehensive women's theatre project in America. Our motto has always been:

We must invent a theatre equal to our ambitions and needs. We must champion a theatre which expands our dreams.

To get on our mailing list, to offer help, to keep up with what is developing, just drop us a line:

NATIONAL WOMEN'S
THEATRE FESTIVAL
P.O. Box 1222
Santa Cruz, CA 95061 ●



Teen Theatre Company, "We're Women, Too."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Wilma Marcus, National Promotion/Media & Book Coordinator for the Festival, is a director and choreographer. She is on the faculty of the Theatre Arts Department at Cabrillo College in Santa Cruz. In the last five years she has been involved in over 25 productions. In 1982 she became the director of the Vietnam Vets Theatre Company.

Minifest Cures Winter Blues

by Tracy Baim



MUSIC AND MORE MUSIC . . . AND MIME !

OPEN MIC 1:30-4:30

(Sign up any Saturday at Mountain Moving or call 769-6899 by November 28, 1984.)

EVENING OF STARS 6:30-?

Judith Markowitz
Ginni Clemmens
Jeanne Michele Charbonnet
Jorjet Harper & Toni Armstrong
Merle Markland
Make It Mime
Tricia Alexander & Lori Noelle
Diana Dewey
Linda Mitchell
and...
Rochele Bernstein as M.C.

40 ARTISANS FROM ACROSS THE U.S.

JEWELRY

Lizzie Brown (Massachusetts)
Hromovy (Texas)
Kady (New York)
Glenda LeSure (Indiana)
Mater Pliade (Arkansas)

KUDA'S CLOSET GOODIES --
Lesbian Memorabilia

HAIRCUTS by Ella

BODYWORK by Jo Mednick

STARLIGHT'S COLOR MAGIC --
Applique wall hangings, pouches,
patches, vests

POTTERY BATIK-WEAR
GLASSWARE LEATHER GOODS
HERBAL PRODUCTS STAINED GLASS
T-SHIRTS SCULPTURES
DRAWSTRING PANTS
BOOKS CARDS CANDLES
RECORDS CERAMICS PRINTS

Artisans selling jewelry and pottery, records and books. Entertainers performing from afternoon into the witching time of night. Just what women's music festivals are made of.

What holds unique for this particular festival is it takes place in early winter. This past December 1, Chicago's Mountain Moving Coffeehouse celebrated its Third Annual Mid-Winter Minifest, a savior for women caught in winter blues, suffering festival withdrawal, and wanting to buy holiday gifts made by women.

From 23 merchants and a few entertainers in 1981, the festival has grown to this year's 41 craftswomen and 12 entertainment acts, raising (after expenses) about \$800 for the coffeehouse. The festival ran noon to midnight and cost just \$2 each for the estimated 500 attendees. Entertainers donated their time with only travel expenses paid. These costs are minimal because Mountain Moving draws from a good supply of talent in the Chicago area.



Color Magic's Starlight (left) and Lynda Lunah came down from Wisconsin to join the 41 artisans at the third annual mid-winter mini-fest.

Joy Rosenblatt has been the festival organizer since its 1981 creation.

"I had just returned from my first Michigan festival. At the August dinner for Mountain Moving collective members, we were discussing ways to raise money. I was still high off Michigan, and I asked if there weren't any winter festivals," Rosenblatt recalls. Finding, to her dismay, that there weren't any, she decided she'd make her own.

Not accurately predicting all the work involved in such an undertaking, Rosenblatt said Mountain Moving members did much of the organizing on-the-spot. About 200 women attended the first festival, which raised \$300 for the coffeehouse coffer. Again, most of the performers and artisans were from the Chicago area, or from neighboring states.

Artisans said they find the festival worth their while, Rosenblatt added, even those who travel many miles (for example, jewelers Kady from New York and Hromovy from Texas, Starlight of Wisconsin with applique color hangings/books/bags, and Iowa Women's Works Bookstore).

Artisans return 10% of their profits to Mountain Moving. They are not charged for space, registration, or entry into the festival, unlike at many other women's music festivals.

"Most artisans did really well and were happy with the whole situation," she said of this year's Minifest, even under the quite crowded conditions in the basement of the church which the coffeehouse uses all year. On the potential problem of the festival growing too large for the present space, the concern of the coffeehouse is finding a larger location and affording it. The whole purpose

Continued on p. 61

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Tracy Baim is editorial assistant with GayLife newspaper in Chicago, a freelance typesetter, and a freelance writer for the Chicago Tribune.

the 4th new england women's musical retreat



labor day weekend,
aug. 31,
sept. 1-3, 1984
ten mile river
scout camp,
narrowsburg,
new york



FRIDAY

9:00-OPENING CEREMONIES
9:30-JANICE PERRY AKA GAL
10:00-DEADLY NIGHTSHADE

SATURDAY

8:00-ODETTA
9:00-FERRON
10:00-EDWINA LEE TYLER and a Piece of the World

SUNDAY

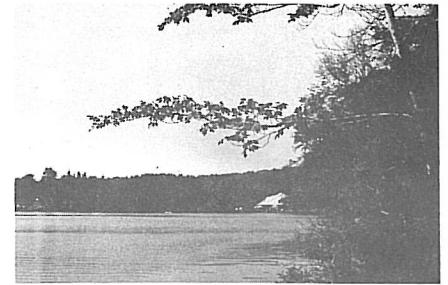
8:00-KATE CLINTON
9:00-WOMEN OF CALABASH
10:00-KAY GARDNER with C.T. and April

MC's KATE CLINTON, LINDA TILLERY, JULIA WILLIS

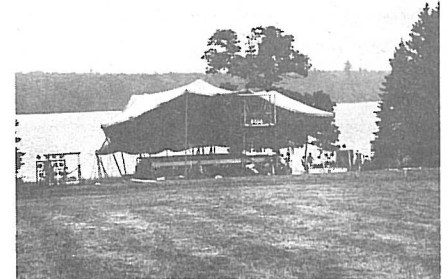
DAY STAGE PERFORMERS: Nancy Day • Robin Ferguson • Gayle Marie • The Girillias • Mev Miller • Ruth Pelham • Toshi Reagon • Denitra Vance • Sandra and Sharon Washington



Edwina Lee Tyler & a Piece of the World electrify NEWMR audiences.



Night stage as seen from the surrounding, private lake front.



The first NEWMR night stage, pre-fest, hoisted by the hands and muscle of women and women only.



Long-time folk singer and activist Odetta.



Who says on every parade a little rain must fall? In four years, this is the first rain during NEWMR weekend. Day stage activities moved into the long dining hall where Toshi Reagon made up for lost time.

All photos © 1984
by Darci Vanderhoff
& JoAnn Lynch

Chris Smithies

CALICO'S

The Women's Coffeehouse

Calico's was established to provide a fun, chemical free, safe, and inexpensive gathering place for women, and a supportive environment for all kinds of artists. Calico's is more of a women's cultural arts center than a coffeehouse.

I recall Opening Night on February 7, 1982, with a great deal of sentimentality. I was truly amazed that a small, dirty warehouse had been transformed into a simple but attractive gathering space, and best of all, women were streaming in the door. Yes, I had been worried that no one would show!

Calico's storefront space is a rectangular area, about 22' x 60', located in an older building. It is owned by a feminist who has been very generous in letting us use the space for little or no rent. Just before the clean-up effort began, fire broke out in the building. I was not sure how to interpret this sign, but I had learned that the building had formerly housed a prostitution business, so I figured the fire was meant to clean out the bad spirits of men who had done terrible things to women. On a practical level, the fire meant insurance money which was added to a gift of money I had received from a relative. The clean-up and start-up of Calico's were accomplished for about \$3,300 plus lots of help from Columbus women.

There was, indeed, a lot of dirty work. A major task was tuck pointing the brick wall that runs the length of one side of the space. I guessed that the job would be completed in a

weekend. It took six months. Now we refer to the wall as the "Judy Chicago Wall" -- so many women joined in the tuck pointing effort.

We also had to clean, install sinks, refinish furniture, sand, lay carpeting, paint, acquire a refrigerator, hang lights, and make curtains and pillows -- of calico print, of course! The name "Calico's" was the first of about 50 names that were suggested, and it was chosen because the word is associated with calico cats, which are beautiful and always female. We had to file corporation papers (Calico's is tax-exempt), deal with the health department, get a phone/answering service, and do publicity.

"Best of all, women were streaming in the door."

Within the space, there are no little tables with chairs. Instead, the space resembles and feels like a big living room. The seating capacity ranges from 50 (comfy) to 100 (squeezed in), and for concert events, most of the audience is seated on the floor.

Now that we have used the space for two and a half years, we feel that for some events we would certainly like a larger space with a considerably larger seating capacity. We'd like a more professional setting for performers. However, we like the fact that we have very

cheap, permanent space that we can control. And the size and versatility of the space are very appropriate for non-concert events, such as support groups, classes, and the gallery space.

The creation of a gallery space for women artists was very important to me, and Calico's has featured many exhibitions by a variety of artists. Some women have had the chance to present their first show in a supportive environment. More established artists have had the opportunity to exhibit their work in a women's space. Often, an exhibiting artist will feature a participatory experience in her opening, in an effort to reduce the distance between an artist and the audience. One of these experiences, by artist Suzie Shie, was tying together strips of cloth and creating a beautiful web throughout Calico's.

The coffeehouse space is used on weeknights for a variety of support groups and classes. Currently, there is a support group for Slightly Older Lesbians and another for mothers experiencing post-partum depression! There is a class on yoga and meditation, and in the past there have been programs on nutrition, self-defense, massage, and Kay Gardner's Music/Color/and Healing workshop. The space is also available to community groups for meetings, fund-raisers, celebrations, etc. When a group or class uses the space, usually the hat is passed, and the donations are given to Calico's. We stress community building. We are proud of Columbus being so active.

What about organizational structure, money, and production decisions? I am a veteran of collective process, but I knew that I really wanted to "take charge" of the Calico's project, and friends encouraged me to do just that. I believe that this individualistic approach worked because I have had years of experience in the Columbus community, and women wanted a coffeehouse as soon as possible! I must emphasize that lots of women have always helped with the work. I must also say that I expected to be confronted and criticized for at least some of my decisions, but with very few exceptions and to my delight, I received support, trust, and appreciation.

Financially, Calico's stays alive because local performers donate their door receipts. In the future, we hope that all performers will be paid. It has been great, however, that local performers have appreciated that there is a space in which they can have an audience, a good time, and acquire experience. Nancy Day, Haresuite, and Sharon & Sandra Washington have all given fine performances to home crowds at Calico's, and moved on to other stages.

It has been a pleasure to produce Kate Clinton, Nancy Brooks, Debbie Fier, and other performers when they were fairly new to the road. I believe that coffeehouses can be important stepping stones for performers. Coffeehouses can also provide a break from the big concert hall. Calico's has produced June Millington, Teresa Trull & Barbara Higbie, Kay Gardner, Casselberry & DuPree, Rhiannon & Mimi Fox, Robin Flower, and Betsy Lippitt. Maxine Feldman played for our first birthday celebration, and we enjoyed Alix Dobkin for Calico's second birthday.

All of our performers put up with inconveniences, such

as not having a dressing room, no baby grand, and smaller fees. Calico's tries to compensate for these inconveniences with good hospitality and a warm, friendly atmosphere.

Calico's makes very little money from concerts by touring artists, because we contract most of the door to the performer(s). However, our overhead and general expenses are low, workers and the coordinators are not paid, and concerts by local performers generate just enough money for Calico's to make it month to month. Calico's produces at least one fundraiser a year, and these have been well supported by our community. All of our events are produced with a sliding scale ticket price, and no woman is ever turned away. Our average ticket price is \$3.50. There are some events that are free or for only \$1.00.

For the future, it is hoped that more women will participate in the day-to-day operation of Calico's. Bobbi is planning to further develop the gallery space, and Calico's hopes to feature a show and lecture by Kate Millett. An artists' fund is being created that will enable Calico's to make small donations to local women who want to tour or pursue study in the arts. Bobbi is always trying to outdo herself by developing schedules of events that are revenue producing and so exciting that our community will not be able to take Calico's for granted.

Calico's is located at 47 W. Fifth Avenue, Columbus, OH 43201. The phone is (614) 299-2878. We extend a warm Midwest welcome to any woman who is passing through Columbus, and to all touring artists. Please visit us! ●

Coffeehouses can be an important stepping stone for performers.

A year ago I returned to graduate school and passed the coordination of Calico's to Bobbi Pedersen. Both she and I have tried to establish and motivate the Calico's Advisory Team (CAT), in an effort to share more of the decisions and responsibilities for Calico's. So far, our efforts have failed. It seems that Calico's depends on the efforts of "a leader" who is backed up with help from friends and the Women's Music Union, our local "big concert" production group. It has assisted with publicity, sound equipment rental, sound techs, and so on.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Chris Smithies has worked as a feminist for 10 years in the areas of production and women's culture, women's health, and women's studies. Currently, she is pursuing a doctorate in psychology.

COMING IN THE JULY ISSUE OF HOT WIRE

Teresa Trull & Barbara Higbie
Women Duos
Woman Sound
Elizabeth Cotton
How to Run a Coffeehouse
Women and Rock
and much, much more

Pioneering Women's Music in Montana

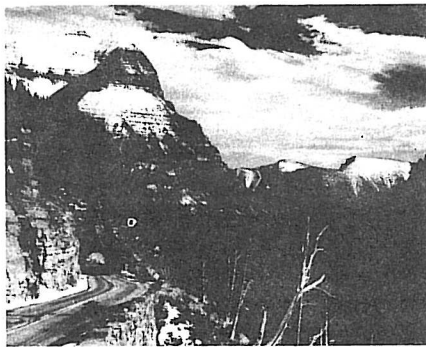
by Alexandra Swaney

Launching a women's band from Montana in the 1980s is an exercise in keeping the faith. Many of us who live here are addicted to the beauty, the clean air, good water, solitude, and space. These things do nourish the creative spirit. Montanans (there are only about 800,000 of us) are tough and self-reliant. You have to be when the temperature reaches 40° below zero outside, and you know you could die if your car stalls on the highway. Summers are paradise and winters are sometimes hell, and we talk about the weather a lot!

We also have a curious tradition: progressive and conservative at once. Montana elected the first woman to a legislative body anywhere in the world in 1916. Jeanette Rankin was a suffragist and a pacifist, and the only member of Congress to vote against U.S. entry into both World Wars.

But Montana's economic and political climate in the year of Reagan's so-called avalanche has cast a chill over many people who operate on marginal economies in the best of times. Even cowboy art is selling slowly these days. Being a musician who doesn't play country and western tunes, let alone a female musician, requires tenacity and stubbornness. People are always telling you how hard it is to make a living as an artist in Montana. And they're right. Only 2% of our people here do so. The figure is much

higher in the cities, especially on the coasts. Then they say, "Why don't you go to the city?" as if you're crazy to want to live here and be an artist. Actually, Montana is a favorite retreat for artists who have already made it in the outside world.



Montana's beauty: Going-to-the-Sun Highway in Glacier National Park, in northwest Montana, crosses the Continental Divide.

There are some advantages to being here besides the beauty, and one is what I call cultural space. With fewer performers around compared to the metropolitan areas, it seems like there is more space or motivation to do or be whatever one wishes. I came back to Montana in 1972 wondering if there was life after graduate school. I lived in a one-room cabin for two years, much as my grandmothers had, with no conveniences whatever (except the stream for "running water"). Always a music lover, I began to sing, play the guitar, and write my own songs. That simple time and space of solitude

and beauty was the seed of my professional career as a singer, writer, and keyboard player. The place does have a way of drawing dreams out of unsuspecting people.

Here in Montana, the beginning of what we now call women's culture or consciousness seems to have arisen in the mid 1970s. I was a part of that stage of its evolution, as a founding mother of a women's trio called Cheap Cologne. Once I met a woman who claimed to have started an all-women's band in the 1940s, but as far as I know, we were the only ones in Montana at that particular time. The two other founders (Willie Williams and Rhandi Rachlis) and I were part of the back-to-the-land migration that brought many people to Montana from urban centers after the "flower power" days. Somehow we three managed to find each other, discovered a mutual passion for music (and women), and settled down in some old buildings in a little mining town called Basin. We began to play together.

We rehearsed in a pottery studio and played Carter Family songs, Ellington tunes, blues, bossa nova, and original songs using our guitars and washtub bass. We worked in some pretty amazing situations. Once, when we were playing White's Bar on MacDonald Pass, 10 or 15 lesbians and some hippie men showed up to dance. The place was full of cowboys and loggers, and you could feel the vibes getting very heavy when the women began to dance together. "Keep playing, keep playing," I told myself through my fear. And sure enough, when I looked up again, one of the hippie men was dancing with one of the loggers. Music is so much more powerful than people imagine.

It wasn't long before Cheap Cologne was officially noticed by the women's community. At

E. Peterson

the Women Aware Conference in 1976 we opened for Meg Christian. That same year women's music and culture in Montana got an enormous boost from two Colorado immigrants. As Artemis Productions, Linda Whedbee and Mary McGilvray organized six annual Montana Women's Festivals. These festivals brought together women from all over the state, as well as headline performers from out-of-state. Cheap Cologne performed at every one of these Festivals, which were usually held in the most outrageously gorgeous places. That, combined with the high level of excitement, interesting workshops, good music, and wild women, made them irresistible.

By 1978, Linda Whedbee thought Cheap Cologne should try for the fifth National Women's Music Festival. She came to Basin and recorded us doing all original tunes except for "Wild Women," Ida Cox's great tune that Willie learned from her friend Ginni Clemmens. We performed on the mainstage at Champaign that year. It was incredibly exciting to find ourselves so well-received by so many women, and to be in the company of such fine performers as Holly Near, Alive!, and Linda Tillery.

When we returned to Montana that summer, we resolved to refine our musical abilities. We realized that in order to grow musically, we needed a drummer. We kept waiting for the perfect female drummer to materialize, but she kept on not being there. So finally we began to jam with a male drummer and his saxophone-playing roommate. We became an integrated blues and jazz band. We were sorry not to be a women's band any longer, but happy with the musical direction we were going and how we increased the instruments we could play. Cheap Cologne became a well-known regional band. We toured, and

in 1981 produced an album on our own label, Queen City Records. It received quite a bit of airplay.

At the same time, another band was emerging in Montana with some powerful women musicians. Beth Lo and Maureen Powell are the two singers/bass players for the Big Sky Mudflaps. The Flaps play vintage jazz and swing, have cut a couple of albums, and toured extensively including appear-

The place was full of cowboys and loggers, and you could feel the vibes getting heavy when the women began to dance together.

ances at national jazz festivals. Once in a while we would meet with each other and compare notes.

Touring was sometimes exciting, but it always seemed absurd to drive so far for the typical wages paid a road band. One year we played Vail, Colorado, four times. After the fourth 1800-mile roundtrip, the glamour had pretty well worn off. Our big break was supposed to be playing an audition for a job in Lake Tahoe, in the spring of 1983. Four days before the audition, as Willie and I were driving to a gig in Park City, Utah, a car crashed into our van. I broke an arm and a leg. But we went to the audition anyway, me stashed on top of the gear so my leg wouldn't

swell. After waiting around all day in Harvey's Stateline Casino with 15 other bands, we played the audition. The crowd loved us and we got the job, only to have it cancelled later when mudslides shut Tahoe down.

After the shock of the accident, I began to realize that I was also bummed out psychically and dried up musically. It was hard for me to measure success in terms of almost getting to play in a casino. I was tired of road life, little money, no time for creating and practicing, and the sexism that Willie and I nearly always faced. Rhandi, by the way, had long since retired to her secondhand store. It was hard to let go of something I had worked so hard at for seven years, but somehow it was my commitment to music and to myself that allowed me to do it. And so Cheap Cologne retired from public life, and I took a much-needed rest.

But not for long. Soon Willie and I began to play regularly with some women friends we'd been jamming with over the years: Marilyn Sternberg, Anne Appleby, and Melissa Kwasny. We had a common musical aesthetic, and before we knew it, the five of us had a new band. And this time, Willie and I got our wish: the others all played some sort of drums. We have been the Jane Finnigan Quintet for over a year now. Jane, by the way, is not in the band. We named it after a dear friend who lives in California. Together we sing and play six instruments, not including all the percussion. Our commitment is to make the best and most exciting music possible together, while projecting our strong female presence and communication with each other.

The women's community has been very supportive, and we've played benefit dances for several women's and peace organizations. Some clubs hire us. Some of them hire us because

we're an all-woman band, and some don't hire us for that reason. We probably could be playing more if we were in a more densely populated area, but we feel it's important to do what we are doing here, in this state (though we'll seize any opportunity to do it elsewhere, too, and leave the state for a time if necessary to expand our audience).

Even though there are frustrations involved, our satisfactions are great. As children, most of us rarely saw women musicians, and we're delighted to be the role models we never had. Working together with friends who really care about projecting positive energy is a rare opportunity.

Jane Finnegan would definitely like to be one of Montana's quality exports. Soon we will have a product to sell. I recently received a grant from a local arts organization to finance a 45 of two of my songs

played by the JFQ. We'll record them at Basin Street Sound, the recording/rehearsal studio dream space that Willie and I have just finished in the old storefront building where we live. The JFQ is looking at a spring tour of the Northwest and at beginning to produce an album in the next year.

Looking back over the last eight years makes me proud to be a pioneering woman musician here. I'm proud of surviving and growing as a musician, proud that I'm still putting out good sounds and heart energy for people, and working and learning with other women. My goal is to be the finest artist and musician I can be, and to help other women do the same. **That's power. ●**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Alexandra Swaney has been a professional musician for eight years, holds a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from the University of Colorado, is strongly committed to lesbian feminist politics and has worked as a writer in the environmental movement in Montana.



(Left to right) Alexandra Swaney, Anne Appleby, Melissa Kwasny, Marilyn Sternberg, Willie Williams.

Nan Parsons

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Alix Dobkin

THE OLD GIRLS NETWORK

As I was travelling between Bloomington and North Georgia last Memorial Day weekend, an older woman sat beside me on the Atlanta airport shuttle. I offered to proceed to her destination with her, since it was on my way. It was clear to me that this conventional-looking woman was not used to travelling alone. We struck up a conversation. Remarking about the guitar I was carrying, she asked if I was on my way to a concert. I told her that I was en route between two women's music festivals.

"You mean there are no men there?" she asked.

"No," I answered, although a few men do attend the National Women's Music Festival concerts.

She stopped in her tracks. Then she stepped back, looked curiously but directly into my eyes for a long moment, and said, "Well, it's about time!"

She's right. It's about time that women come up with local and national structures to serve special needs of women (including the need to be apart from men). And indeed, this is what we've done, wrenching alliances from more than ten years of intense, groundbreaking personal interactions, consisting (in equal parts) of exhilaration and devastation. Working together during the past decade, we have put together a women's cultural industry, an open, inclusive, and expanding network of resources and support systems. We have a performance circuit: coffee-houses and producers, bookers, and technicians. We have a distribution network [NOTE: See

WILD article in this issue] of bookstores and record distributors. There are publishers, and women with graphic talents, promotional skills, and a whole spectrum of woman-identified artistry and abilities.

They considered me to be "unfeminist, unsisterly, and downright rude."

Women in the women's cultural industry are bonded by our commitment to women, to our culture, and by forces compelling us to make known our love of women. We are bonded by ten or so years of the combined efforts of hundreds of us who have been willing and capable of devoting significant attention and labor to the creation and presentation and documentation of a living art which speaks to women as women. We do this for little money and lots of love.

Our network has developed into a structure uniquely suited to putting out inspiring and empowering ideas and values through cultural channels. To accomplish a woman-centered alternative to mainstream pop culture in a hostile atmosphere, where passive consumerism and "culture" are synonymous, and where high-powered "show biz" values have cornered "entertainment," is extraordinary.

The Old Girls Network now has over ten years of experience. We are constructing our own traditions so that we can operate within a context. Having sorted through and clarified some basic assumptions ("feminism," "anti-Semitism," and "racism" are three of a number of issues), we have learned who "we" are and some of what we can expect from each other. There is a new sense of ourselves in the general scheme of this network.

It certainly never occurred to me in 1973 when Lavender Jane Loves Women was released that in 10 years "women's music" would be celebrated at Carnegie Hall, and that the evening would attract a tuxedo-clad audience of thousands of lesbians from coast to coast. In 1973 all I knew was that women's culture was destined to change women's lives by the millions. And radically. We had no forms to accomplish this, but Kay Gardner and I had our own ideas. It was hard to make it work for us, but it was still a good dream. Moreover, it has turned into an even better reality than Kay and I could possibly have imagined. How could we have predicted, then, the number and variety of similarly motivated individuals, many of whom we would come to know over the next decade?

And what a thrill it is to get to know associates over the course of these years, meeting women while on tour and at the festivals, becoming familiar with more and more individuals on each subsequent occasion. It is

wonderful to build closer connections with women in the biz, to ride the land shuttle at the Michigan festival and later have the driver produce my concerts in her hometown, states away.

Increasingly we have gotten to know and care for each other, because together we have survived the challenges of creating an industry out of nothing but talent, love, time, and labor. The confrontations we have had over the years have not destroyed the network; we've come through them.

In 1976 at my first concert in Woodstock, New York, I requested that non-lesbians leave for one last song. It was a new one called "My Lesbian Wars" and I felt uncomfortable singing it to straight women. Needless to say, such a request did not go unchallenged. Shortly after the Woodstock show I received a petition signed by 14 or so local women who considered me to be "unfeminist, unsisterly, and downright rude." Some of those women are now extremely dear friends, including River Lightwmoon. She organized the letter, later played drums on XX Alix, and now plays with me and Debbie Fier in Party Line Dance Band.

We have all come a long way and are no longer babies. We have gradually learned to cooperate better. We have our annual conference at the National Festival every spring. The Music Industry Conference is four days of workshops and meetings in which we discuss what we do and how we can better work together to guarantee success for all of the businesses involved. We discuss our communities' needs, as well as national trends.

One of the best aspects of our Old Girls Network is the practical ways in which we can act as resources for each other. For years I didn't realize just how much help a distributor is in terms of concert promotion

and publicity contacts. Party Line recently did a show produced by the band Abyss in their hometown of Kalamazoo. Through their experience with these dances, they became more and more aware of their technical resources, and when we left them they were seriously contemplating making sound production a business. In turn, I was happy to share with them the names of producers I know in other areas of the country.



Deena Romoff

"We are bonded by our commitment to women, to our culture, and by forces compelling to us to make known our love of women."

Personal connections can't be underestimated. Women's networks operate largely by word-of-mouth. Individual networks are generating rapidly. Women's Music Plus directory lists over 700 contacts, and is updated continually. These names, addresses, and phone numbers are us -- active feminists and lesbians in every state who are making women's culture happen. A quick glance through any women's publication with ads and a calendar page reveals that cultural festivals, retreats, conferences, excursions, adventures, sports, discussion groups, and other ongoing projects are proliferating. It seems inevitable that someday soon the

various networks will connect to deliver the forces for which this weary world has been waiting for thousands of years. We are beginning to circulate the most subversive, revolutionary, and truly effective information ever to hit the consciousness of our planet.

I believe that this results in part from a generally emerging cultural permission for women to love and bond with each other. Pop culture minimizes (or erases) overt eroticism between women even as it exploits its deep impact. Few subjects evoke the intense universal response that women's attraction to women evokes. It particularly fascinates women as well as males of the straight persuasion.

Thanks to the women's movements we can now take ourselves and each other more seriously. We are, according to large segments of pop media recently, entitled to be proud to be female without being regarded with considerable alarm. Mass media must at least pretend to take women seriously, as female consumers are becoming increasingly assertive. The write-in campaign to get "Cagney & Lacey" back on TV showed that women desire positive images in the media, and are willing to speak up.

In the last decade, the visibility of non-traditional images of women has been increasing. This includes mainstream publications like Ms., and the media coverage of women's rights issues (ERA, affirmative action, pro-choice, anti-rape). The entertainment industry has been capitalizing on the trend, slowly but definitely. Girls growing up now see Grace Jones, Cyndi Lauper, and Annie Lennox on the videos. They watch "Kate & Allie" and "Cagney & Lacey" on TV. There are movies like Lianna and Personal Best, widely distributed and seen by the movie-going public. There are

commercials in which women are portrayed in hardhats and as executives, as other than passive. Though the images are not always what we would choose if we totally controlled the media, the visibility of non-traditional women has tremendous impact.

A qualitative first step has been taken in raising the mass consciousness of women. The gradual acceptance of options for women is creating a new dimension to move in. It is my conviction that to one degree or another, women in general are newly ready to hear our message and to move deeper into woman-identification. This is an environment which makes it possible for us to save our planet from male destruction. The severity of the situation might account for the urgency, the intensity of our connections, the passion we bring to our politics, our romances, and our businesses. It explains why Old Girls Networks have sprung up and are rapidly expanding in every field of interest and area of work where women participate. There are millions of women who don't even know how ready they are to hear us.

Our art and culture, by-for-and-about-women, has a major role to develop. Music and humor reach otherwise inaccessible places. That is what art does. Over the past dozen years a network has grown up around our art, and has developed into a vital and vibrant industry, ready and willing as always, but now, finally, able to change women's lives by the millions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

"Argumentative...trouble maker...dissenter..." says the dossier on Alix Dobkin in the files from the FBI. Her girlfriend says that she is nosy and likes to get her own way. Alix says all of this is true. She is also the mother of a "gorgeous, fabulous fourteen-year-old daughter." Whenever possible, she lectures to high school and college audiences on "Women-Hating, Racism, and Violence in the Top 40," a mixed media presentation of popular music.

WOMEN'S MUSIC NETWORK RESOURCES

Women's Music Plus Directory of resources, 1321 W. Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660 (312) 275-6512. \$5. 700+ listings of names, phone numbers, addresses, descriptions specifically for the women's music and culture circuit.

HOT WIRE: A Journal of Women's Music and Culture, 1321 Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660 (312) 275-6512. Subscription \$14. Published three times a year.

Annual Index of Women's Media, Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross NW, Washington, D.C. 20008 (202) 966-7783. \$8.

Feminist Periodicals: Current Listings of Contents, Susan Searing, Women's Studies Librarian, 112-A Memorial Library, 728 State, Madison, WI 53706 (608) 263-5754. \$12 per year.

Ladyslipper Music Catalog and Resource Guide, P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705 (919) 683-1570. Largest collection in the world of recordings by women.

Women's Music Archives, Kim Kimber, 208 Wildflower, Fairfield, CT 06430. Collecting, preserving, sharing women's music materials and memorabilia.

Lesbian Herstory Archives, P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10116 (212) 874-7232. National archives to preserve lesbian culture.

Feminist Writers' Guild, P.O. Box 9396, Berkeley, CA 94709 (415) 624-3692. National organization for women who take their writing seriously. Directory to local chapters available.

Roadwork East, 1475 Harvard NW, Washington, D.C. 20009 (202) 234-9308.

Roadwork West, P.O. Box 3505 S. Berkeley, CA 94703. National organization that does tour coordination and acts as a resource for women's and progressive culture.

Sistersingers Network, Linda Ray, 7426 Melrose, Shawnee, KS 66203 (913) 631-3406. Women's choirs and choruses.

WILD, Denise Notzon, 1450 Sixth, Berkeley, CA 94710 (415) 527-7545. Women's Independent Label Distributors.

Women in Print, c/o Metis Press, P.O. Box 25187, Chicago, IL 60625 (312) 929-4883. National network of publishers, printers, and publications.

Women in Film, 8489 3rd, Los Angeles, CA 90048 (213) 651-3680. Women in film, cable, and TV industries.

Women's Land Directory, Ambitious Amazons, P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48823. More than 60 groups.

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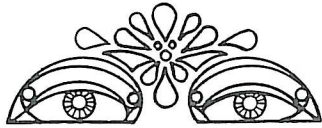
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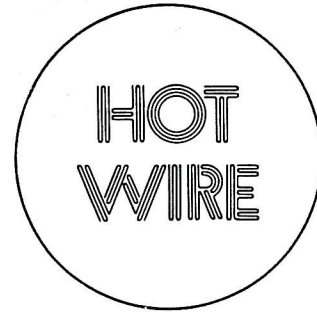


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Taking the Plunge

by Hunter Davis

Choosing music as a career involves a great deal of time, money, energy, and frustration, but once you make the decision (provided you survive it), you will be more than repaid. I recently took the plunge, and I've been and still am "paying my dues." I'd like to share some of what I've learned.

It amazes me how many of us who are musicians completely disregard the fact that music is a profession as well as a business. When one undertakes a career in any other field, such as medicine or law, there is a certain amount of education that is required before one can practice that trade. Would you want someone who merely "has a dream" of becoming a doctor to operate on you? If you have a dream of becoming a professional musician, take responsibility for it! Do your homework. Set aside a certain block of time and call it "dues paying time." In that time, don't expect to make money, expect to spend it. Set realistic goals for that period, after which you can evaluate your progress and decide whether or not you want to continue. For example, let's say you are 24 years old, a fair guitar player, an okay songwriter, and a great singer. Your performance experience consists of playing in Mayberry, North Carolina, on your front porch, for MaryLou. Your goals are to be a hip guitar player, a better writer, and the world's greatest singer. You would also like to have your

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



Irene Young

During your dues-paying time, don't expect to make money. Expect to spend it.

own record someday. First, decide how much time you will need to accomplish each objective. You might break it down for yourself like this: "For one year I will take guitar lessons, attend writing workshops, and write 12 songs. I will also take voice lessons, and listen to as many different artists as I can."

Face it, friend, all this requires full-time commitment. You'll have to leave the front porch for the bright lights of local coffeehouses and clubs. Don't push yourself too hard. At first, you may want to play gigs in three cities other than Mayberry. MaryLou will probably become your road manager. In spite of all these changes, remember, and keep remembering, that these steps are investments in your career.

I cannot overstress the importance of realizing your limitations. Recently, I have been studying voice with Judy Davis, who coaches Barbra Streisand, Mary Martin, Journey, Jefferson Airplane, and many other successful singers. I have worked with her for three months, and to this day I haven't sung once in class! She teaches us to regard our voices as instruments, showing us how to take care

of ourselves, how to be objective, and to know what we can and can't do. Studying with Judy has saved me from developing vocal nodules, which I was well on the way to getting. Why? Because I could only play the guitar in certain keys which were, in many cases, too high for me. Do you know what keys are good for you? I didn't, but you can bet I do now. Realize your limitations, and be objective about yourself.

Expect to pay for lessons and professional advice. We'd all like a record label to come along and take care of us, but to begin with, you will be doing it all. Get counseling on everything from business taxes to booking. You may need to consider relocating, just like going to college or moving up any other professional ladder.

My uncle, an Episcopal minister, told me, "You know, Hunter, there's not much difference between what you do and what I do. We're paid to perform a service and to entertain. For the length of time we're on stage we must give the audience something to take home with them. The secret is to have something people want or need. Then they will be excited about coming to see it." Amen, uncle. To be a successful performer you must know your au-

Continued on p. 60

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Hunter Davis is a singer, songwriter, and guitarist. She has recently appeared at NEWMR, the NWME and the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. She composes and performs music with the simplicity and directness of her North Carolina heritage. Hunter's most recent album is Girl's Best Friend, on Hunter Records.

BEHIND THE SCENES

by Lucy Diamond

Since the beginning of time in women's music distribution there has been BETSY YORK. For more than 10 years, Betsy has developed an intimate bi-coastal understanding of women's music distribution and the marketplace. She began in 1974 in the Boston area, where she still owns Women's Music Distribution Co. In 1980, she returned to her home in Los Angeles and began distributing in southern California. She was hired at this time to be Redwood Records' L.A. warehouse. In 1984, she moved to Oakland and became the national distribution and marketing manager for Redwood. Betsy sold her southern California business, but has remained available to the new owner on a consultation basis. Presently she is taking a personal time out, but continues as owner of her Boston company.

In the fall of 1973, Betsy began producing a series of concerts at a local women's bar. She received a call from a woman who had a friend in Washington, DC who wanted to perform in Boston. This woman wanted to play two nights. Betsy thought that anyone who imagined she would need two nights was worth a try. That performer was Meg Christian. When Meg opened her set with "Hello Hooray," Betsy became an official convert. Betsy kept in touch with the goings-on at Olivia Records. When they decided to create their own distribution network, Betsy asked to be the distribu-

tor for Boston. Her first record sale was the 45 Meg and Cris made in 1974. She recalls wondering then if she should return to L.A. to be a distributor; six years later she did.

Money is not what has kept Betsy in women's music. In fact, the reality of owning a



Betsy York

distribution business is that a return on your investment is not seen for many years. In order to be successful, distributors must work constantly to maintain their territories. Each year has shown growth in distribution and sales, a result of incredible work. Betsy is concerned about how distributors are viewed by their communities. If a distributor appears to be reaching self-sufficiency, she may be viewed as a capitalist, no matter what her political convictions are. If concerts are successful in a territory thanks to the record promotions done by the distributor for the performers, the distributor must many times haggle with producers for the right to sell at the concerts. Betsy hopes that in

the next 10 years, distributors will be acknowledged positively for having well-run and profitable businesses in the women's music industry. She says, after gaining a national perspective from her work with Redwood, "Our outstanding distribution system has been the key to the success of women's music."

In 1977, BARBARA BORDEN saw Cris Williamson, Margie Adam, Holly Near, and Meg Christian in concert. Shortly thereafter she saw Margie in concert again, and this time she had five other women instrumentalists with her. Barbara's reaction was twofold: inspiration (from all those women performing together), and anger (because she wasn't one of the performers). Thus sparked the rebirth of Barbara's career in music, and her journey into the women's music network. Barbara had not performed since 1969, but these two events were exactly the push she needed.

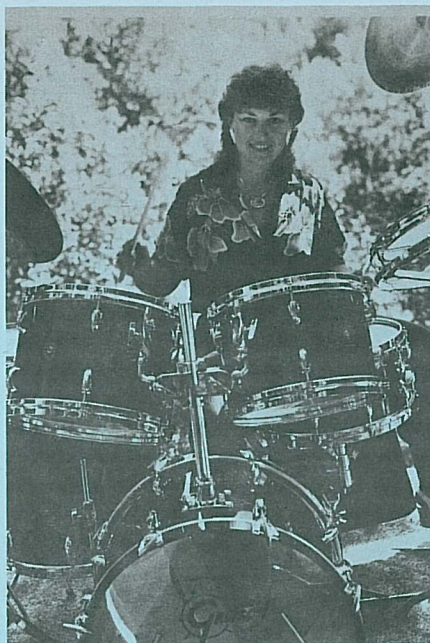
Barbara is currently the woman behind the drums for the jazz quintet Alive!, which has three albums and tours from coast to coast. When not busy with the band, Barbara freelances in the studio and live with performers like Mary Watkins, Margie Adam, Linda Tillery, Terry Garthwaite, and Meg Christian. In 1978, before joining Alive!, Barbara played on and off with Jerene Jackson's band. She met Rhiannon at a gig, and when Alive! decided to hire a drummer for their U.S. tour, they asked Barbara to audition. Janet Small

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.

was also hired then, and they still joke about it. "The only reason Janet and I were hired is because we both agreed to assume the loan payment the other Alives had incurred in order to take us on tour." For the past six years, ever since that tour, women's music fans have had the pleasure of experiencing the talent Barbara brings to those drums.

What keeps Barbara in the women's music network is "a commitment to honesty and quality" in her music. The network has given her the opportunity to express herself in these areas. She feels strongly about freedom of choice, and has found her experience with Alive! and women's music provides that.

Of all the positive experiences Barbara has gained, the music festivals top her list.



Barbara Borden

"To see women working together, trying to create situations that are beneficial to us all" has been a vital part of the network's success. She has observed a great diversification in the types of music being played. In the early days, there was a folk-music orientation. Now it's progressed to include rock, new wave, country, jazz, bluegrass, gospel, classical, pop, and reggae.


Along with being a dynamic and sensitive drummer, Barbara has given numerous percussion workshops, booked two tours for Alive!, and has endorsements with Gretsch Drums and Zildjian Cymbals. At the age of 10 Barbara made the decision to play drums. Lucky for us! ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Lucy Diamond has been involved in the women's music network since 1974. She has done concert production, booking, and record distribution.

Karen Beth

the edge of the horizon



Karen Beth

The Edge of the Horizon


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The Do-It-Yourself Agent

by Kay Gardner

It's not that I wanted to be my own agent, booking my own concerts, pulling together my own press kits, arranging my own travel schedules, and negotiating my fees with producers. I mean, where's the time to make music if the business is bogging you down and demanding so much of your time?

In the world of mainstream music, be it classical, country, jazz, or pop, an agent does all of the above work for the artist and in return gets 10%-20% of the artist's gross earnings. This isn't so bad if you can command a fee of \$1,000 or more, but what if your fee is under \$500, or if you have to pay your own travel expenses, or if you play mostly coffee-houses for a percentage of the door charge? Having an agent as a musician in an alternative music industry (an industry not based on a high profit motive), while very helpful, can be a luxury.

Granted, some musicians are very flaky about business dealings and may need someone to pull together all the details for them, but an artist who ignores the details completely may be in for a rude awakening later. To paraphrase Katharine Hepburn, my only failures have been in situations where I have not been in control.

I went through three and a half booking agents before deciding that I could and should do it myself.

From 1976-1978 my lover was doing my bookings and was doing a beautiful job of it. After all, who could extoll my



artistic virtues and uniqueness to potential producers and come off with total sincerity better than someone who loved me? Unfortunately, our relationship started crumbling in 1977. With the dissolution of our personal life together, our business relationship also suffered irreparable damage. Because we could no longer communicate, we separated, and I was without an agent and therefore without gigs! Lesson One: Nothing is forever; beware of entering into business relationships with lovers.

Later, in 1978, the record company I was with found an experienced East Coast concert producer who believed in my work enough to do tour bookings. She booked a very successful spring tour, but in July she fell in love and was so wrapped up in her new affair that she "forgot" to book my fall tour! No fall tour, no winter mortgage payments. Thank goodness (or the Democrats) for food stamps and heat assistance. Lesson Two: Be sure that your agent is emotionally stable.

An artist acquaintance suggested that she be my booking agent in 1980. After six weeks of sending letters to no response and refusing to use the phone, she quit in frustration.

Lesson Three: Be sure your agent is neither phonephobic nor unwilling to foot an initially large phone bill.

Finally, in 1981, I met a Cincinnati woman who was retiring from a job with a huge corporation. She was enthusiastic about my music, and she wanted to start a women's music booking agency. I would be her first client. After discussing all the details, I went off to Ireland on a much-needed three-week vacation while she arranged a six-week fall tour for me. When I returned with only a week to repack and prepare to go on the road, I found that not only had she booked just two concerts for me, but she'd neglected to arrange for travel advances and the first gig was 1,500 miles away. Not only that, she'd decided that the booking business was not her cup of tea and had moved, new address unknown. Lesson Four: Be in constant touch with your agent, or expect communication and enthusiasm to falter.

It's called "live and learn." It was after contemplating the 36-hour bus ride to Madison, Wisconsin that I threw up my hands and resigned myself to doing my own bookings. I'd paid enough dues entrusting my career to others; now it was time to sell myself.

Deciding that I'd like to go to the West Coast from Wisconsin, I plotted (with road atlas by my side) a course from Los Angeles to Seattle via towns and cities serviced by Greyhound Bus. I looked up production companies and bookstores

in Toni Armstrong's We Shall Go Forth directory [now called Women's Music Plus] and Gaia's Guide, figured out dates, and began phoning: "Hi, this is Kay Gardner." Here name-recognition through my early recordings was invaluable.

I told them, "I'm going to be travelling through your area on such-and-such dates and would like to do a concert and possibly a workshop for your community. I realize this is very short notice, so I'll provide posters and will split the door charge 50/50 with you." Virtually everyone bought it (such a deal!), and I soon had a tour of 13 communities. Concerts were held in bookstores for audiences of 35, in churches seating 300, and in spaces sized in between. Workshops were scheduled in more than half of the cities. I made enough money to pay my mortgage through the winter and purchase an airline ticket back to Maine. A generous Michigan producer gave me a bonus, and my winter wood was paid for. All in all, the relative ease of booking this tour gave me the confidence to be my own agent.

The above-described tour was almost a fluke. My guardian angels must have been looking after me. To arrange a successful tour under normal conditions takes careful planning and organizing. Also, an initial investment of several hundred dollars is necessary. I suggest the following plan of action:

(1) Honestly evaluate who your audiences are. Women only? Lesbians only? Women and men? Folk clubs? Bars? Colleges? Coffeeshouses? Churches? Invest in the resources listed at the end of this article. Go to the library and get college guides with addresses of student activities directors. Go to your local Metropolitan Community Church or Unitarian-Universalist Church and borrow a list of their churches nationwide. These

churches are always open to making space available to women's, lesbian, and other alternative events.

(2) Decide where you'd like to tour. If driving, plot your tour with a road atlas. If you are booking a band or a group and must work often to make anything, you'll need to move along from city to city at a fairly brisk pace, but do plan a couple of days off every week to 10 days. Being on the road is exhausting work! If, on the other hand, you're a soloist, you might want to spend two or three days in each community. This is a wonderful way to make lasting friends (and sponsors), and to serve your function as minstrel and cultural worker, for only by getting a feel of the community (by spending time there) can you have constructive information to share with other communities.

If you'll be flying, get a good travel agent who understands and accepts your limited musician's budget and who

knows about the special unlimited mileage airline fares.

If you don't like travelling and/or meeting people, you are in the wrong business!

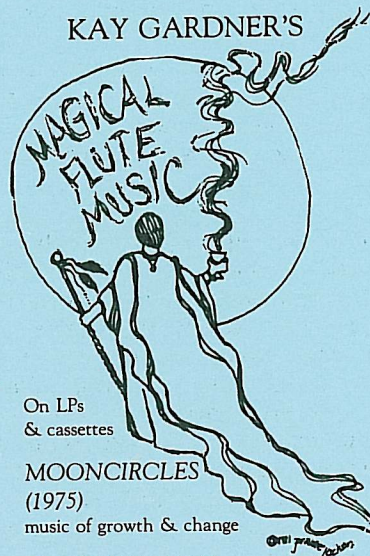
(3) Have a good studio-quality demo tape made of your best material. This is important if you don't already have name-recognition or a professional recording. If you have a dance, theater, mime, or comedy act to sell, make a studio-quality videotape, preferably in a live-performance setting.

(4) Prepare a brochure or biography sheet. It should be neat, clean, and simple. 8½" x 11" format is good. Include briefly-stated background experience and photos/graphics of you in action. Use short quotes from established artists, reviews, and articles about you and your work. Don't forget your return address and phone number. If you can afford it, have the text typeset and the layout done by an experienced graphic artist. A lot of us like to do this work ourselves, as it is creative and fun. See the resources for a how-to manual.

(5) Write letters to your potential sponsors. On your own business stationery, preferably designed with a unique, relevant, eye-catching logo or graphic, state who you are, when you'll be in the targeted area, what your fee is (but be sure to say that it's negotiable), and that you'll call them in two to four weeks to follow up.

(6) Allow enough time. If you don't have name-recognition, send the cover letter, brochure, and demo tape at least three months before your tour. Sponsors need two months to do adequate preparation and publicity. Agree in advance about

Continued on p. 61



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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, including the New England Women's Symphony, Wise Women Enterprises, Urana/Even Keel Records, and extensive recording and performing.

The Women In Print Movement

by Nancy Poore
with Jorjet Harper

"The power of the press belongs to her who owns the presses." This slogan has appeared on feminist posters, reprints, and postcards. It's usually quoted as a witticism, but it says something very real about the situation of women who are trying to get their own, and each other's, words and images into print. Unless you control all the equipment necessary to get your material printed -- and that takes a lot of money -- you can never be sure that you won't be censored by the people who do.

Before women began their own printing and publishing, feminists and lesbians had no choice but to take their work to male printers, some of whom would sabotage it by printing things upside down or by leaving out pages. In some cases they would refuse to print it: you might leave your stuff and come back in a week to pick it up only to find that the job hadn't been done at all. They'd say, "This is a decent family establishment. We don't print this kind of trash," after they had pored over every word. I'm talking about lit, politics, etc.

There have been isolated cases of women being publishers and owning presses. Virginia Woolf co-owned Hogarth Press from 1917-1937, and published works by T.S. Eliot as well as her own. Sylvia Beach, owner

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, and the interface between writing and the other arts.



Nancy Poore in Iowa City at the cutter, trimming copies of *Bernice, A Comedy in Letters*.

of the 1920s bookstore "Shakespeare & Company," was the publisher of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. These were not really "feminist" ventures, let alone lesbian feminist, and these women did have a women-in-print network for support.

Starting more than ten years ago, from slightly sub-zero, the Women In Print movement has been gradually building, to support women's efforts to do their own printing, bookselling, and publishing, and to promote cohesion and awareness among women in these trades. This includes women in other print-related fields as well: distributors, librarians, archivists. So far we don't have any large presses or big printing plants, but we are working to keep our network growing, and keep our communication strong. This is especially important when we work alone or in isolated groups in so many scattered communities around the country.

The first meeting of WIP took place in Omaha in 1976. The largest WIP meeting so far, a national one in Washington, DC in 1981, attracted around 200 participants. There will be

another national conference this June in San Francisco.

Printers, publishers, periodicals, and bookstores (along with wholesale distributors and book clubs) now make up the main categories of WIP. It has been a major job, and sometimes a contentious one, to define and clarify the nature and purposes of each of these categories distinctly, and the relationships between them. For example, the terms "print" and "publish" are loosely interchanged in common usage, even by some women in the literary trades. But a publisher is someone who arranges for the production, financing, and usually the promotion and marketing of a publication. Period. Publishers may or may not have printing facilities. Nowadays they seldom do. A printer is someone who operates a printing press. A press is a machine or device which applies inked images to paper. This is where we get into misunderstandings within WIP, and see educational challenges in dealing with the reading public. Many of us feel that our resources must be explained and our conflicts resolved before we can really move any further ahead on a large enough scale. "Large enough" means large enough to have real power of the press, to be looked upon as more than a hobby, an underground avocation, a costly indulgence.

The big commercial presses, because of the size and speed of their machinery, save a lot of money in unit cost. Since the feminist audience is still small, feminist publishers must

Considering the Options

by Gayle Marie

Are you, at this point in your musical life, contemplating recording your songs? I recently finished my second album, and I've learned that there are several options to consider. Not everyone will be in a position to do an album.

Making well-informed choices right from the beginning will save you future time and money. These guidelines are not intended to be complete instructions on how to proceed. Be clear in advance about your budget and your goals, and choose accordingly.

MAKING A 45

My first 45rpm recording was "Stormy Nights." The main goal of that project was to generate interest and money to make the album Night Rainbow. The second 45, "Double Talk," is also promotional, but this time the goal is slightly different. I will include them in press kits, help the distributors get the songs on jukeboxes, and send them to radio stations and newspapers. It will promote my new album and my tours.

Enter into the making of a 45 with the idea of using it as a promotional tool to further your career. Having a money-making hit would be wonderful, but realistically most record stores won't carry 45s by unknown artists, and the odds are against getting lots of airplay.

Find two songs you like the best, and plan on 10-20 hours

MAKING TRACKS features information about recording and issues pertaining to the recording industry.



"Enter into the making of a 45 with the idea of using it as a promotional tool."

in the studio. Use 8, 16, or 24 tracks depending on the depth of your production. Always make and keep a $\frac{1}{4}$ " safety (duplicate) tape.

A lot of the expense will depend on whether you choose a plain white sleeve or one with elaborate cover art. The cost can vary as much as \$600-\$900 depending on what you choose.

For \$1,500 or less, 45s are not a bad way to go.

CASSETTES

Recording your songs on cassettes is an excellent choice for a first recording if you have the material and the budget. Count on 10 hours per song, including mix down. I advise that you over-budget by about 10% to avoid being caught unawares by hidden costs that creep up at unforeseen moments.

As with an album, you must decide if you want a simple production (voice and piano) or an entire band. The more complex the project, the more you

may want to hire a producer. You should choose someone who has your best interests at heart, someone whose musical sense you respect. Mary Watkins produced and did musical arrangements for Night Rainbow and Double Talk. It is a great relief working with a good producer, someone to share all the tasks and who can supply that "extra something" to an otherwise basic arrangement.

The cost of your cassette will range from the low to very high thousands, so plan well, and know the market you want to hit. Cassettes will not sell themselves, so find a good distributor, booking agent, and manager, and take it on the road.

ALBUMS

Recording an album on vinyl (with or without cassettes) continues to be the most advantageous way to proceed once you have developed an audience. Everyone would like her first album to be a smash, with lots of airplay, great reviews, and fantastic sales. Some people have had success with their first attempts, but be prepared for any outcome. There are some things you can do to push things in your favor, though.

Night Rainbow is selling slowly and steadily. I fully expect Double Talk to sell much better right from the start. Of

Continued on p. 59

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Gayle Marie currently lives in the Bay Area. She has performed at several major women's music festivals.

RECORDING continued from p. 58
 course now I have developed more of an audience since I have toured and performed at national festivals. In addition to this, I've made some business decisions that will help: I have specifically hired someone to promote this album, another woman to book tours, and I'm working with Icebergg Records, Inc. These people are enthusiastically supporting Double Talk, and believe in good marketing.

One book that helped me was How to Make and Sell Your Own Recording, by Diane Sward Rappaport.

Understand before you start that you need thousands of dollars to do this project. It can cost up to \$30,000. It took 100 hours of studio time for Night Rainbow and 130 for Double Talk. The album jacket is essential, especially if you have little audience exposure, so hire good photographers and graphic artists, people as good as the musicians you hire.

Getting you and your record on the road is a part of the age-old tradition of touring. Find a good booking agent who is enthusiastic about your music, and work with the distributors. Get out and perform, gather names for your mailing list, find financial backing. It's back-breaking work, I assure you!

Give yourself a year or more to organize the project well and get it in motion. At the top of list should be: don't ever lose sight of your goal. Go for it.

[Editor's note: See "Remember, Vinyl is Permanent" by Ann Reed in this issue.] ●

HONEY continued from p. 21

And loved they are, especially in their home community of Washington, DC where the members of the group all work or go to school and, in some cases, have family responsibilities. Sweet Honey performs at benefits, rallies, church functions, and other Washington events, securing its local base while simultaneously expanding its reach across the country and around the world. The group has performed for sell-out crowds in New York, Boston, Detroit, Hollywood, and Japan. [Editor's note: Sweet Honey has driven women's music festival audiences wild every time they have appeared on festival stages.]

People hearing Sweet Honey know they are experiencing something new and different. What they may not know is that the tradition expressed in a Sweet Honey in the Rock performance is a contemporary statement in a long continuum of black music.

"It seems to have worked for us," explains Reagon, "to be solidly within the tradition of black unaccompanied singing, which has its roots in Africa. We're pushing it forward into a new time, a new day."

Since 1980, Sweet Honey (which the group refers to as "she") has pushed forward into a new area, adding a sign language interpreter. Shirley Childress Johnson does more than translate the words of the songs. She harnesses the strength of her body to convey the feeling as well, transforming her hands into a different kind of voice emanating from the concert stage.

Another stage for Sweet Honey

Another stage for Sweet Honey is recording their sound. Their fourth and most recent album, We All...Everyone of Us, was produced by Evelyn Harris on the Flying Fish label.

"People who play us are making a political statement in their stations," according to Reagon. This may account for their recordings not being heard by the mass radio audiences.

But their reputation has grown despite these types of obstacles. "When I first saw

Sweet Honey I thought they were the baddest group I had ever seen," says current member Yasmeen Williams. "I didn't realize that they didn't have instruments until they were almost through. I felt like they could hold any stage."

That hasn't changed. ●

ALIVE! continued from p. 20

difference in the sound of the group. But there is still that consistent thread running through the music that has been there from the start: spontaneity, communication on-stage as well as with the audience, spirit, and a positive hopefulness that most aptly creates "Aliveness!"

As a business, Alive! also undergoes constant change. The management, booking, and record company are all in one office in San Francisco now instead of being spread from coast to coast. Alive!'s new director and business manager is Deborah Klein. Each member of the band has participated in all aspects of the business. They feel it is important to understand how it functions. However, with this more efficient staff, Alive! members look forward to being able to concentrate more on their true love -- music.

Future plans: recording album #4, more touring in the spring and summer (hopefully internationally), and a general campaign to reach even more people with their music. The group feels a strong sense of doing their best: pushing the limits, being spontaneous, being open to the creative spark that flows through each of us. In other words, being most Alive! ●

personally and professionally.

WILD distributors share ideas and information with each other and with producers, artists, labels, and bookers. With cultivated media, and social and political contacts, distributors are valuable resources, acting as information clearinghouses in the women's music and culture network. They meet annually at the Music Industry Conference, held at the National Women's Music Festival in Indiana. 1985 is the third year that the distributors' conference is an official part of the National Festival.

To function effectively as network liaisons and resource people, distributors need regular communication from the artists, producers, booking agents, labels, and promoters. Since distributors are often required to sell at concerts, they have new album release information and concert tour schedules. Distributors need to receive pertinent details about local production events well in advance to avoid conflicts.

Women's music distributors are among the core group of "front line" women who make the music and comedy available to a large audience. They are the ones who convince store buyers to carry the product, and their job is often difficult and frustrating. The bulk of a distributor's hours aren't spent working in the company of supportive feminist women at concerts. Most of the time is spent packing and shipping, filling orders, inventorying stores, and driving between stores and cities.

Through their commitment, inspiration, and work, WILD women have contributed im-



"And our new one by Kate Clinton, THERE'S A JOKER IN THE MENSTRUAL HUT, will sell like hotcakes for you."

W.I.L.D. continued from p. 15

utor decides to quit or sell her company, the business is first offered to other WILD women and their employees. Sometimes the territory is dissolved and other companies divide the states, adding parts of the former territory to their own companies. However the change happens, distributors and labels alike make sure that the albums get to the stores.

WILD differs from other independent record distribution systems in its inherent feminist philosophy, the high level of attention WILD distributors give to the product, and in the role WILD women play as resource contacts for other industry members. The strength of the WILD network comes largely from the support distributors give each other

mensely to women's culture and are themselves a cultural phenomenon. And to find out about the WILD distributor in your area, contact me (Denise Notzon) at Communicadence, 1450 Sixth, Berkeley, CA 94710, (415) 527-7545. Please send a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you want a reply. ●

MOVING?

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WIP continued from p. 57

our movement. We know we have to convince and educate our audiences, to offer the best in skills, quality, and competitive pricing. These are big challenges, given the mountainous male printing establishment we are up against. But a strong, independent network is developing, including the emergence of international contacts who share our vision of making autonomous women's publishing a reality.

There is one more task that we cannot overlook. While we have been hard at work to preserve documentation of so many other areas of women's history, we have largely overlooked that of the ultimate documentors: ourselves. Some of us in the Women in Print movement realize how little there is outside of our own memories. As we recapture our precious history, and as we build a strong WIP for a growing body of literature and art, we hope for a readership with an expanded understanding of our purposes, and a mutual commitment to the power of our own presses. ●

Want your name to become a household word?

Display space will again be available to performers at the National Women's Music Festival (see ad page 31).

For details about Artist Promotion/Block Booking, write:

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TILLERY continued from p. 5

music without naming dozens, hundreds, thousands of black performers since the late 1800s. Black people have made a major contribution to the development of American music. I think that will always be so. Which is why I say there is a tradition to carry on. When someone asks me who my heroines are, I think about Bessie Smith. It's not just a Pavlovian response. Bessie Smith was like two cannons going off at one time. She put the blues on the map with her style of singing. The same with Ma Rainey, Leadbelly, Lightnin' Hopkins, and Howlin' Wolf. These people have been and still remain extremely important. I want to be at least musically like them. There is a separation that can be made. When you ask me how I feel about my involvement in women's music, are you talking about my musical involvement, my personal involvement, or my philosophical involvement? They're not always the same. There is music and then there's politics.

HW: In the women's music network, the way it is now, you don't feel as much of a connection to the music as you do on a philosophical or political level? The music is not reflective of your culture, your taste?

LT: Yes, that's what I'm saying. When you say something like that, it can make others feel, "Oh, gosh, she's putting us down." I'm saying there's room for everybody to exist. But those people who have power need to move over a little bit so somebody else can be heard. ●

RADIO continued from p. 6

who is knowledgeable and interested to try and do a similar show in your area. It will be easier to get the local public radio station interested if you are at home in front of a microphone. One idea would be to put together a show at home using your own equipment. Take the tape to the station as an example of what the show would be like. Making a tape gives you a little time to correct your weak points, and you'll be well prepared if they like the idea. You will probably need your own records in order to do such a show. Here are two places you can write for catalogs:

LADYSLIPPER
P.O. Box 3124
Durham, NC 27705

ELDERLY INSTRUMENTS
1100 N. Washington
Lansing, MI 48901

Remember that some of the recordings you are interested in are pressed in very small quantities and go out of print very quickly. Try to track them down as quickly as possible.

When planning the actual show, follow your tastes. You'll feel more at home commenting on music you know well. It will be a show you'll enjoy doing and it will have a real personality to it. ●

DAVIS continued from p. 51

dience. I don't mean that you should alter who you are. Simply bill, book, and promote yourself honestly and consistently. If you are a folk singer, approach folk clubs and folk festivals. The same goes for women's music. In many cases, the music networks overlap, so take advantage of that. Do your research.

Margie Adam gave me some advice once. She said, "Just remember that your audience is there with you." It took me some time to appreciate the validity of this advice, but it's true: as entertainers, we don't have to be miracle workers, magicians, goddesses, or perfect lovers -- we're simply musicians. Just do your work, love sharing what you do, keep your heart in it, consider it your profession, and the rest will take care of itself. ●

SWING continued from p. 23

Association of Cultural Workers. We were able to raise more money than we had planned, a testament to our connection to the anti-intervention and women's communities in the Bay Area.

We arrived in Managua on September 19, 1984 and began to perform twice a day in markets, schools, theaters, hospitals, and military bases of the Sandinista Army. Throughout our trip we were greeted with openness and curiosity by Nicaraguans. Many women were thrilled to see us playing instruments -- a rare sight in Nicaragua, where instruments of any kind are scarce, and most musicians are men. Young women were particularly responsive and demonstrative. They would crowd around, touching us and asking questions. "Are you married? No? I'm not going to get married, either. Will Reagan be re-elected? Do you go to jail for playing this kind of music in your country?" Their enthusiasm and involvement in "non-traditional" work (from the army to the TV station) underscored the Nicaraguan chant: "Without the participation of women, there is no revolution!"

The two deeply entwined strands of our own evolution were evident during our tour. We have sharpened our skills in the women's

music movement over the years, giving us the competence and confidence to set up our equipment in 20 minutes, and to perform in every conceivable setting. Our work in the progressive community has given us the breadth of vision to reach many kinds of people with our music. We touched Nicaraguans with our song, they touched us with their endless, inspiring chants between songs, and performances became a spiraling exchange of energy and love.

That energy and love is vital to a country that has been at war for seven years. We played for soldiers who were convalescing from serious injuries and for men at a prison farm who had been members of Somoza's guard or the contra forces. Many people thanked us by saying, "Music heals us. We are a country in permanent mourning and we need healing." We, in return, never felt a clearer purpose for our work.

Since returning to the U.S., we have put together a multimedia show with slides, arrangements of "Volcanto" (Nicaraguan topical songs), jazz by Nicaraguan musicians, and our own music to bring the tremendous impact of our experience to our audiences. We

Since returning to the U.S., we have put together a multimedia show with slides, jazz by Nicaraguan musicians, arrangements of "Volcanto" (Nicaraguan topical songs), and our own music to bring the tremendous impact of our Nicaraguan experience to our audiences. We will be touring the spring, reaching anti-intervention activists, the skeptical and uncommitted, and folks who just want to hear some good music. ●

LINDSAY continued from p. 18

without both parties having a countersigned, dated copy of the agreement safe in their pockets. Often the first contract offered is the one used, at least as a jumping-off point. Bear in mind this does not have to be a formal "legalese" document. Just summarize the main points. State and clarify mutual expectations. Prior to this contract you should have had a conversation verbally finalizing the details. Restate expectations after every conversation: "So I'll see you for rehearsal May 3 from 2-6 PM, and May 4 from 7-11 PM at 1502 Grandview. You will receive a check for \$150 by 11 on May 4."

If the written contract says anything different from the verbal agreements you made, be careful. You may be dealing with an unscrupulous (or at least careless) person.

Keep your goals in mind at every step. It is possible to do business professionally, where everybody wins and a mutually beneficial arrangement is made. There are sorts who will try to take advantage of you, and it is your responsibility not to allow this. Be informed and be wary of people who approach you with the attitude that they are doing you a favor.

It is a glorious feeling when several otherwise separate people come together and make a whole new world out of their individual parts, each as valuable as the next. Trust yourself. And don't forget to have fun! ●

NEW RELEASES continued from p. 11

"Spuyten Duyvil" to the accompaniment of Janet Marlow's composition for 10-string guitar. This moving and topical cassette concludes with Margie Adam's instrumental piece "Woodland." ●

BEING YOUR OWN AGENT RESOURCES

The Performing Artist's Handbook by Janice Papolos, Writer's Digest Books, Cincinnati, 1984. This excellent book is geared toward performers of classical music, but has much information about publicity, self-promotion, demo tapes (both audio and visual) and press kit preparation. A must!

This Business of Music by Sidney Shemel and M. William Krasilovsky, Billboard Publishers, Inc., New York, 1964. Definitely a mainstream approach, but if you're aiming toward that market, this book offers much, especially on contracts.

Making a Show of It by Ginny Berson, Redwood Records (Box 996, Ukiah, CA 95482), 1980. This guide to concert production gives an excellent background to anyone in women's music.

Women's Music Plus by Toni Armstrong, Chicago, 1985. A comprehensive guide to concert producers, coffee-houses, festivals, publications, etc. ad inf. Another must!

"Hey, Rube! Gig List" Hey, Rube! P.O. Box 9693, Minneapolis, MN 55440. A catalog of 2000 potential sponsors available only to members of Hey, Rube!, a national organization for folk and people's music.

HOT WIRE: A Journal of Women's Music and Culture Vol. One, No. One, November 1984. "Tour Booking and Promotion" by P. Rosenwasser, J. Davey, S. Gaynes, and T. Wood.

Gaia's Guide 132 W. 24th, New York, NY 10011, \$10.

GARDNER continued from p. 55

the number of press kits you'll send (it depends on how many newspapers, radio and television stations your producer will contact). These must be sent out, ideally, six to eight weeks in advance of your gig.

(7) Follow up with phone calls in two to four weeks. If you don't want your phone bill to be overwhelming, use the least expensive times of day to call. In these calls, details will be clarified. Don't wait for written responses. You will find out that some of your preferred sponsors can't afford you. Be flexible with your fees, but do not let yourself lose money unless you can make it

up somewhere else. If a preferred sponsor can't make a commitment to produce you, ask her for a list of other potential sponsors in her area and their phone numbers.

(8) Use contracts. Once you have a verbal commitment from a sponsor, you must prepare a contract. Send it in duplicate, and have one signed/returned to you. Don't underestimate the importance of having written contracts.

TO BE CONTINUED...Next time: Contracts, production notes, plus more ideas on how to do your own business. ●



"I'd love to do the gig, Lbryxta, but unless you include travel expenses..."

OPERA continued from p. 13

Church for being "too female." This opera is woman-identified in theme and in form.

Preliminary response to women's opera has been exciting among feminists at women's festivals, but there is still much ground to be broken in traditional opera circles. Women conductors are few, and in the production end of things one rarely finds a woman backstage with any position of real power³. Just because women have been writing operas for nearly 400 years doesn't mean anyone in charge has noticed yet!

endnotes:

1. Angus Heriot, *The Castrati in Opera*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1975, pp. 23-24.
2. Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein, *The Mother of Us All*, New World Records, 1977. (Santa Fe Opera Company. Raymond Lepard, conductor.)
3. Sandra de Helen. "Backstage at the Opera," *Rag Times* (Portland, Oregon women's newspaper), Oct. 1984, p. 11. ●

SAUNDERS continued from p. 26

business but was overwhelmed by Debbie's voice, offered her services as a manager. Kimbyl says, "I was a pushy bitch. I told Debbie I didn't know anything about music, and she said she didn't know anything about management. We both learned."

Kimbyl discovered how tough it is to promote a solo act. The Bay Area press prefers rock, jazz, and new wave, so Debbie received little coverage. Yet her gigs multiplied. She performed with June Millington and Mary Watkins in late 1982, after which Mary approached Kimbyl and said, "Debbie has a fantastic voice. If you're ever interested, I'd love to produce her." Okay!

The goal was set: to record a professional demo tape. Debbie and Kimbyl had no idea what material to use. Then they got a gig with Rita Lackey and her harmony

The goal was set: to record a professional demo tape. Debbie and Kimbyl had no idea what material to use. Then they got a gig in Santa Cruz with Rita Lackey and her harmony trio Somethin' Special. Debbie loved Rita's songs, and the gig created high energy that inspired Debbie. They decided they might as well try to do an album.

Kimbyl wrote a fund-raising letter in 1983, after she met with Mary Watkins and set a \$20,000 budget. And the contributions rolled right in. The album, *A Shot in the Dark*, was completed in June, 1984.

Debbie is usually a solo performer. Her album and the Michigan music event, however, didn't happen solo. The timing was with her. The result: quality music. ●

MINIFEST continued from p. 40

of the Minifest is to raise money for Mountain Moving, so they avoid spending when possible.

So now you want a women's winter (or any season) festival in your own backyard or church basement? Start at least six months in advance, giving artisans time to make and prepare enough items to sell. On finding talent, Rosenblatt says, "You'd be surprised at the talent you'll find in your own area." [Editor's note: See Mateel Music Festival coverage in *HOT WIRE*, Nov. 1984]. ●

**Put Your Money Into
Women's Music.**

STEPPIN' OUT

by Toni Armstrong

ALIVE! P.O. Box 911, Fairfax, CA 94930. (415) 456-2732.

ANN BANNON. 400 Munroe #9, Sacramento, CA 95825.

KAREN BETH. P.O. Box 371, Bearsville, NY 12402. (914) 679-8049.

CASSELBERRY & DUPREE. 378 Pacific, Brooklyn, NY 11217. (212) 625-1874.

GINNI CLEMMENS. 3721 N. Greenview #2, Chicago, IL 60613. (312) 935-2298. March: Hawaii. May: Midwest.

KATE CLINTON. P.O. Box 93, Cazenovia, NY 13035. (315) 655-3308. March: Midwest, East, South. April: West, Midwest.

MARY DALY. RD 1, Montague, MA 01351. (413) 367-2848.

HUNTER DAVIS. P.O. Box 7715, Berkeley, CA 94707. (415) 527-4894. March-April with Julie Homi: Midwest.

ALIX DOBKIN. 5173 Clint Finger, Saugerties, NY 12477. (914) 246-8822. March: Midwest. April: East Coast & Elsewhere. May: Northeast.

THE FABULOUS DYKETONES. P.O. Box 12333, Portland, OR 97212. (503) 249-0422. March-April: Southeast. April-May: Southwest. May-June: California. July-September: Provincetown, MA.

FERRON. Lucy Records, P.O. Box 67, Saterna Island, BC, Canada. Sometimes with "Shadows on a Dime Band." March: Midwest & California. April: East, South, Midwest.

DEBBIE FIER. CommuniCadence, 1450 Sixth, Berkeley, CA 94710. (415) 527-7545. Spring: Southwest, Northwest, West Coast.

CATHY FINK. P.O. Box 5778, Takoma Park, MD 20912. (301) 270-3873.

JANE FINNEGAN QUINTET. c/o Alexandra Swaney, P.O. Box 42, Basin, MT 59631. (406) 225-3770.

ROBIN FLOWER & BAND. 644 Chetwood, Oakland, CA 94618.

FREELANCE WIFE REVUE. c/o Catherine Lee, P.O. Box 6004, Boston, MA 02209.

SUSAN FREUNDLICH. c/o Susie Gaynes, 1944 Rippleton Crossroads, Cazenovia, NY 13035. (315) 655-3308. March: Oregon, NY, K.C. Jazz Fest. April: East. April-May: On tour with John McCutcheon.

TRET FURE. Olivia Records, 4400 Market, Oakland, Ca 94608. (415) 655-0364.

TO SUBMIT INFORMATION FOR THIS SECTION: Send touring information that spans July-December to HOT WIRE, post-marked by March 15, 1985.

GAL (AKA JANICE PERRY). Bedbug Inn, Ferrisburgh, VT 05456. (802) 877-3223. Now booking 1985 world tour.

KAY GARDNER. P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207) 367-5076.

RONNIE GILBERT. Redwood Records, 476 Mac Arthur, Oakland, CA 94609. (415) 428-9191. April-May: East, Southwest, West.

ROSI GOWDEY. P.O. Box 2194, Des Moines, IA 50310. (515) 255-1430.

GRACE & GODDESS UNLIMITED. P.O. Box 4367, Boulder, CO 80306. (303) 494-5425. Spring-summer: national album tour ("Songs of the Goddess").

SUSAN GRAETZ. P.O. Box 6411, Ithaca, NY 14850. (607) 272-7579.

JORJET HARPER. 2465 N. Clark, Chicago, IL 60614. (312) 929-1321. Spring-summer: Clark Street.

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

JULIE HOMI. P.O. Box 7715, Berkeley, CA 94707. (415) 527-4894. March-April: Midwest with Hunter Davis.

KATHARINE KAY. Greenbriar Productions, c/o Julie Blake, Rt. 2 Box 107, Guilford, IN 47022. (812) 487-2623/2642.

MARIENNE KREITLOW. 83 North St., Newton Centre, MA 02159. (617) 332-9174.

KRISTIN LEMS. P.O. Box 2267, Champaign, IL 61820. (217) 384-3015/ 367-2784.

DIANE LINDSAY & SUE FINK. c/o Pam McCarthy, Ivyknot Bookings, 2801 B Ocean Park Blvd. #66, Santa Monica, CA 90405. (213) 391-8878. March: New England/South. April: Midwest & Northwest. May: Southwest.

AUDRE LORDE. 207 St. Paul Ave., Staten Island, NY 10304.

KAREN MCKAY. P.O. Box 909, Lewisburg, WV 24901. (304) 645-6396.

MAKE IT MIME. 6465 Evergreen #202, Portage, IN 46368. (219) 763-3741/4649.

GAYLE MARIE. c/o Doodle Smith, P.O. Box 755, Corvallis, OR 97339. (503) 753-1409. March: South/Midwest/West. April: Midwest/East. April: Everywhere.

JUNE & JEAN MILLINGTON. Fabulous Records, 4246 Hollis, Emeryville, CA 94608. (415) 428-2342.

MUSICA FEMINA. 1236 SE 34th, Portland, OR 97214. (503) 233-1206.

HOLLY NEAR. Redwood Records, 476 MacArthur, Oakland, CA 94609. (415) 428-9191.

PARTY LINE DANCE BAND. c/o Alix Dobkin, 5173 Clint Finger, Saugerties, NY 12477 (914) 246-8822. April: East.

ANN REED. 788 Fuller, St. Paul, MN 55104. (612) 228-1152.

REEL WORLD STRING BAND. P.O. Box 1972 Lexington, KY 40593. (606) 259-1002.

TOSHI REAGON. Roadwork West, P.O. Box 3505 S. Berk. Sta., Berkeley, CA 94703. (415) 549-1075/ (202) 726-0749.



MARIE RHINES, c/o Fretless, P.O. Box 3124
Durham, NC 27705. (919) 683-1570.

ADRIENNE RICH, P.O. Box 186, Montague,
MA 01351.

BETSY ROSE, P.O. Box 79, Cambridge, MA
02238. (617) 576-1066.

DEBBIE SAUNDEP, 457 Wayne, Oakland,
CA 94506. (415) 831-1116.

JUDY SLOAN, P.O. Box 1867, New Haven,
CT 06508. (203) 397-2187.

SOFTWARE, 5653 E. 62nd Pl., Indianapolis,
IN 46220. (317) 255-8800.

SOJOURNER, c/o Shanta Nurullah, 8500 S.
Vernon, Chicago, IL 60619. (312) 994-3302.

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK, Roadwork
East, 1475 Harvard NW, Washington, DC
20009. (202) 234-9308. March: East/California
April: Midwest/East. May: Midwest. June:
East. July: Africa. August: Vacation.

SWINGSHIFT, c/o Naomi Schapiro, 2138
McKinley #1D, Berkeley, CA 94703. (415)
821-0554.

SUNWOMYN ENSEMBLE, c/o Kay Gardner,
P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207)
367-5076. Will play with local musicians.

LINDA TILLERY, P.O. Box 3336, Berkeley,
CA 94703. (415) 549-1075. Spring tour for
new album Secrets, March-April: East Coast/
Midwest/Canada.

ADRIENNE TORF & JUNE JORDAN, 123
Seventh #162, Brooklyn, NY 11215.

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

JUDY SLOAN

ROBIN TYLER, 13514 Hart, Van Nuys, CA
91405. (818) 904-9495. March: Midwest.

NANCY VOGL, c/o Cheryl Diehm, 2381
Farm Rd., Sonoma, CA 95476. March-June:
Northwest to South.

ALICE WALKER, c/o Wendy Weil, Julian
Bach Agency, 747 3rd Ave., New York, NY
10017. (212) 753-2605.

WASHINGTON SISTERS, P.O. Box 142092,
Columbus, OH 43214. (614) 263-3840.

MARY WATKINS, Starfire Productions, P.O.
Box 20133, Oakland, CA 94620. (415) 547-
6427.

CRIS WILLIAMSON, Olivia Records, 4400
Market, Oakland, CA 94608. (415) 655-0364.

BETH YORK, 519 S. Candler, Decatur, GA
30030. (404) 377-1863.

How to Submit Information For *Steppin' Out*

Deadlines

For March Issue: December 15
(spans March-August)

For July issue: April 15
(spans July-December)

For November issue: August 15
(spans November-April)

Include

Name of artist, address, phone
number people should call for
bookings. Remember zip code
and area code.

Tour schedule or prospective tour
schedule. List month and
geographical region. Example:
March: Southwest. April-May:
Midwest.

Black and white photos, preferably
performance shots. We often
need "filler" shots, and use
what we have in the files.
Include photo credit.

Send to: HOT WIRE,
1321 Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660

CLEMMENS continued from p. 14

Ginni's philosophy is evident in her latest recording, Lopin' Along Through The Cosmos: Songs for the Human Potential in Us All. Her background as a music therapist, a bridge-builder, and a teacher of children comes through in this collection of songs by herself and others.

"Music can get people to listen with their hearts, and that's where our deepest need is. Any song that dispels misunderstanding between people is worth singing."

Of course, the best indication of a songwriter's philosophy is in the songs she herself writes, where the message to each of us living in a cold, fast world is clear.

*I can take some time to breathe
And I can take some time to feel
And I can take some time for a friend
And I can watch the friendship grow
Til I know where I'm going
Til I know where I'm going
And I know where I've been.*

from "Slow Down Song"
● Ginni Clemmens

1985 WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS Directory of Women's Music & Culture

700+ listings of producers, performers,
festivals, record labels, publications,
organizations, etc. etc. \$5 to:

Toni Armstrong
1321 Rosedale,
Chicago, IL 60660
(312) 275-6512

REEL continued from p. 24

world. So much junk is being produced. I don't want to add anything to it. The creative process itself is drawn out and painful for me. A phrase or thought will overwhelm me at times when I'm not even thinking about music or creating. This might go on for months before I sit down and work the song out. I have learned to be more patient, and after the song is written, I can usually look back and appreciate the whole process. Not that it helps me much the next time around. Often, when I sit down to write, the other band members are in my mind, and there is a real joyful kind of feeling to have Reel World, as a group, express what I write."

Rounding out the group is Karen Jones, a classically trained violinist from Kentucky who began playing fiddle music when she was teaching Appalachian dance to children.

Whether they are writing protest songs, setting a child's poem to music, or giving a Cajun flavor to an old fiddle tune, instrumentally and lyrically Reel World is creating original and innovative music, creating their own traditions. ●

SOUNDSHEETS

by Marilyn K. Wilson
and Toni Armstrong

MARY WATKINS



"COMIN' HOME"

Performed by: Mary Watkins
Written by: Mary Watkins
From: Spirit Song

Starfire Productions
P.O. Box 20133
Oakland, CA 94620

Mary Watkins' new album, Spirit Song, will be in record stores this spring. Mary is mentioned a few times in this issue of HOT WIRE by artists who admire her skills as producer, musician, and arranger.

THE WASHINGTON TWINS

"WHERE THERE IS LOVE"

Performed by:
Sandra & Sharon Washington
Written by: S. Washington
Players: Sandra & Sharon Washington (vocals), Nancy Day (piano).

Sandra & Sharon Washington
P.O. Box 142092
Columbus, OH 43214

See HOT WIRE #1 (November 1984) to read more about the Washington twins and their musical development.



THE JANE FINNIGAN QUINTET

"TIA'S SONG"

Performed by:
The Jane Finnigan Quintet
Written by: Alexandra Swaney
Players: Mary Jane "Willie" Williams (lead vocal, trombone), Alexandra Swaney (Yamaha SK 20, Micromoog bass, Kawai acoustic piano), Anne Appleby (congas), Melissa Kwasny (flute, percussion), and Marilyn Sternberg (traps).

The Jane Finnigan Quintet
P.O. Box 42
Basin, MT 59631

See "Pioneering Women's Music in Montana" (page 44) for more details about JFQ and the evolution of women's music out West. Since the article was written, the band has decided to make an album instead of a 45 as stated.



THE DEBBIE SAUNDERS BAND



"TURN ME LOOSE"

Performed by:
The Debbie Saunders Band
Written by: Rita Lackey
From: A Shot in the Dark
Step By Step Records
1431 5th Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94122

See the article on page 26 in this issue of HOT WIRE for information about how the A Shot in the Dark album came to be. The article also lists the musicians who appear on the album.

Soundsheets

This little stereo record has 2 cuts per side. We hope you enjoy the artists featured on our first soundsheet.

Thanks to Ruth Dworin of Canada for the idea.

CLASSIFIEDS

PHOTOS of favorite women musicians! Bette, Holly, Cyndi, Eurythmics, more! Introductory 8x10 for only \$5.00 - or send SASE for free list: Onstage Photos, P.O. Box 925, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

"FEMINIST BOOKSTORE NEWS" blurbs new record releases and books. Bookstore mailing list (150 names on labels) - \$10.00. P.O. Box 882554, San Francisco, CA 94118.

PIEDMONT VISITORS! Discover our wide selection of new and used books, magazines, cards, records, and other treats. Regulator Bookshop, 720 Ninth St., Durham, NC 27705.



MOUNTAIN MOVING COFFEE-HOUSE encourages performers to send us demo tapes and bio info for possible booking. Local women are invited to join our collective. For info: Joy Rosenblatt, 828 W. Leland, Chicago, IL 60640 (312) 769-6899.



Studio Red Top, Inc.

A nonprofit, tax exempt resource center, organized to promote appreciation of jazz music, and to improve employment opportunities for women musicians.

To be placed on our mailing list, write:
Studio Red Top, Inc.
P.O. Box 6004
Boston, MA 02209

For more information, call **617/492-8436**.

Studio Red Top, Inc. is funded in part by grants from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts & Humanities, a state agency, and Boston Arts Lottery Council. Donations are welcomed and are tax-deductible.

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 material concerning women's contributions to music. Most services to musicians provided free. Donations are tax-deductible. Contact: Catherine A. Lee, Executive Director.

To Place Classifieds:

\$3/line (35 characters/line. Count each letter, space, and punctuation mark as a character). 2 line minimum. Classified display ads are \$15/column inch. Deadlines: For March issue: December 15. For July issue: April 15. For November issue: August 15. To: HOT WIRE, 1321 Rosedale, Chicago, IL 60660.

ITEMS RECEIVED

A Piece of Mine, J. California Cooper, Wild Tree Press, P.O. Box 378, Navarro, CA 95463, (415) 864-5821, \$7.95.

A Hot-Eyed Moderate, Jane Rule, The Naiad Press, P.O. Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302, (904) 539-9322, \$7.95.

Inland Passage, Jane Rule, The Naiad Press, P.O. Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302, (904) 539-9322, \$7.95.

We Too Are Drifting, Gale Wilhelm, The Naiad Press, P.O. Box 1053, Tallahassee, FL 32303, (904) 539-9322, \$6.95.

Paz, Camarin Grae, Blazon Books, 1934 W. Belle Plaine, Chicago, IL 60613, (312) 975-0317, \$8.95.

Dancing Poems, Louise Mattlage/Candice Channing/Beatrice Asken, Takao Kudo, P.O. Box 8, Key Biscayne, FL 33149, (305) 361-9340.

Womansong, Gerri Gribi, P.O. Box 8021, Green Bay, WI 54308 (414) 437-7373.

Circle of Friends, Haresuite, P.O. Box 8291, Columbus, OH 43201.

Somewhere Between, Susan Graetz, On Our Way Records, P.O. Box 6411, Ithaca, NY 14851.

Wrapped Around the Sun, Marianne Kreitlow, Good Company Productions, P.O. Box 429, Newton Center, MA 02159.

"Can't Kill The Spirit" 1985 peace calendar, Syracuse Cultural Workers Project, P.O. Box 6367X, Syracuse, NY 13217, (315) 474-1132, \$6.95.

CATHY FINK'S new children's album: "A delight and fun for the whole family" - Ms. Send \$8.50 post paid to Community Music, P.O. Box 5778, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

ONYX, bi-monthly Black Lesbian Newsletter. Submissions by Black Lesbians requested. Subscriptions: 1442A Walnut #307, Berkeley, CA 94709. \$10/yr.

SEND ANNOUNCEMENTS OF EVENTS AND OTHER HAPPENINGS TO "HOT LINE"



Susan Wilson

Swingshift at a demonstration in Nicaragua at the U.S. Embassy. See the feature on women's bands.



Photo By Susan Wilson

Wallflower Dance Order recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. See Hot Line.