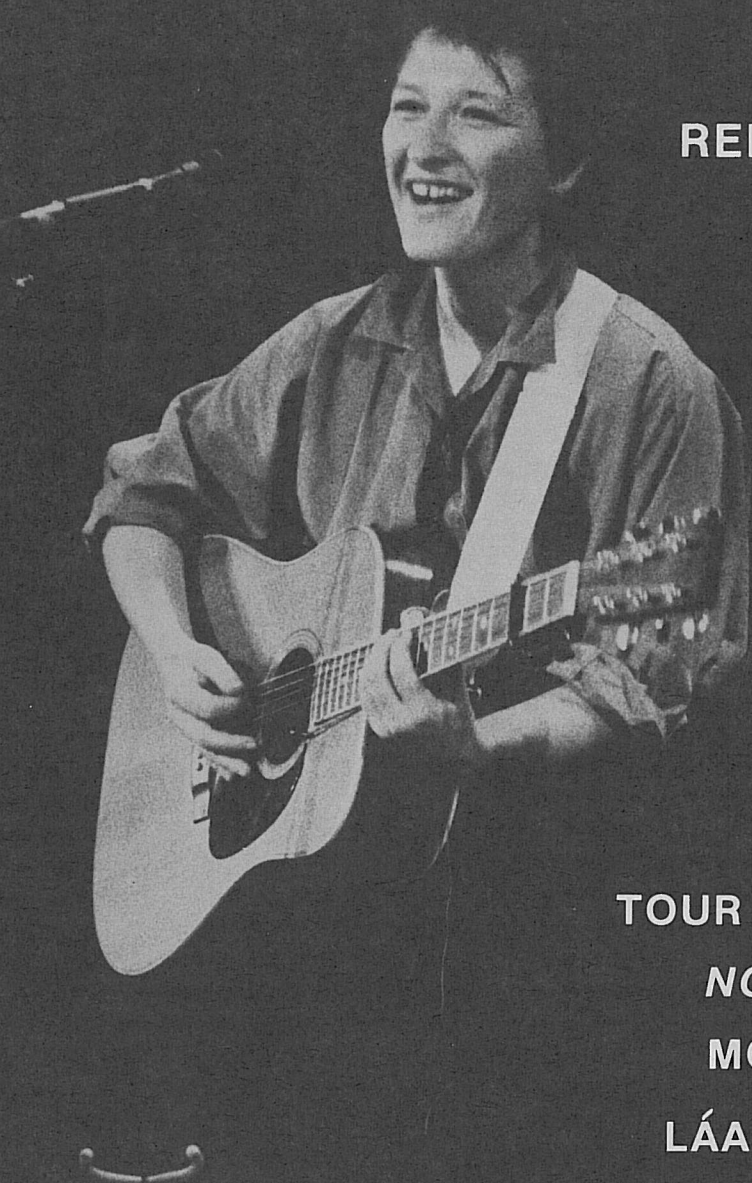




HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE



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RITA MAE BROWN
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Vada Vernee

VOLUME TWO, NUMBER THREE, JULY 1986

\$5.00

To the readers: SOUNDSHEETS

The soundsheets have returned with this issue. The little July recording is double-sided, and it features songs by Hunter Davis, Kay Gardner, Casselberry-DuPree, and Chickie and the Chicks. Your stereo soundsheet is attached to the inside back cover.

READERS' CHOICE AWARD

In the November issue, we asked our readers to nominate women who have made outstanding contributions to the women's music network. In the March 1986 issue, we printed the names and accomplishments of every nominee readers sent to us, asking the readers to vote.

Plaques were awarded at the Music Industry Conference Banquet in Bloomington to the women who received the highest number of votes, honoring them as the recipients of the first annual HOT WIRE Readers' Choice Awards. They are Kay Weaver & Martha Wheelock, for their film One Fine Day, and the tireless women of Ladyslipper, for maintaining the most comprehensive catalog of recordings by women.

The other women who were nominated by the readers received certificates honoring their contributions. They were Sue Fink, The Women's Music Archives, Holly Near, Dino Sierp, Linda Tillery, Roadwork, and Mountain Moving Coffeehouse.

Postscript: there was substantial reader response to this idea, and all of the nominees received significant numbers in terms of the readers who wrote in. Everyone's efforts toward building and maintaining a national women's music circuit are appreciated.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

If you would like to distribute copies of HOT WIRE in your town (even group orders for your group of friends), you can buy them in quantities of five or more and receive a discount. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope for the details.

"WOMEN'S MUSIC IS DYING"

Questions are raised from time to time about the relative health of our network. The most pessimistic among us have predicted rigor mortis for the whole scene within the next few years. This topic was hotly discussed at the annual Music Industry Conference in Bloomington (the convention for women who have made a business out of women's music). From the mail that comes in to the HOT WIRE office, we don't get the impression that women (a) are bored with the whole thing, or (b) no longer need "women's music." The readers who write to us are, without exception, happy that the women's music and culture circuit exists. We would be interested in receiving thoughtful letters on this topic.

I WROTE TO THEM MONTHS AGO—WHAT'S THE DELAY?!

There is a stack of unanswered letters, unreturned photographs, and basically un-dealt-with stuff about four feet high on my desk. To those of you waiting for something from us, my heartfelt apologies. HOT WIRE moved into a new space this winter, and there have been many complications. We have gotten to things as we were able to—and our top priority is putting out the journal right on time—but have become severely backed up in the correspondence department. We hope to have everything squared away by the end of June.

GIVE THE GIFT OF A "HOT WIRE" SUBSCRIPTION TODAY!

ON THE COVER

This issue's cover features Canadian singer/songwriter Ferron, who has taken a year-long grant-subsidized sabbatical from the women's music scene. Read about her in both the "Ferron" artist profile (page 32) and the "Redwood Records" article (page 26).

BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

A quick scan of the masthead (located next to the table of contents) reveals that the number of in-Chicago staff members has dwindled. Some women have found themselves with less time due to increased job responsibilities, and some have left to pursue higher education or start enterprises of their own. However, the number of "regular contributors" has expanded greatly, and the list contains the names of some very talented writers, photographers, and artists. We are extremely happy to be finding—and working on a regular basis with—so many other women from around the country who share our visions and commitments to women's music and culture.

EYES IN ALL DIRECTIONS

HOT WIRE has a continual interest in and need for information from all over the country. We appreciate being added to mailing lists, and we like receiving letters from individual women even better. Please keep in mind Joy's "Hotline" column. We are also very interested in expanding our coverage of the women's music and culture situation outside of the borders of the U.S. We intend to gradually become more international in focus. Help from our readers in the form of articles—as well as suggestions for articles, and guidance regarding where our writers should look for pertinent information—would make things more efficient, don't you think?

YOU SEEM TO LIKE...

The mail during the past few months has been positive, with many praising words for the way the HOT WIRE production team makes the magazine look. We do make every effort to publish the best quality journal we can, given our limited resources, and we appreciate the feedback!

HOT WIRE

**Journal of Women's Music
and Culture**

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Rita Mae Brown

An Interview by Toni L. Armstrong

Rita Mae Brown was born in Pennsylvania and grew up in Florida where she attended Broward College. She received a B.A. in English and Classics from New York University, where she also did graduate work in English. She has a cinematography degree from the School of Visual Arts and a Ph.D. from the Institute for Policy Studies.

*At the age of 28, she wrote a fictionalized version of her own life entitled **Rubyfruit Jungle** published by a small feminist press. It eventually became a cult classic and there are currently close to 700,000 copies in print of the Bantam paperback edition. It is now taught in college classes. Her other novels include **Six of One**, in which her real life mother became the fictionalized heroine; **Southern Discomfort** and **Sudden Death**; and her most recent, a Civil War novel entitled **High Hearts**. She is also the author of volumes of poetry, **The Hand That Cradles The Rock** and **Songs To A Handsome Woman** as well as **Hrotsvitha: Six Medieval Latin Plays** and a collection of political articles, **The Plain Brown Rapper**.*

*Rita Mae Brown is also the author of several screenplays including **Room To Move**, **Sleepless Nights**, **Thursdays 'Til Nine**, and screenplays of several of her own novels, including **Southern Discomfort**, which has been sold to Margot Kidder and Godmother Productions. Her first film credit, **Slumber Party Massacre**, hit movie theaters in 1982, becoming a target of **Women Against Violence Against Women**; she insists she wrote the script as a spoof and never intended for it to be made into a straight horror film. Her teleplays include the Emmy nominated **I Love Liberty** for Norman Lear and Embassy Productions, an adaption of William Faulkner's **The Long Hot Summer** starring Don Johnson, and the controversial **My Two Loves**—prime-time network TV's first attempt at portraying bisexuality, featuring open romance and affection between the characters played by Lynn Redgrave and Mariette Hartley.*

HOT WIRE: In your experience, what are the differences between working with small independent publishers and major mainstream publishers?

RITA MAE BROWN: I stayed with women's presses until 1978. I loved those days. I loved June Arnold and Parke Bowman of Daughters Press. They sold Rubyfruit Jungle to Bantam Books

which forever changed my life. Even after that I returned to them with my second novel, In Her Day. By the time of my third novel, Six of One, I had become a phenomenon. It was Daughters who told me that they couldn't handle me anymore. They were too small. So I made the crossover. It's been a remarkable career, and I thank June (now deceased) and Parke for handing me over.

My experience with Daughters Press was as delightful as my experience with Diana Press was disastrous. No one has ever censored me except for [network television] Broadcast Standards and Practices, but they censor everybody. I was furious. Then Diana Press, how shall I say this...well, Diana Press seemed to enjoy murky accounting. I finally sued them and won. I hated every second of that but it taught me a valuable lesson. Why assume that a woman who says she is a feminist is honest? Feminism is a broad term and all manner of people can be under the banner. I don't expect women to be honest anymore and I don't expect to like feminists any more than I like anyone else. There's good and bad in every bunch.

HW: What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with small presses compared to large established publishers?

RMB: The advantages of a small press are that one can get personal attention and that one can get started. Much of whether something is right or wrong for you depends on the nature of one's work. You can't expect a book from a small publisher to be able to compete with Simon & Schuster. But you can get some

notice, and that's good. I have enormous respect for small presses and I measure our literary health by the stability of small presses.

However, a large press can give a writer a large printing, the advertising campaign to back up that printing, and the staff to make certain the book gets in the bookstores in time. You get better shelf space, too.

HW: There is sometimes criticism that when women writers and musicians "get big" they choose to work with mainstream publishers, producers, and record companies, thereby making the profits available to male (rather than female) enterprises. Is this criticism valid on any level?

RMB: That's such a simple criticism. The issue is never that easy. If someone's work has the potential to reach a mass audience then they should reach that audience. We don't do any good hiding our light under a bushel basket. As for profits, as I've stated, I found some women to be less than honest. The point is who is honest, who honors their commitments, who works hard for you? I could care less about the gender of that person or company. I want a team I can depend on. I had such a team with June Arnold and Parke Bowman. I again have such a team with Bantam Books. I think the only factor that can influence any artist is: Do I want to communicate? All decisions are easy once that is answered.

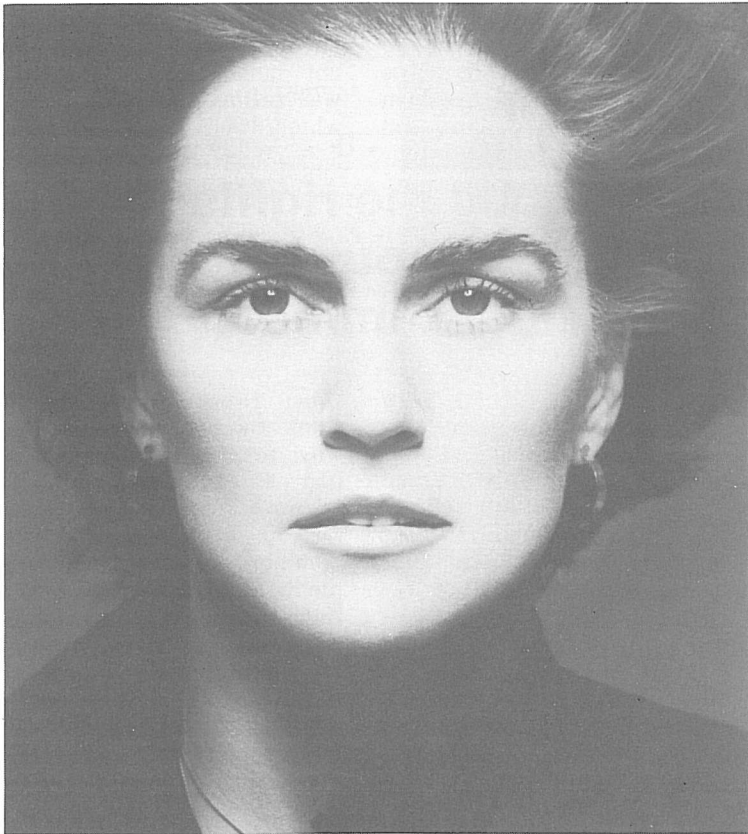
HW: Is there such a thing as "feminist" writing?

RMB: No. Writing is either good, bad, or indifferent. The politics

of the writer are interesting but have no bearing whatsoever on talent.

HW: Is there an inherent difference between women's writing and men's?

RMB: No. Until such time as the sexes reach political, social, and spiritual equality the subject matter may be different but this is a cultural difference and not an inherent one.



"If someone's work has the potential to reach a mass audience, then they should reach that audience. We don't do any good hiding our light under a bushel basket."

HW: There is a steady demand in women's bookstores for your early poetry volumes The Hand That Cradles The Rock and Songs To A Handsome Woman. Who owns the rights to these? Are there any plans to reprint?

RMB: I own the rights. There are no plans for a reprint since I can't afford to publish these works myself. Neither can I afford to sell them to another publisher cheaply.

HW: Who owns the rights to

Rubyfruit Jungle? There have been a lot of rumors about it becoming a movie.

RMB: Unless I am able to buy back the rights of Rubyfruit Jungle I don't think it will ever become a movie. I don't think that's necessarily bad. If I had the extra \$150,000 in my back pocket I would buy those rights back because I know I can make the movie and I can get the money to make it. Without me

I think the project is hopeless but without the purchase money it's all hopeless. A "film option" means a person or company has the right to sell a book to be made into a film. They do not own the film rights to the book. If someone agrees to put up the money then the option is exercised just as one would do in real estate. Because it was my first movie deal and because I was broke I sold the rights to Rubyfruit Jungle to Ira Yerkes and Arnie Reisman of Boston. They shopped it all over Holly-

wood. Because of their inexperience and the time (this is over 10 years ago), they couldn't get the project off the ground. However, they own the rights. If I wanted to make a movie of my own book I would have to buy those rights from them. Again, think of real estate. I was the architect and the contractor but I don't own the house I built. At this point, it would be foolish for anyone to buy Rubyfruit Jungle. First of all, no one will get the money for it without me being attached to it as the screenwriter or as the producer. Secondly, because it has been shopped it has been ruined. As a film, Rubyfruit Jungle is worthless for another 10 years or so. If I had the money, I would buy back the rights simply because it is my story and I love it. As a businesswoman, I must say that it isn't worth the \$150,000. As the author of the book, of course, I think it's worth a lot. Anyone who would buy those rights today ought to have his/her head examined.

HW: How much control does the author of a book have over the film version of that book?

RMB: None whatsoever. You only have control if you are the producer or the director. Of the two, the producer is more powerful and the director gets more attention.

HW: What do you think of the movie version of Alice Walker's The Color Purple?

RMB: I dearly wanted to write the screenplay for The Color Purple. As it is, it's fine. It's very difficult to translate a book into a movie, and this book was exceptionally difficult. The Africa stuff is pretty shaky in the movie anyway. As to softpedaling the affair with Shug, well, I would have made the opposite choice—not because I am gay, but because it was through that love that our main character found herself and her strength. To remove that weakens the story, and if you go back and watch that movie you will discover that it begins to wane right about the time that Celie kisses Shug. The movie gets

long after that. However, it's a hell of a lot better than other things out there, so let's not throw stones.

HW: Did you know prior to the release of the film Educating Rita that the main character named herself after you because of her admiration for your writing? Did they have to get permission from you to do that?

RMB: I knew because Educating Rita was a stage hit in London. Some of my friends sent me the playbill. I do not know the author, Mr. Willy Russell, but since the success of Educating Rita I have corresponded with him and

garet Mitchell because she wasn't afraid to utilize sentiment without becoming sentimental.

HW: What do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of "feminist" reviews/criticism of cultural works created by women?

RMB: The word "feminist" is loaded because everyone seems to define it according to their own perspective. In a way that's good. It's a bit like trying to define Christianity. I don't see a generic weakness to feminist criticism. The weakness is in the individuals presenting themselves as feminist critics. My question is, have these people produced

1981 which went out over the wires in which Nancy, a veritable saint, was turning Martina toward men. Yes. Well, time has passed and Martina, to her credit, did come around and own up to loving women and to saying that women are worth loving. It's more than anyone else has done. Galileo recanted so I can forgive Martina's descent in August of 1981.

HW: What did Martina think of Sudden Death?

RMB: Martina knows better than anyone that Carmen Semana is not her. The trick to that book was telling the truth in interviews which I did. I said it wasn't Mar-

"Anyone who would buy the rights to *Rubyfruit Jungle* today ought to have his or her head examined."

he is a fascinating man. I would love to meet him someday. I did not give him permission to use my name. By law I am considered a public figure. Stuff like this happens to me all the time. In the case of Educating Rita it's lovely; in other cases it's just awful because people lie about you in print. If I go through this, think of what Don Johnson, Dolly Parton, and those kind of people must endure? Rilke said, "Fame is the sum of misunderstanding which gathers about a new name."

HW: What writers do you enjoy reading and why?

RMB: Aristophanes is my favorite non-English writer. He lived in Athens in the fifth century B.C. and wrote brilliantly, stylistically beautiful comedies. I've learned more from him than from anyone else. Mark Twain taught me a lot, too. Thanks to him I don't think I'll ever veer toward pretension. Also, Madame de Sevigne because she was sophisticated, understood power, and possessed a sharp wit; Alice Walker because I've read her for years and liked her tenderness; Lady Murasaki because she can tell a good story; Barbara Tuchman because she teaches me with grace; and Mar-

work equal to what they are criticizing? If not, how can they possibly sit in judgment of another person's work? This is true of every critic. The other problem with feminist criticism is that it can be narrow sometimes. Not every human act or emotion reduces to the power imbalance between women and men.

HW: People love to gossip. What do you think of the way the private lives of lesbians who have achieved celebrity status—such as Martina, Billie Jean, and yourself—become "public property"?

RMB: Equal rights means equal wrongs. In the past the privacy of celebrity heterosexuals has been invaded. Why should the privacy of celebrity homosexuals be any different? If we want recognition we have to take the bad with the good. What bothers me is that neither of the women you mentioned came out happily. Loving other women was not a positive issue. They both were dragged out of the closet kicking and screaming. Billie Jean did an interview with Barbara Walters where she appeared to be joined to her husband, Larry, at the hip. Martina and Nancy Lieberman gave an interview in August of

tina. However, people want to think the worst. I laughed all the way to the bank and I think she had a good giggle, too. People also wanted to believe I was Harriet. I have next to nothing in common with Harriet. Again, people believe what they want to believe. As for Martina, I love her very much. Love changes forms; it doesn't die. I can't speak for her, but I think she cares for me. We're good friends.

HW: Since its release, Rubyfruit Jungle has been a major link for lesbians; countless women in the 1970s who couldn't think of any other way to come out to each other would ask, "So...have you read Rubyfruit Jungle?" What codes do you think closeted lesbians in the 1980s are using?

RMB: I don't know because I don't have any closeted lesbian friends. While I have great sympathy for people who think they must live that way, I don't want to be around it. Closet life contains too much self-hate and deception for me to handle. Then, too, if a woman is closeted why on earth would she speak to me?

HW: You became very famous for your outspokenness about oppres-

sion issues. To what extent and in what forms do you still have the same beliefs?

RMB: My beliefs have changed a little...not much. The timetable is what's changed. As far as new situations are concerned we can only do what the church calls "bear witness." Our lives give testimony to our belief.

HW: How have your political perspectives changed over the years? What have been the major catalysts?

RMB: The major catalyst in my changes has been time. When I was young I was seduced by the compelling purity of logic. At 41 I know people wish to be logical but rarely are. I have much more tolerance now than then, and I know that change is usually slow. I accept that without rancor. I expect more from myself and less from others.

HW: Any speculations on how far the Far Right will get before the pendulum swings back?

RMB: The pendulum is already swinging back. Falwell had to cancel his 800 number and lay off staff as well as raise the tuition to Liberty Baptist College. Nothing happens overnight, but the New Right has had its day and their star is waning. Now it's time for the technocrats to rise: people connected to no ideology. If you tell a technocrat to cut Welfare, the technocrat does it. No questions asked. If you tell a technocrat to build new bridges into San Francisco, s/he does it. Technocrats want results. How they get the results is irrelevant to them.

HW: In your opinion, what are the most effective ways people can work against the 1980s forms of oppression within the U.S.?

RMB: Vote, for one thing. Be an active member of your neighborhood. Face-to-face contact is still the best way to influence people. Thirdly, make money if you can. No movement can be funded without contributions. Besides, I'm getting worn out making contributions. Some of the rest of you

have to pick up the slack. I need a break.

HW: In what major ways have you seen women's music and culture advance since the early 1970s? In what areas do we still have a long way to go?

RMB: The advance has been in the discharge of ideas. In the beginning there were so few of us. We were quite young, without money and without contacts. We are now middle aged and that



Susan Lewis

"While I have great sympathy for people who think they must live that way, I don't want to be around it. Closet life contains too much self-hate and deception for me to handle."

seasoning has enabled us to institutionalize, if you will, our culture. There are now two generations of feminists causing some interesting differences. Where we fall short is in our ability to penetrate the mass market. This has less to do with ideology and more to do with money. We don't have feminist executives in major record companies, etc. I don't think the work is necessarily anti-feminist, but I think women interested in women's culture tend to stay inside that culture. Until more of us get out into the world our work will remain limited. There's a Southern expression, "Preaching to the choir." We are

still preaching to the choir instead of to the congregation. If one wants to make a movement then one seeks sinners—if you will tolerate the metaphor. We've got to get into the world.

HW: What value do you see in the emerging women's music and culture network? What do you perceive as the most problematic aspects of it?

RMB: The value is that our ideas are provocative. New ideas get people stirred up and that's good. The other great value is that it draws us together. We need a sense of community. The most problematic aspect of the women's movement in general, whether it's political or cultural, is that people's egos get in the way. Your ego should serve the movement, not vice versa.

HW: What impact is the annual Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival having on lesbian and/or feminist communities?

RMB: I attended one time and people thoroughly enjoyed themselves. I think everyone goes back to their community rejuvenated. You can't ask for more than that. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Toni L. Armstrong teaches special education in a high school and is pursuing a second Masters degree in addition to publishing 'HOT WIRE.'

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HOTLINE

By JOY ROSENBLATT

HONORS

DESERT HEARTS, the film version of Jane Rule's Desert of the Heart, directed by Donna Deitsch, won the Jury Prize at the U.S. Film Festival, reported Time magazine.

LORI NOELLE was awarded the title of "Funniest Person in Illinois" by Showtime, the national pay TV service, in their talent search for the funniest person in the U.S. [Lori also appears as pianist for the group Chickie and the Chicks: see soundsheet in this issue of HOT WIRE.]

JEANNIE POOL, executive director of the International Congress on Women in Music, received two special awards for her work in promoting and documenting the work of past and present women in music. She received the 24th Annual Radio-TV Award from the International Music Fraternity Sigma Alpha Iota Southern California Interchapter Council, and received a plaque from the American Federation of Musicians AFL-CIO Local 47 Los Angeles.

JOANN FALLETA, conductor of the Bay Area Women's Philharmonic, was the 1985 winner of both the Stokowski Competition and the Toscanini Award.

DEBBIE FIER's instrumental Firelight (Ladyslipper, 1986) has been nominated by the National Association of Independent Record Distributors for Best New Age Album and Best Album Design.

HOTLINE announces upcoming events in women's music and culture, presents capsule reports of past happenings, and passes on various tidbits of information.



Lori Noelle: SHOWTIME's "Funniest Person in Illinois"

KOKO TAYLOR is a four-time winner of the title Best Female Blues Artist, awarded by the International Blues Foundation. She is also a five-time Grammy nominee, according to Forte.

MUSICA FEMINA (Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen) was chosen to perform for the 4th International Congress on Women in Music. They performed original works of their own in addition to those of Kay Gardner, Judith Markowitz, and Hilary Tannen.

ANNIE LENNOX received England's equivalent of the Grammy when the British Record Industry voted her Best Female Vocalist, according to the "Entertainment Today" TV program.

GROUPS

The WOMEN TAKE LIBERTY action at the Statue of Liberty on Sunday August 3 is being sponsored by Women Rising in Resistance, a national network of feminist activists. They plan to "claim and dedicate the female figure to a true vision of liberty, sisterhood, equality, and peace, rather than the patriarchal/patriotic militarist, jingoist July 4th ceremony." Contact: WRR, P.O. Box 257, Northport, NY 11768. (718) 768-4602.

THE SAINTS collective, those wonderful women who work the Michigan Festival concession, were turned down by the Boston Licensing Board, reported The Bay Window, when they requested a liquor license transfer. After they receive the decision in writing, they may appeal or take the matter to court as a last resort.

WOMEN IN MUSIC has been established as a support network for women in all facets of the music industry. The group sponsors workshops and publishes a newsletter (and are seeking submissions for it). Contact: WIM, c/o the Raleigh Group, 250 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019. 24 hotline: (212) 627-1240.

THE WOMEN PRODUCERS' ALLIANCE has been formed to foster communication, effectiveness, and efficiency in the efforts of women producers who want to share skills and resources. The WPA presented survey results and organized a pre-session at the Music Industry Conference in Bloomington this May. Contact: Brynna Fish, P.O. Box 18175, Cleveland Hts., OH 44118. For survey info contact: Teri Reed, 2333 12th Ave. East, Seattle, WA 98102.

A new group called the MEDIA ACCESS NETWORK & DISTRIBUTION LOOP is offering a variety of resources for musicians, filmmakers, and writers, including specialized mailing lists, bibliographies, and related publications. They are also starting a syndicated features loop that will help to collect and distribute work. Free catalog: 2912 Daubenbiss Ave. #66, Soquel, CA 95073.

The MARYLAND WOMEN'S SYMPHONY is a newly-formed group co-founded by conductor DEBORAH FRIEDMAN and pianist SELMA EPSTEIN, reported the ICWM Newsletter. Its purpose is to bring little-known music by women composers to the attention of the general public. It is the East Coast's only all-women orchestra.

MOVIES & TV

SHARON GLESS (Cagney) and TYNE DALY (Lacy) have, in support of anti-apartheid efforts, pledged their South African royalties from "Cagney and Lacy" to the outlawed African National Congress, according to a report in The Milwaukee Journal.

"I think it's nice for women who aren't 17 anymore to realize that they can still be happy even if marriage is not in the cards," said BETTY THOMAS ("Hill Street Blues") in People's March 31 article about single women celebrities entitled "The New Look In Old Maids." Also featured were Oprah Winfrey, Sharon Gless, Teri Garr, Diane Keaton, and others. How does Betty feel about not being married? "Fine with me! I'm not a great believer in marriage anyway."

"Hill Street Blues" has a new lesbian character, Officer Katherine McBride (LINDSAY CROUSE). She came out to partner Lucy Bates (BETTY THOMAS) on the March 20th show, reports Lesbian Inciter.

LILY TOMLIN and her partner/collaborator JANE WAGNER continue on Broadway with their smash hit Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe... NANCY LIEBERMAN, former basketball star and close friend of tennis star MARTINA, will star in a movie about basketball... JENNIFER BASSEY from "All My Children" and LOIS KIBBEE of "The Edge of Night" recently worked together in staged readings of The Well, a play about the attempts to get RADCLYFFE HALL's The Well of Loneliness published. [News shorts thanks to The Lesbian Inciter.]

Women directors are coming into their own in Hollywood, states Time magazine, and it is because they are making movies that make money. SUSAN SEIDELMAN's Desperately Seeking Susan made \$27.5 million. AMY HECKERLING's National Lampoon's European Vacation made \$50 million and was in 1985's top ten grossing pictures. BARBARA STREISAND will soon direct an adaptation of the play about AIDS, The Normal Heart, and ELAINE MAY is currently directing a \$30 million movie, the most expensive ever entrusted to a woman.

"I feel as much passion for Marjorie as I do for any man. How can I choose between them?" read the promo for "MY TWO LOVES," broadcast on ABC April 7. The movie, starring Mariette Hartley and Lynn Redgrave, was the first to feature explicit romance between two women on primetime TV.

GATHERINGS

The 3RD ANNUAL CHORAL FESTIVAL will be held in Chicago November 7-9. 12 choruses will be participating in a public concert to be held at Lane Tech H.S. This year's festival is sponsored by the ARTEMIS SINGERS. Contact: Ann Morris, 1416 W. Winnemac, Chicago, IL 60640.

The NOW-sponsored NATIONAL MARCH FOR WOMEN'S LIVES focused on reproductive rights and took place in Washington, DC on March 9. The crowd was estimated at 125,000. A matching march took place a week later in Los Angeles, with a crowd of 25,000, reports off our backs.

150 registrations will be accepted for the August 21-24 WOMEN'S MOTORCYCLE FESTIVAL. Contact: 7 Lent Ave., Leroy, NY 14482. (716) 768-6054.

continued to page 59

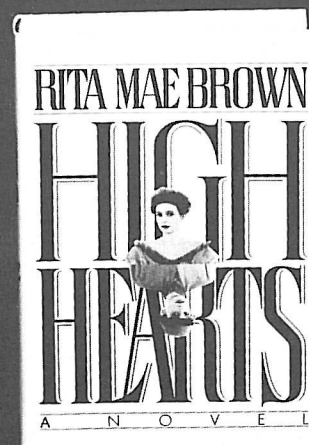
ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Joy Rosenblatt does production for Mountain Moving Coffeehouse. In her spare time, she works for the State of Illinois as an employment counselor to welfare mothers.

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BANTAM

ON STAGE AND OFF

Playing the College Circuit

By Elaine Townsend

Bookings at colleges and universities can be a solid source of income and exposure for the touring lesbian/feminist performer. In general, the money tends to be better than for club and concert dates—you can expect to get between \$200 and \$500 per gig if you are a solo act. Another advantage is that the event itself is usually realized with a minimum of headaches once the contract is signed.

Colleges, as a rule, have good facilities, including well-lit, large performance stages, with knowledgeable technicians working on high-quality sound equipment. The small details—like providing quiet dressing rooms with closet space—are looked after because the college personnel are used to booking entertainers. A lot of bar managers, by contrast, are used to running bars, and the needs of the performers are not always uppermost in their minds.

The college audience varies according to night of the week, other campus activities, and who sponsored the event. Also, certain regions are more conservative than others. According to booker Susie Gaynes, Kate Clinton is well-received in the Northeast and on the West Coast, with pockets of good response spread throughout the rest of the regions. There are surprises sometimes, though, so no absolute generalizations can be made. But there are differences. Be prepared.

The college audience can be tough, but once you've cracked this circuit as a whole, the response can be very rewarding. This is a thinking, discriminating audience that can help create a

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



"The key to getting bookings is to find the best angle or contact."

very special atmosphere. They see plenty of good entertainment and are therefore demanding. This forces you to keep in touch with your best performance skills.

One very nice feature of on-campus performances is that alcohol is usually not being consumed. In the past, some performers (especially solos and duos) were booked into campus pubs—which is basically like an average club gig. In the past few years, however, the drinking age has been raised in many states, closing these establishments and increasing the number of alcohol-less concerts. In fact, this may be a great turn of events for smaller acts. It could help revive the college coffeehouse.

GETTING YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR

The key to getting bookings is to find the best angle or contact—which can be harder than it sounds.

The first step is to contact the committee or board at the college that is responsible for booking entertainment. There will be an adult advisor and a student chairperson—find out their names and contact them directly. These entertainment committees are generally composed of volunteer students and a paid advisor whose job it is to facilitate the progress of the students. The committee decides whether to book you, and the advisor is the one responsible for signing your contract and paying you.

It's important for your contact to be very strong with a number of people, but especially one or both of these entertainment-board leaders. You need someone who will go to bat for you. Colleges—especially large universities—are complex bureaucratic organizations, like the government, or at least a large corporation. The buck doesn't stop with the committee or any one person. The advisor can't draw up your contract by herself. She has to go through other channels in the multi-leveled hierarchy of red tape.

You need a personal representative who feels responsible towards you. The more contact you have with this person, the firmer the connection becomes. Be persistent with your contacts.

Keep in mind there are a lot of performers wanting to play the college circuit. The entertainment committee probably receives 10 or more press kits a week. You have to be sure to make yours special. If you don't establish

extra contact—through calls, postcards, etc.—there is no reason to expect that you will get noticed, let alone booked. Colleges often book by the semester; discuss with your contact the possibility of you lining up something for next semester, or the one after that. Be sure to follow through if you have found a receptive person, even if she can't offer you a gig right now.

Be aware that colleges will sign up acts sometimes on very short notice, sometimes as little as four weeks in advance. The larger universities sign contracts longer in advance. I have been booking fall college dates since early 1986. Don't plan on summer work at a college.

If nothing is available through the entertainment committee, try other groups that might be likely to be interested. Minority affairs, women's studies, and the lesbian/gay student alliance are all good possibilities. They might be able to fit you into their budget, or perhaps a joint sponsorship could be arranged. Unfortunately, the budget cuts invoked by President Raygun have hit these organizations first and hardest in both private and state schools.

N.A.C.A. SHOWCASING

If you find that you've enjoyed playing in a few colleges, you might consider showcasing at a National Association for Campus Activities convention. N.A.C.A. provides you with a huge amount of exposure to schools all over the country and to mainstream record labels.

It also affords the advantage of block booking. College representatives will communicate with each other about which artists are coming to their geographical area, and try to arrange for many gigs in that area. This is good for the performer, since she gets more bookings, and good for the colleges, since their costs are lower if they can do this cooperatively. Block booking happens mostly at N.A.C.A. conventions.

Warning: it is very expensive to showcase at a convention. The big expense is the \$300-per-year N.A.C.A. membership fee you are required to pay. Then there are fees to pay for your promotional

booth and for the 20-minute set you will play. Counting travel and preparation of materials, it could cost up to \$2,000 before you ever get on the showcase stage—and there are no guarantees that any bookings will come out of it.

This organization is also very mainstream and conservative, but it has moved a few careers along. For more information: N.A.C.A., P.O. Box 6828, Columbia, SC 29260, (803) 782-7121.

CHOOSING MATERIAL

Speaking of politics, how "out" you intend to be during your performance may be something you'd like to communicate about in advance. On the other hand, you may want to show up and either gauge your rap/choice of material by the audience or just do your show and let come what may. I personally use the audience as my guide, and expect that if the producers read my press kit carefully enough (it doesn't identify me as a lesbian per se, but my songlist includes Ferron and Robin Flower, and my engagements include women's coffeehouses), they know what to expect. This is a personal decision, one that you need to devote some attention to.

In this article, I've attempted to tie up a few of the generalizations that can be made about this aspect of our industry. It is difficult to be more specific than I have been here, since there are so many inconsistencies in this field. Just remember to be firm and persistent.

DO ask for enough money. It may sound weird, but a college probably won't even consider you if you don't ask for at least \$200 for a solo and \$500 for a band. They generally operate on the premise (and it's easy to forget this working with bar managers) that you wouldn't ask for it if you weren't worth it.

DO be firm about the rider to your contract. Colleges can generally fill basic artist needs because they have such a wide resource base. If they won't, you can get financial adjustments. For instance, you've worked out your flat fee (another nice thing—they deal in flat fees) but they won't provide a hotel room. More than likely you can get \$50 tacked on

instead (and sleep on some nice woman's couch).

DO arrive in plenty of time on the day of the show and get your sound check over with. Since you'll be working with a new sound person, you'll want as much time as you'll need to get comfortable. Humor is invaluable here.

DO be available for promotional purposes. If there is a campus radio station, try to get your producer to set up an interview.

DO get them to cash your check in advance. They'll tell you they can't, but they can. If you must take a check, tell them specifically who it should be made out to. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Elaine Townsend is a singer-songwriter guitarist from Columbia, SC. She is currently attending the University of SC as well as performing throughout the Southeast. She thanks Robin Flower and Susie Gaynes for their invaluable assistance.

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THE AUDIO ANGLE

By Karen Kane

Here are some often-asked questions that were sent in by HOT WIRE readers. Feel free to send more questions directly to me at 329 Highland, Somerville, MA 02144.

Cris Williamson's 'The Changer and the Changed' was "remixed" and reissued. Why? What's the difference?

In the early 1970s, the women of Olivia Records, as well as many other women in the business, were just starting out. In 1975, when Changer was recorded, there was little knowledge of the recording and mixing procedures. It was an experimental time, a learning process. As a result, one of the things that happened during the mixing process to complicate matters was that everyone involved was there in the studio giving feedback and opinions. Have you ever heard the expression "too many cooks spoil the broth"?

After three years of living with the record the way it was and getting feedback from various people, Olivia realized it could be better. They felt that The Changer and the Changed deserved the best. Having learned a lot more, Olivia went back into the studio and remixed the album. This time only two people—instead of five or more—were involved. Some additional recording happened as well; Meg Christian added some background vocals. The rest of the changes during the remix involved bringing Cris's vocal more out front, playing with and changing the reverb and echo effects and playing with the equalization of each track to obtain a more pleasing sound [see

THE AUDIO ANGLE discusses information about recording, the mysteries of the recording studio, and answers technical questions submitted by HOT WIRE readers.

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Barb O'Heaney

"Audio Angle," HOT WIRE, March 1986 for explanation of reverb, echo, and equalization). Basically, a more lush and full sound was desired for the album. Mixing is a crucial part of the process. You can take a great recording and make a terrible mix as well as take a terrible recording and make a decent mix.

What are the differences between what a sound engineer does at a live performance and what a recording engineer does in a studio?

One of the first things a sound engineer has to do to prepare for a live performance is set up the equipment. The equipment used during a live performance is called a P.A. system or sound system. It consists of house speakers for the "house" (audience), monitor speakers for the performers to hear themselves on stage, a mixing board, and amplifiers to power the system. When you walk into a recording studio all of these pieces of equipment are already set up. In fact, once a studio opens its doors to the public, the equipment remains intact indefinitely. A mixing board used for live performance controls each microphone that you see on stage. If a mixing board has 12 channels, you can use up to 12 microphones. If it has 24 channels, you can use up to 24 microphones. The main job of a sound engineer during a live performance is to sit behind the mixing board

(usually located somewhere in the audience) and make sure that the balance between the microphones is good. Things are always changing during a live performance, and the engineer is constantly making adjustments. This is not unlike what the recording engineer does in the studio when all the recording is done and it's time to mix an album; balancing all the recorded tracks, making sure the mix is good. When you're in the studio, you can listen to a song as many times as you need to to formulate your mix. When you're mixing a live show, you only get one chance. Since the equipment for live performance travels a lot and gets set up and torn down so often, the sound engineer must also deal with equipment failure and other technical problems. It is therefore useful for the sound engineer to be knowledgeable in electronics. Some sound engineers are good technicians but do not have "musical" ears and might not do a good job of mixing the music. Other engineers are musicians who have good ears but are lacking in technical knowledge. To be most useful on the road, as a sound engineer, it is ideal to have both of these talents. However, there are many good engineers out there who do well with just one or the other. In the recording studio, since the equipment remains intact, technical problems occur less often. Also, the studio usually has maintenance people on staff who are either around or a phone call away if something goes wrong that the engineer can not handle.

I've heard people refer to certain albums as "well-engineered" or "not well-engineered." What does that mean?

A "well-engineered" album basically means that the recording quality is excellent, a function

of the quality of the equipment as well as the talent and ears of the recording engineer. Lots of things are taken into account when a judgment like this is made. For instance, the clarity of all the sounds on the record is considered. Also, does the record seem sonically too bright or too dull? Listen to the mix; how well-balanced is it (i.e., is the vocal not loud enough above the instruments or vice versa)? Ten years ago, even with the most talented engineers, the quality of records was much different than today's records. The equipment of a decade ago was nothing like what we have today. Compare some early recordings like Lavender Jane Loves Women to the latest recordings—you will hear what I mean.

What does it mean when someone says an album is "mainstream"?

A record that is considered "mainstream" is usually connected to a major record company like Warner Brothers, A & M Records, or Columbia. Independent record companies like Redwood Records or Olivia perform the same function as the major label companies but don't have as much money. This results in a major disadvantage: not being able to promote a record the way the major labels can (i.e., did you ever notice that many record stores will have multiple copies of the same album jacket in the window? Or, several radio stations will play an artist's new song over and over? You've seen massive newspaper, magazine, or TV ads?). All of this kind of mass promotion takes money, and major labels have it! One advantage of the independent record companies, though, is that the artist can retain artistic control over the production of the record. When an artist signs with a major label, the record company executives take control and make a lot of decisions concerning promotion of the record—especially when the artist is not very well-known on a national level. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Karen Kane has produced/engineered more than 50 albums. She currently resides in Massachusetts.

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NOTEWORTHY WOMEN

Great Women Pianists in the Nineteenth Century

By Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen

Keyboard instruments have historically been one of the instruments deemed "appropriate" for females to play. A woman could sit demurely in her parlor at a keyboard without distorting her body or face, and could play alone without ever having to leave her home. In the nineteenth century, however, there were several women who performed publicly on the piano and were recognized right along with such great keyboard artists as Thalberg, Liszt, and von Bulow.

CLARA SCHUMANN

Clara Schumann (1819-1896) was born Clara Wieck, and was trained by her father, Friedrich Wieck, to be one of the greatest pianists of the nineteenth century. He was quite strict and demanding, and the technique of playing he imparted to Clara is characterized by a solid but not flashy style. Her rival, Liszt, represents the other popular nineteenth century style, filled with all the flash and show biz for which he was known.

Clara gave her debut at age nine. By 1830 she was making concert appearances throughout Germany. According to Harold Schonberg in his book *The Great Pianists*, Clara altered the format of concert giving by dispensing with the usual practice of having many different artists on the same program, or a single main artist with assisting artists. She also played longer, more serious works in her concerts instead of short, flashy crowd-pleasers. She

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



The Bettman Archive

Teresa Carreño: twice invited to play the White House

sought not to merely show off her technique, but to interpret the composers' wishes.

Robert Schumann came to Herr Wieck as a student when Clara was only nine years old. By the time she was 20 years old, Clara had to rebel against her father in order to marry Robert. The battle finally reached the courts, which allowed Clara and Robert to marry one day before her 21st birthday. Much of Herr Wieck's refusal to accept Robert came from his feeling that Clara's career would suffer if she married an unknown composer. By 1840 Clara was famous throughout Europe, while Robert was still a struggling unknown.

Robert was, on the surface, quite supportive of Clara's wish to continue her career—unless "the composer" was at the piano composing. Then the house had to be quiet. Both of them realized that

for a concert artist to maintain her technique many hours of practice were required each day, but both of them also accepted the idea that Robert's work was more important. Clara did give concerts after her marriage, to be sure. She even defied convention by performing in public while pregnant. Often historians and reviewers from the time claimed that she was "in ill health" or "indisposed." Clara toured to Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Germany after her marriage.

In 1844 Robert and Clara moved to Dresden because of his nervous condition. By 1850 they had moved to Duesseldorf. In 1854 Robert's health had deteriorated to the point that he attempted suicide, and he spent the remaining two years of his life in an asylum near Bonn.

To meet his medical expenses and to support their children, Clara continued to concertize, playing in nearly every capital and large city in Europe. She had just shortly returned from a tour of England when Robert died in 1856. Seven of her eight children were still alive, and they ranged in age from two to 15. By 1860 she had regained notoriety throughout Europe. Her repertory consisted of Robert's works, and the work of their mutual friend, Brahms, as well as other masters including Chopin.

After Robert's death, Clara moved her family to Berlin to her mother's house. She moved to Baden-baden in 1863, where she stayed until 1874. From 1875-78 she lived sporadically in Berlin and Baden-baden, but in 1878 she was appointed to head the piano department at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt. By this time, three more of her children had

died, and one of her sons was in a mental asylum.

In Frankfurt, Clara edited Robert's works for publication. She continued to tour and teach. In old age she was bothered by growing deafness and rheumatic pains, but her last concert was held in 1891, at age 72. She died in Frankfurt in 1896.

In addition to her piano virtuosity, Clara was also a composer. She had little faith in her compositional abilities, but in the last 10 to 15 years there has been an increase in the attention paid to her compositions, both in the publishing and the recording of her works.

TERESA CARREÑO

Another nineteenth century virtuosa was Teresa Carreño (1853-1917), of Venezuela. Teresa was the granddaughter of a composer, Jose Cayetano Carreño. Her father was a politician who was also a musician. At age eight she was taken to New York to study with Gottschalk. While in the U.S. she gave a number of successful concerts in Boston and played for President Lincoln in the White House. It was reported that she complained that the piano was out of tune and that

the bench squeaked. The little virtuosa did agree to improvise on Lincoln's favorite song, "Listen to the Mockingbird," however. In 1866 Gottschalk suggested that she go to Paris, where she later studied with Matthias and with Rubinstein.

By 1872 Teresa had toured extensively in Europe and was known as a flashy, fiery player. She married Emile Sauret, a violinist, in 1873—the first of four husbands she was to have. But he was a heavy drinker, and left her in two years.

In 1875, she returned to Boston to study singing. She had been encouraged by Adelina Patti, the great opera singer, and by Rossini, the composer, to develop her voice. Consequently, she vowed to change careers.

She did have some major roles and some success during her opera phase, which lasted until 1882. During this time she also became the common law wife of Giovanni Tagliapietra, a singer and confirmed gambler. They eventually made their home in New York where they had two children, Teresita and Giovanni. The young composer Edward MacDowell lived next door, and over the years Teresa became a champion of his music. His "Concerto in D" is dedicated to her.

By 1892 Teresa had married Eugene Albert, the pianist and composer. He is said to have been a good influence on her playing, instilling discipline where before there had been tempestuous virtuosity. This was apparently a stormy marriage that found their two children—Eugenia and Hertha—still babies when they divorced.

In 1902, Teresa married the brother of her second husband, Arturo Tagliapietra. They lived in Berlin for a number of years, until World War I when their funds were confiscated because "Tag" was an American citizen. They made it to America, where Teresa was invited to play again in the White House, this time for President Wilson. She died in 1917.

As well as being an outstanding pianist and an adequate singer, Teresa was a composer and even, on some occasions, wielded a conductor's baton.

AGATHE BACKER-GRONDAHL

Agathe Backer-Grondahl (1847-1907) is perhaps Norway's most famous female pianist and composer. Her debut as a soloist was made in Oslo at age 17. This concert launched a performing career that took her all over Europe. She studied in Berlin with Kullak, in Florence with von Bulow, and later in Weimar with Liszt.

As a composer she is mostly known for her songs and piano compositions. Her compositions show the influence of Schubert and Mendelssohn.

Although not as much has been written about Agathe Backer-Grondahl, a dissertation was published about her 1968 by the University of Oslo.

Clara Schumann, Teresa Carreño, Agathe Backer-Grondahl—all nineteenth century virtuose on the piano, all composers, and all great musical foremothers. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen make up the guitar and flute 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.

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LÁADAN

Lesson #2

By Suzette Haden Elgin

Aranesha Bethu

Bíi nahóya Aranesha Athileya—
nahóyaháalish wa. Memahina
abesh; zhe womelíithi woboshum
yáanin, i mehel oyimahina reneth
óoma netha yil wa. Melirihal babi
zhe melirihul mahina. Hotheya
woho, loláad ne hodoth i lehinath
i léelith, woliyeneth wohesheth
i woyetheth wohilith. Wu hohama
wa! Uhudehóo raden, aril hal ra
rawith wa. Thalehal, owáano—thi
Aranesha, Athileya, uhudemid. Wil
mehothel uhudemid wa.

NOTES:

1. The title means, literally, "Arkansas It-Of"; "About Arkansas." The word "Aranesha" is a loan word, a "láadanization" from English.
2. Láadan has a set of degree markers, including "-hal" (neutral "very") and "-hul" ("very, to extreme degree") and "-háalish" ("very, to extraordinary degree"); that lets you use the contrast between "melirihal" and "melirihul" to indicate that both the birds and the flowers are very colorful, but the flowers are more so.
3. In the sentence about seeing tulips and green grass and silver water, and so on, all the grammatical objects carry the object

LÁADAN: "the language of those who perceive," a language constructed to express the perceptions of women. This column presents translation-lessons for those interested in learning to use the language. Suzette Haden Elgin welcomes correspondence from women interested in the further development of Láadan. Route 4, Box 192-E, Huntsville, AR 72740.

marker "-th" at the end; this is formally correct. However, whether you must use the object marker or not depends on your worldview. If you want to say that you speak Láadan (di le Láadan, SPEAK I LÁADAN), you absolutely don't have to add the marker (Láadaneth), because "the language speaks me" is entirely impossible. Similarly, if you were perceiving a book or a chair, you would need no object marker. But can the tulips and lilacs and so on "perceive you" back? If so, the object marker is required to indicate who or what is doing the perceiving. I've put them in to demonstrate; if you don't hold with sentient flowers and grass and water, you can take them back off; thus "you see lilacs" becomes just "loláad ne lehina" instead of "loláad ne lehinath."

4. Some of you may find that "RELATIVE" morpheme mystifying...I suspect it looks like linguist jargon. English derives "the green grass" from "the grass which is green," with "which is green" being the relative clause; when a language does that with a morpheme instead of by grammatical processes like moving things around and deleting and inserting stuff, the morpheme is called a "relativizer." So, "liyen" is "be green" and "hesh" is "grass"; "woliyen wohesh" is "green grass" because of the relativizing prefix.
5. The focus marker "-hóo" was left out of the beginning dictionary (along with many other things, due to space constraints). It is added to a word to mean "this particular specific one" or for emphatic stress--the context will indicate which.
6. Because of space constraints (again), I'm putting in the list of vocabulary words only those that aren't obvious from looking at the

literal translation. If that doesn't work for you, please let me know; if you have the dictionary, it will be no problem.

7. Finally, in Lesson #1 (March 1986) there is a line containing the word "ril" and translating it as "PAST"; it should have been "PRESENT." My apologies.

TO THE READERS:

I've been getting quite a lot of mail asking me to put the writer in touch with others working on Láadan; I can't do that unless I have the other person's permission. If you write to me, and you're willing to have your name and address given to other people wanting to correspond about Láadan, please tell me. Unless you specify that clearly, I will assume that you prefer not to have the information passed on. If you would like to be on the Láadan mailing list, send your name and address clearly printed or typed.

I've also had requests for a newsletter about Láadan, or an apa about Láadan. I wish I could do that, but I can't. The newsletter I already publish, plus the help I give with a whole plethora of other people's newsletters, leaves me without a time-niche for either of those. But I want you to know that anyone who wants to put together something of that kind has my blessing (in the most emphatic of terms!) and can count on my help if it's wanted.

I'd be grateful if those of you who write to me in Láadan would enclose a rough English translation. I'm not always certain just exactly what you mean—not because you are making mistakes, but because (a) my own command of the language is far from perfect, and/or (b) you are being particularly creative and I can't quite follow you.

Till next time, then....

LINGUIST'S TRANSLATION

First line: Láadan

Second line: morpheme-by-morpheme, all in upper case

Third line: "free" translation

1. Bíí nahóya Aranasha Athileya--
2. DECLARATIVE START-BE BEAUTIFUL ARKANSAS APRIL-IN
3. I tell you, Arkansas in April becomes beautiful--

1. nahóyahálish
2. START-BE BEAUTIFUL-TO EXTRAORDINARY DEGREE
wa.
ACCORDING TO MY PERCEPTIONS
3. incredibly beautiful, to my mind.

1. Memahina abesh ; zhe
2. PLURAL-BLOOM ALL-THAT-IS BE-LIKE
womelíithi
RELATIVE-PLURAL-BE WHITE
3. Everything is in bloom; the trees are like white clouds,

1. woboshum yáanin, i mehel oyimahina
2. RELATIVE-PLURAL-CLOUD TREE AND PLURAL-MAKE VIOLET
3. and the violets make a carpet under your feet.

1. reneth óoma netha yil wa.
2. CARPET-OBJECT FOOT YOU-OF UNDER MY-PERCEPTIONS.
3. (See above.)

1. Melirihal babi zhe
2. PLURAL-BE COLORED-VERY BIRD LIKE
melirihul mahina
PLURAL-BE COLORED-VERY FLOWER
3. The birds are brightly colored like the flowers.

1. Hotheya woho, loláad ne hodoth i
2. PLACE-AT EVERY PERCEIVE YOU TULIP-OBJECT AND
lehinath
LILAC-OBJECT
3. Everywhere, you see tulips and lilacs

1. i léelith, woliyeneth wohesheth i
2. AND JONQUIL REL-BE GREEN-OBJ REL-GRASS-OBJ AND
woyetheth
REL-BE SILVER-OBJ
3. and jonquils, green grass, and silver water.

1. wohilith. Wu hohama wa!
2. REL-WATER-OBJ WHAT-A GLORY MY PERCEPTIONS
3. What a glory!

1. Uhudehóo raden, aril hal ra rawith
2. NUISANCE-FOCUS WITHOUT FUTURE WORK NOT NOBODY
wa.
MY PERCEPTIONS
3. Without some specific nuisance, nobody would get any work done.

1. Thalehal, owáano-- thi Aranasha, Athileya, uhudemid
2. BE GOOD-VERY THEREFORE HAVE ARKANSAS APRIL-IN TICK
3. It's a very good thing, therefore, that Arkansas, in April, has ticks.

1. Wil mehothel uhudemid wa...
2. LET-THERE-BE PLURAL-BE BLESSED TICK MY PERCEPTIONS
3. Bless the ticks...

VOCABULARY

hoya: BE BEAUTIFUL, OF A PLACE
liithi: BE WHITE
uhud: NUISANCE
uhudemid: TICK (NUISANCE-CREATURE)
Athil: APRIL
liri: BE COLORED
thal: BE GOOD
hothel: BE BLESSED

A DOZEN NEW WORDS TO ADD TO YOUR DICTIONARY

lema: TO BE GENTLE
ban: TO GIVE
luben: MAP
wethalehale: MELODY (LITERALLY,
MELODY PATH)
lalal: MOTHER'S MILK, BREAST MILK
shulin: TO OVERFLOW, AS WATER DOES
nuthul: ORPHAN
neda: ONLY
thamehal: PLANET
zhalaad: TO RELINQUISH A CHERISHED
PERCEPTION
wotha: A SAGE, A VERY WISE PERSON
dathimemid: SPIDER (LITERALLY,
NEEDLEWORK CREATURE)

A DOZEN CORRECTIONS TO ADD TO YOUR DICTIONARY

ALIEN (noun): neeha
AT LAST, FINALLY: dool
BABY NURSE: hawitha
BARREN ONE: rawoobana
TO BETRAY: ulhad
TO BRAID: boobin
BRIDGE: oodoo
BUT: izh
BUTTERFLY: aalaa
COUSIN: edin
CUPBOARD, DRESSER: dimidim
TO BE CLEAN: the second entry of "to be
clean" should be "to be clear"
(Note: most of these errors are tone
markers either left out by the computer or
inserted in the wrong places; unfortunat-
ly, they matter. Such a young language to
be suffering from scribal error...)

LÁADAN LESSONS

Recommended materials

A First Dictionary and Grammar of Láadan by
Suzette Haden Elgin. This reference book is avail-
able from SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701
(if you cannot obtain it from your local women's
bookstore). \$8 plus \$1.50 postage and handling.
Grammar tape to accompany the dictionary/gram-
mar reference book. \$3 includes postage and han-
dling. From Suzette Haden Elgin, Rt 4 Box 192-E,
Huntsville, AR 72740.
Láadan: A Language for Women, article about the
development of the language, in November 1985
issue of *HOT WIRE*.

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Suzette Haden
Elgin is a Doctor of Linguistics. She has
taught at the University of California,
specializing in Native American lan-
guages. She has written numerous lin-
guistic texts in addition to 10 major SF
and Fantasy novels (including the re-
cently-completed sequel to 'Native
Tongue').*

THE TENTH MUSE

SAPPHO: POET, TEACHER, PRIESTESS

By Jorjet Harper

This is the second of a series of articles on Sappho of Lesbos: her life, her work, her loves, her historical influence, the controversies surrounding her, and how her work was lost and some of it rediscovered.

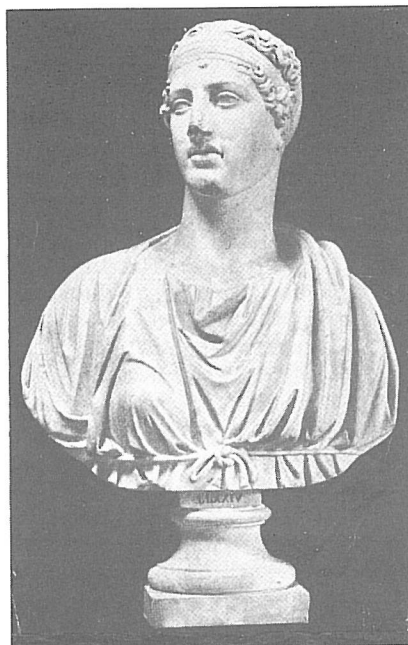
During her own lifetime Sappho was recognized as a poet of genius. When she was able to return to her native island of Lesbos after a period of political exile [See HOT WIRE, March 1986], young women of Athens, Miletus, Phocaea, Colophon—from all over the Greek world—travelled to Lesbos to live with her and be her mathetrai, her pupils.

But exactly what did it mean to be a teacher in 600 B.C., in a world where religion, art, and science were comingled? What might it have meant, especially, to be a woman teacher, in a position of authority, at a time when matriarchal values inherited from prehistoric times were everywhere being supplanted by the rule of patriarchy? And what was the exact nature of Sappho's "school"? These are probably the aspects of Sappho's life that are still most hotly contested by scholars.

MUCH MORE THAN A SCHOOL

"She was the leader and chief personality in an institution which trained young girls," says Sir Maurice Bowra in his Greek Lyric Poetry (1936 edition). "But it was much more than a school or an

THE TENTH MUSE: Who was Sappho of Lesbos, praised by Plato as "the Tenth Muse"? This column explores the facts, speculations, and controversies surrounding the world's first famous Lesbian.



occasional association of girls for religious purposes. It was primarily concerned with the cult of Aphrodite, and its members formed a thiasos—a tightly knit company of religious revellers who dance and sing in honor of a god, or, in this case, the goddess Aphrodite—"which excluded men from its number."

In a quaintly phrased article that appeared in a 1905 issue of The Etude magazine (my thanks to Kay Gardner for bringing this article to my attention), we are told that the girls Sappho taught became members "of as strange a coterie as ever existed in the vision of a philosopher or the dreams of a poet...It was a private circle resembling a female college, in so far as it was comprised entirely of a band of young women, everyone of the opposite sex being rigidly excluded from joining them even socially during hours of leisure." Thus it would appear that headmistress Sappho

did not allow men near her "school" even at the ancient Greek equivalent of teatime.

Some scholars pointedly disagree with the idea that Sappho was in any way a "formal" teacher of young women, and claim that she was not the head of any "institution," that her relationship with her pupils was a loose and fluid, almost haphazard one. Yet none deny that Sappho was a teacher of some sort, and that girls came from far away to study with her, and most scholars are agreed on the use of the word "pupil" to describe them. In light of this, protests about the degree to which she was an "official" teacher seem to be the product of more than cautious scholarship.

Historian Arthur Weigall, for instance, who has written an interesting but somewhat fanciful biography of Sappho, writes that after her return to Lesbos, Sappho "now began—casually, I think, and without plan—to gather about her a number of young girls from her own walk of life, to whom, as a labor of love, she taught the arts in which she excelled." As you can tell from this passage, Weigall makes suppositions about Sappho's life, mind, and intentions that are not based on any evidence; he speaks rather from his own romantic imagination, believing that he "understands" her motives, her psyche. He is not atypical of a number of male writers of the early twentieth century who studied the poet and wrote books about her. In reading them, one must look for the facts embedded in the fancy, and draw one's own conclusions.

Weigall goes on to say that "Sappho always speaks of these girls who thronged to her house as her hetaerae," which "may best be translated as 'intimate com-

panions'...I do not suppose, thus, that she thought of herself as in any sense the head-mistress of a school or academy, as is usually believed, nor does it seem that she wished to be regarded at first as a teacher around whom a group of students, or pupils, or disciples, was gathered...she simply enjoyed having these girls, younger than herself, around her, making free use of her charming house and gardens, vying with one another to do little things for her, adoring her as their ideal, and, incidentally, learning from her..."

Another biographer goes so far in his trivialization that he calls Sappho the founder of the "world's first ladies' club." Such language betrays a reluctance to credit Sappho as a teacher on a par with male figures of similar influence, as Socrates, for example, who was understood and acknowledged as a teacher.

Maximus of Tyre, a writer and lecturer of the second century A.D., specifically makes the parallel between Sappho and Socrates. He says that Sappho's relationship with her female pupils is comparable to that of the philosopher Socrates and his male followers: "What Alcibiades, Charmides, and Phaedrus were to Socrates, Gyrrina, Atthis, and Anactoria were to Sappho."

Sappho translator Mary Barnard is also inclined to the view that Sappho's teaching was in some sense structured, as that of a "formal" teacher, adding, "I myself should prefer, however, to compare Sappho's entirely hypothetical position to that of kapellmeister, or perhaps to that of a Renaissance painter" with a studio full of talented young apprentices.

OTHER TEACHERS

Since we know almost nothing of the social structure of Lesbos in the time of Sappho, we must rely on her poems for information about her position. This, too, is difficult, since so few of her works have survived. But many of the poems we have do speak about her pupils—and not only of her pupils but of other women teachers as well. So whatever formal structure within which Sappho was a teacher of young women, she was not the only one.

In her own town of Mytilene, there were at least two others. One was Andromeda, who stole away Sappho's star pupil (and, judging from the poems, her lover—more about this in a future column) Atthis. Gorgo was another. Bowra says, "There was eager rivalry between Sappho and these women for the affection of various girls...It was for Andromeda that Atthis deserted Sappho, and Sappho felt that the girl had come to hate her." Maximus of Tyre makes this parallel with Socrates, also, claiming that Socrates's "rival" teachers, such as Protagoras, were the equivalent of what Gorgo and Andromeda were to Sappho, who "sometimes takes them to task and at others refutes them and dissembles with them exactly like Socrates."

FREEDOM AND STATUS OF WOMEN

We also know that women had considerable freedom on Lesbos compared to places like Athens, and were still afforded high status in some other places at that time. In her 1958 translation of the collected (i.e., surviving) works of Sappho, Mary Barnard comments, "The surprising number of women poets in sixth century Greece suggests that for some reason people thought it advisable for young women to study and practice the composition of poetry and music. (Even one woman poet would be surprising. We hear, however, of a number of them, including Corinna of Thebes, who is said to have taught Pindar...) The choruses of girls dancing and singing at festivals in honor of Artemis and Aphrodite suggest a possible reason for this unusual attitude, namely, the use of songs in religious exercises, some of which were performed exclusively by and for women."

Leaders of these religious/artistic events, who would also train and write works for choruses, were formally employed by Greek cities for this function. It was a "job," though surely they did not think of it as such in the modern sense. "The parents of ambitious young girls who aspired to the position might, in that case, have been moved to send them to study with the most

celebrated lyricist of the day," says Barnard, "if she were willing to accept them as students, companions, apprentices, novices, or whatever word may be considered appropriate."

CULTIVATING THE MUSES

Whatever motivated the young women who came to surround Sappho, it is clear that Sappho herself was totally dedicated to her art and to her vision of love and beauty. Her house was considered to be under the protection of the goddess Aphrodite, and she herself called it a moisopolon domos (moiso—is Aeolian Greek, the dialect spoken on Lesbos, for the Attic form mouso—muse), a "house of those who cultivate the Muses." And it was, indeed, according to tradition, restricted to women. The combined aspects of art and religion in this conception of her teaching can hardly be disputed. In this sanctified place she lived with and taught the women who performed with her at religious celebrations. And it's quite possible that her function as a teacher was intertwined with that of a priestess.

Several fragments of Sappho's poems may refer to such religious rituals, as in the following:

*And their feet move
rhythmically, as tender
feet of Cretan girls
danced around an
altar of love, crushing
a circle in the soft
smooth flowering grass...*

*The moon shone full
and when the girls stood
around an altar...*

In her new book, The Highest Apple, Judy Grahn says of Sappho, "Her place was on an island, from what can be imagined as a 'House of Women' in the middle of her world. This is a place of far more power than any of the descriptive titles and
© 1985 Jorjet Harper *continued on page 59*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jorjet Harper writes fiction and non-fiction. She is a regular contributor to 'HOT WIRE' and to the 'Windy City Times', a Chicago newspaper. She is the National Coordinator of the Feminist Writers Guild.



Linda Koollish

The original cast of the "Passing" script. (Left to right) Deborah Israel, Julie St. Germaine, Corky Wick, Jennifer Krebs, and Ida VSW Red.

"WHAT A REVELATION..."

Ten Years of Mothertongue Readers' Theater

By Kate Brandt

In 1976, a group of women variously affiliated with San Francisco State University formed the Women's Speakers Network, traveling to community organizations, high school classes, and other local groups to speak about feminist issues. These presentations sometimes were performance pieces rather than lectures, and eventually some of the performers began working as a group separate from the Speakers Network.

Following Mothertongue tradition, I name here the women who have contributed to this article: Mary Angela Collins, Suzanne Israel, Cherie James, Toni Langfield, Jess Miller, Ida VSW Red, Corky Wick, and Kris Kovick, who conducted interviews.

They put together a script called "Breasts and Roses" which included pieces not only about breast cancer and breast reduction, but also about naming ourselves, and "about the roses in our lives, the beauty in our lives." It was performed at the Full Moon Coffeehouse, a women's cafe and bookstore. In December of 1976, the San Francisco Women's Center sponsored a conference on violence against women. The day of workshops included this newly-evolved women's theater, now a readers' theater wherein performers, working without costumes and sets, read from bound scripts. One group of performers reprised "Breasts and Roses" while another presented

a new piece called "Women and Work."

Although the original name of the theater group was itself to be Breasts and Roses, the women concluded that this name might preclude their being invited to perform at high schools. They brainstormed for a new name, and knew they had the perfect one the minute they heard it: Mothertongue.

In 1986, Mothertongue Feminist Readers' Theater celebrates her tenth anniversary with a series of monthly performances in the San Francisco Bay Area. The featured scripts range from pieces performed in that first year to those being written to premiere during the festival.

CURTAIN GOING UP... AND UP

by Kate Brandt

The longevity of grassroots women's theater is a phenomenon which has weathered financial setbacks, orphaning of the arts by government, and periodical upheavals in the women's community. From video productions to fully-staged plays to reading series, feminist theater thrives in a variety of locales, circumstances, and manifestations:

At the Foot of the Mountain (Minneapolis) was founded in 1974. A "women's theater of transformation, celebration, and hope," its work encompasses plays, both those scripted before rehearsal and those created jointly by writer and performers; an "Emergent Artists Series"; the creation of ritual ceremonies for groups and individuals; media projects including films, videos, and audio cassettes; workshops and classes; and collaborations with other feminist theater companies. Contact: Theresa Ann Ziegler, General Manager, At the Foot of the Mountain, 2000 South 5th St., Minneapolis, MN 55454. (612) 375-9487.

Mermaid Theatre (Brookline, MA) has been in existence for five years, performing individually- and collectively-written scripts throughout the Northeast, including at the 1985 Boston Women's Theater Festival. Although most of the original members have moved, Mermaid still exists in the person of Deborah Fortson, who recently has been performing her solo show, "Baby Steps," a piece which follows a child's movement from birth to walking. Deborah intends to continue Mermaid, although she is looking for a new name with a "more political slant." Contact: Deborah Fortson, Mermaid Theater, 167 Babcock, Brookline, MA 02146. (617) 731-9697.

Additional resources:

Women's Music Plus Directory of Resources in Women's Music and Culture, 1417 Thome, Chicago, IL 60660; published by Empty Closet Enterprises; lists women's theater groups and festivals; \$5.

1986 Index/Directory of Women's Media, 3306 Ross Place NW, Washington, DC 20008; published by Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press; lists mainstream feminist resources and individual contacts; \$8.

In a decade which has seen many women's ventures falter in the face of a renewed social and economic conservatism, *Mothertongue* not only survives but thrives. The current active membership is more than 70 women, as new members join to balance the departures or sabbaticals of "old" members. The treasury is maintained through revenues from performances (at which a \$4-\$8 sliding scale is charged; the success of the anniversary festival has been particularly helpful) and through donations, such as the anonymous \$1,000 "challenge grant." Offered in 1985, the grant money is to be matched by *Mothertongue* friends and members. In addition, "branches" of *Mothertongue* exist in other parts of Northern California, and at least three other local women's theater groups—plus a group in Florida—have their roots in *Mothertongue*.

Are there really that many frustrated actors running loose in the women's community? Not exactly. Because if "acting" is perceived as the art of being who you're not, then *Mothertongue* is the Janus-face of acting: it's about being who you are.

"A lot of us had secret ambitions about acting," explains co-founder Corky Wick, "and so really a lot of our work has been in demystifying the stage. We don't hold auditions, and we don't have a hierarchical order of directors, writers, and actors...Our guiding principles are feminist principles of cooperation, non-hierarchical consensus..."

This "non-hierarchical consensus" is reached at monthly general meetings, open to all members. Decisions of the meeting are announced to the membership through a monthly newsletter, produced under a "rotating editorship" by whoever is willing (and someone always is!) to take notes that month and type, reproduce, and mail them. There is also a Policy Circle (again open to any interested member) which proposes long-range goals and establishes suggested guidelines to be presented at general meetings.

"This is the feminist process," explains Corky Wick, "this is living the movement, and it has been very sustaining."

"By adhering to feminist principles," adds early member Jess Miller, "we offer a chance to as many people as possible."

This applies to all aspects of *Mothertongue*, as Corky Wick describes:

"At the end of every performance there is a call for interested women to join our open scripts and contribute to scripts already in performance." To "join" a script, a woman must attend meetings of that script's "group" and participate in writing and compiling the script material, and/or performing in the final production. To be considered a member of *Mothertongue*, a woman must be a participant in a script group for three months or attend three general meetings.

The resulting scripts, the heart of *Mothertongue*, are not the creations of imagination, but the lives of women. Miller says, "We tell our own stories rather than create characters." Wick adds, "Many of the pieces come from women's journal writing, and for women who have been timid to publish, here is an opportunity to 'publish orally'...We're telling our own stories."

The telling of the stories, rather than any dramatic embellishment, is the focus of all *Mothertongue* performances. *Mothertongue* follows the format of the traditional readers' theater. Since some of the founders came out of a university speech department, Miller explains, "You had people who were familiar with oral interpretation and readers' theater, who adapted it for their own uses."

These adaptations have made *Mothertongue* less formal and more personal than traditional readers' theater. The women dress

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For more information about Mothertongue, contact: Mothertongue Readers' Theater, c/o The San Francisco Women's Building, 3543 18th St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Kate Brandt is a San Francisco poet and reviewer, and a co-editor of the anthologies 'conspire: to breathe together' and 'We're Working On It.' She suspects that Mothertongue was the real reason she moved to the Bay Area in the first place.

FIREBRAND BOOKS

MAKING AVAILABLE THE QUALITY WORK OF LESBIAN AND FEMINIST WRITERS

By Sue Gambill

Nancy Bereano is editor and publisher of Firebrand Books, a new and dynamic lesbian and feminist publishing company in Ithaca, NY. Within its first year, Firebrand put out six books. Six more are planned for 1986.

Before starting Firebrand, Bereano worked as editor of the Feminist Series at Crossing Press for four years. During that time she hadn't seriously considered starting her own publishing company, mainly because it requires a good amount of capital. The most important thing for her was being able to produce the books she wanted, and she was able to do that at Crossing.

In 1984, however, differing perspectives on the needs of the Feminist Series and of the Press resulted in her being fired. In order to continue with the kind of work she'd been doing, it became necessary—and possible—for her to start her own publishing company. Bereano says, "I immediately felt the need to do something, as opposed to sitting back and licking my wounds. So I was fired in October, Firebrand was started in November, and the first set of books was published in April."

Along with good administrative skills, Bereano has a real love of the printed word. She has always been a reader, and has felt the changes that reading has helped to facilitate in her own life. She is keenly aware of the impact that books have upon the world. With film, radio, and television production often out of reach for many women because of high production costs, Bereano sees print media as an invaluable and accessible avenue of communication that is vitally needed if a movement is to survive and thrive.

A COMPANY OF HER OWN

As editor and publisher—chief executive of her own company—Bereano has additional responsibilities and aggravations. But she also makes decisions for herself, and has the freedom to experiment with new things. She enjoys being a public person, and in operating Firebrand Books she takes on the challenge of generating certain kinds of public images through the books she chooses to publish. There's the risk of choosing a book that does not do well, or one that is open to criticism. Those kinds of mistakes can be costly and very public. But Bereano feels the work is essential and challenging; she gets great satisfaction working with women whose writing she respects, helping to turn their private endeavors into public ones. "There's a big difference," she says, "between writing and trying to have that writing be published and accessible to a wider audience."

Bereano's past experience as an editor enabled her to immediately begin producing titles. She already knew how to turn a manuscript into a book. She was already familiar with the typesetters and designers in Ithaca. Her professional reputation encouraged women to trust her with their manuscripts before there was an actual company structure. Distributors knew that Firebrand was going to produce books comparable to those that Bereano had generated for the Crossing Feminist Series. There was a base from which to begin.

The new aspect of the job was starting an independent publishing business. There was a lot to learn during that first year, everything from contracting for UPS services

to constructing a realistic budget.

The goal, from a financial point of view, was to produce as many books as possible for as little money as possible. "What that means, given the absurd cash flow problems in publishing," Bereano explains, "is the sooner you can get books sold, the better the chance to produce books the following season. You don't get paid for 90 to 120 days after the book sales. That meant from November 1984—when I started—until September 1985 (four months after the first publications), there was no cash coming in from the sale of books. Any cash available was fundraising money. That's been part of my impetus to get as many books in print as quickly as possible."

Some of the best business advice from within the industry came from Helaine Harris of Dae-dalus Books. Her advice: if you must be up until two in the morning, edit manuscripts, don't pack books. Let the distributors handle your order fulfillment. In the small press movement, people generally say exactly the opposite. There is a widespread belief that the press should do its own order fulfillment in order to build up the clientele.

Bereano would rather be editing books than packing cartons anyway. Additionally, a benefit of having distributors handle order fulfillment is that then they will also do the accounting procedures. This includes making sure Bereano gets paid by the people who have ordered books.

Firebrand has benefited from the feminist and lesbian presses that have gone before, such as Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, Persephone, Diana, and Naiad. Information was available because of the experience

of these groups. Bereano says, "The small press movement has gotten more sophisticated in understanding what it needs financially to stay afloat, to learn how to market to their particular clientele—whether that is computer how-to books or lesbian novels. You don't sell those books best by aiming as broadly as possible, but by understanding how to reach the people who really are your readers. Along the way you pick up other people that are unexpected."

BUILDING ON THE BASIC LESBIAN AND FEMINIST READERSHIP

Firebrand's marketing approach reflects the philosophy of the press. The focus and commitment is to make available the quality work of lesbian and feminist writers, reflecting the diversity of our movement. The catalog includes books such as Living As A Lesbian, Cheryl Clarke's poetry volume playing variations on the themes of blackness, anger, violence, loss, loneliness, lesbianism, and sex; Moll Cutpurse, Ellen Galford's lesbian romp featuring the adventures of a swashbuckling heroine; Jonestown and Other Madness, Pat Parker's fifth poetry collection addressing the facts of her life—being black, female, and lesbian; and the recently published My Mama's Dead Squirrel, lesbian essays on Southern culture by Mab Segrest with an introduction by Adrienne Rich.

Firebrand's approach not only strives to present the diversity of experience of lesbian and feminist women, but—hopefully—will also succeed in taking these voices out in the larger communities from which each of us come.

Firebrand published a collection of short stories, The Sun Is Not Merciful, by Anna Lee Walters, a Native American woman living on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. She writes about contemporary tribal life. Walters is not a lesbian and there isn't one lesbian character in the book. The stories are written from a feminist perspective, with many strong women characters. There are male characters, though the collection does not specifically focus on heterosexuality. Bereano is not inter-

ested in publishing stories about the institution of heterosexuality, nor is she interested only in material about lesbians. She says, "I think it's essential that lesbians, as a basically disenfranchised community, look at what other disenfranchised communities do for survival. And that's what Anna Lee Walters writes about. My hope is that, for example, the women who read Beth Brant's Mohawk Trail (who I also published, who's a lesbian as well as a Native American, and who is accepted in the lesbian-feminist world because of those categories she fits into), will also decide to pick up Anna Lee Walters because there's something about a Native American voice that appeals to them." And, in turn, hopefully those readers in the traditional Native American literary world



Janis Kelly

"You don't sell small press books by aiming as broadly as possible, but by understanding how to reach the people who really are your readers."

who are already familiar with the work of Walters will pick up Beth Brant's Mohawk Trail—enabling the work of a lesbian writer to get into the hands of people who might not otherwise have known of Brant's work. Bereano explains, "I start off with a basic lesbian and feminist readership interested in exploring the significance of difference, and then I build on that readership."

Another example of this is Tender Warriors by Rachel Guido deVries. The novel is about an Italian-American family, with a brother as the main character. The narrator is his sister, who's a lesbian, and the novel is written

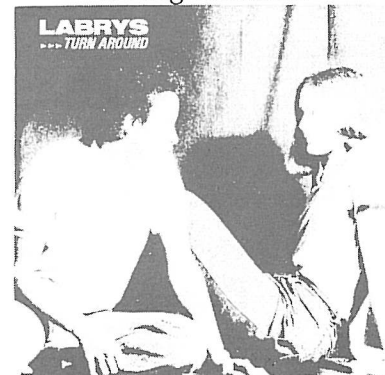
with a lesbian perspective. Bereano plans to market the book to both feminist and Italian-American audiences. "The Italian-American readers may or may not be disturbed by the fact that the narrator is a lesbian," she says, "but they certainly will understand the particular insider's view that this Italian-American writer brings to writing."

Firebrand Books is an important new link in the ever-growing chain of women's culture. "It's really essential that we have books," Bereano says, "and other forms of printed media, as a way of communicating with one another. I view Firebrand as part of a larger, progressive movement that is learning how to work in coalition with one another to get the changes in the world we need in order to survive."●

To obtain Firebrand's catalog: Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (607) 272-0000.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Sue Gambill is a writer who recently returned to the Midwest after living every place else for 13 years.

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NEW MUSIC AMERICA

Festival Report

By C.W. Child

When I saw the stage set up with thousands of dollars worth of electronic equipment, washtubs suspended from ropes, and a lone bicycle wheel, I knew this music festival was unlike any I'd ever attended. But when musicians came out with serious demeanors and actually "played" the washtubs, struck the spokes of the bicycle wheel with mallets, and sawed on the amplified spokes with violin bows, I asked myself, "What am I doing here?"

Actually, I was in Houston attending the eighth annual New Music America festival, 10 days of avant garde music hosted each year by a different major city. This year's festival was devoted partly to sound installations or sonic environments, which is why I wanted to be there. I was curious and, after all, wasn't Pauline Oliveros, the best-known contemporary woman composer in the world, the artistic advisor of this year's festival? And wasn't this the festival where Laurie Anderson got her start? My straight-laced New England conservatism was to be challenged constantly over the three days of events I attended.

Even though only 23 of the 100 or so scheduled performances were women's works, I was able to go to several of them. I thought HOT WIRE readers might be interested to know what these avant garde women artists are doing since none of our women's music festivals or producers present "new" or avant garde music performances.

There were quite a few sound installations by women at New Music America, and a few by teams of women such as "Sonic Miniature Golf"—a cross between miniature golf and pinball. To "play," the participant had to hit a red golf ball past various obstacles like chimes and gongs or through 30-foot-long corrugated hoses or over xylophones and upside down aluminum bowls to end at holes which buzzed or peeped or burped.

Mary Cullather's "Y-Pool Installation" was 45 minutes of sounds through speakers mounted on posts all around Houston's YWCA swimming pool. The sound collage included cement pouring, offshore oil rig noises recorded during Hurricane Alicia, and noise from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Carnival. I was glad the sound level was kept low because of a swimming class for babies, or I might have drowned in the assault.

"The Long String Instrument" was a series of 50-foot-long harpsichord strings extending across a large room at waist height and ending at a wooden box resonator. Clamps at various points altered the pitch of the strings, which

composer Ellen Fullman played by walking along the strings' full length with rosin-covered hands—producing long drones and overtones.

For years I'd received flyers about Bonnie Barnett's tunnel hums, events where large groups of participants gather with the



Pat Oleszko: "Where Fools Russian, Or War'n Piece is a Pat-pourri of dissonant objections over rules, weapons, and the ruling crass."

composer to vocally set underground passageways or highway tunnels resonating. Part of a nationwide series, the "Tunnel Hum Project," Barnett presented "Under Houston Humming" for festival goers, for unaware pedestrians who happened upon the scene, and for those who tuned in to their public radio station which broadcasted the hum live.

All works weren't large-scale sound installations. There were many concert performances as well, and as with the bicycle wheel, anything that produced a sound of any kind was included.

Just to give an idea of how far-out some of these performances went, I'd like to quote what composer Pat Oleszko wrote in the festival program about her work: "'Where Fools Russian, Or War'n Piece' is a Pat-pourri of dissonant objections over rules, weapons, and the ruling crass. Fool of pose and cons, it trips blithe thru various denatured go-vomit resources that premise peace and on closer inspect-shun vanish in despair. 'Watch the world destroyed, with flags and

songs employed, hear the leaders spoil—PLAY BRAWL!' War'n Piece (defeat goes over defense) is a child's play on worlds with unfortunate anterior directions by a-dolts."

In one of the last concerts, three men spent 20 minutes making nightmare noises and sonic ejaculations on amplified violin, trombone with aluminum pie plate mute, saxophone, and every kind of percussion instrument one could possibly endure, all played at ear-splitting decibels. The woman next to me said, "It's as if they're getting back at their mothers for not letting them make noise when they were little."

After this piece, by an ensemble which shall go nameless, the announcer introduced the next piece, which he said was very delicate and would require our attention and silence. I caught the words "Thank God!" on the lips of several of the women in the audience.

Eleanor Hovda announced that her piece "Cymbalmusic/Centerflow III" was inspired by cross-country skiing in her native state, Minnesota. The instrument she played was made of two cymbals, one upside down on top of one right side up. It looked kind-of like a car wheel's empty hub. She played the cymbals by slowly rubbing them with mallets whose heads were made of superballs. The effect was delicate indeed, the softest of metallic drones, fragile yet constant. Every once in a while she'd whisper "Shhhhh," and even though it was 80° in the room, the chill of a snowy day went up my spine. In the middle of the piece she took two cello bows and, holding them like ski poles, she played the edges of the cymbals with cross-country skiing movements. Again, the "shhhhhhh" of the snowy trail. Hovda's work was by far the loveliest I'd heard at New Music America, and convinced me that some new music composers want to explore introspective sound and inner worlds.

Of all the sound installations I visited, the most creative was Ellen Zweig's "She Travelled For The Landscape." For this piece, four participants at a time climbed into a carriage drawn by four white mules. The composer, in heavy velvet Victorian dress,

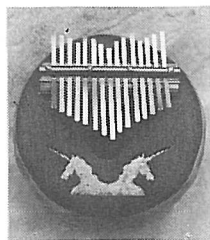
went with us in the buggy—which had been converted into a camera obscura. A lens only a few inches in diameter had been placed in the middle of one of the carriage's two blackened windows. The lens picked up scenes outside the carriage as we rode around downtown Houston and projected them onto a circular screen which replaced the other window. As we rode along, Zweig's text-sound piece, poetry, and observances taped in overlays of spoken words played on small speakers above our heads. The effect was as if we'd somehow stepped into a time machine, for the scenes were mirror images, blurred around the edges like photographs from the nineteenth century, and the "music" was like something from the twenty-first century. It was a strange, evocative, and wonderful work.

Though a good 85 percent of the music I heard at New Music America was chaotic, the other 15 percent made my trip worthwhile. I was reminded of George Sand's description of art and artists, and I paraphrase: some artists depict the world as it is, others look to the ideal, the world as it can be.

I came away from the Houston event musically invigorated and creatively stimulated. The next New Music America is scheduled for fall 1987 in Philadelphia. I'll be there. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: C.W. Child has written for 'Paid My Dues,' 'Sojourner,' and for other publications. She is a world-class ocarina player and spends most of her time in psychic communication with seagulls.

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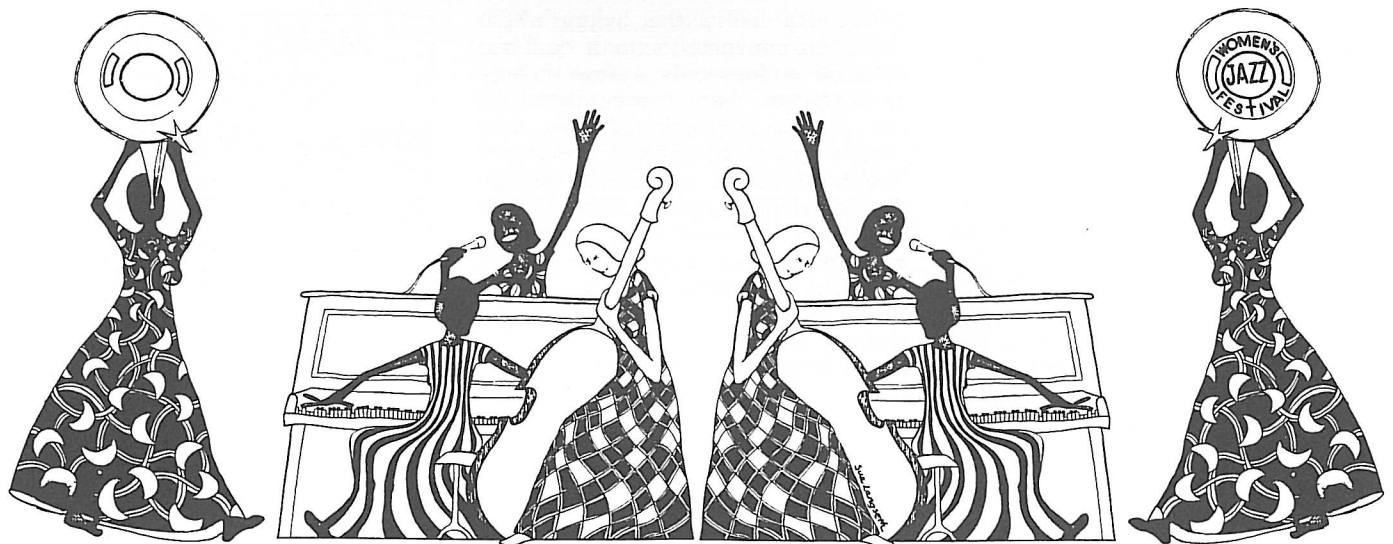
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THE END OF AN ERA

Goodbye K.C. Jazz Festival

By Betty MacDonald

Well, my mailbox yielded some unhappy news this time... the 1986 Women's Jazz Festival in Kansas City was cancelled. The letter stated, "Those of us with the organization since its creation (in 1977) do indeed regret the passing of this wonderful effort, but know that a handful cannot go on indefinitely to support the demands of festival production even on a more reduced level."

My heart is saddened, but I'm in total understanding. Pulling off the festival each year has been an awesome year-round process for the non-profit Women's Jazz Festival Corporation.

Why no more festival? The reason is the usual one—money! Although ticket prices for paid events were quite reasonable, revenue was not sufficient to support the festival's many well-attended free events. This was in addition to financial support from arts councils, benefactors in the business sector, and membership con-

tributions received from individuals, jazz societies, and student groups in 32 states. Funds were also secured from the sale of festival items such as T-shirts, tote bags, posters, and notecards. Benefit events were held throughout the year in Kansas City to bolster the event.

The labor to produce the festival came from unsalaried volunteers, and—due to the growth of the organization—there was need for a paid staff person to coordinate and augment volunteer efforts. Funds for such a position were not available.

The dissolution seems final, but the contributions of the festival continue to have a positive effect for all who came in contact with it, and even for those who only knew it existed. Jan Leder, flutist, and author of *Women in Jazz*, said, "Just knowing that the Women's Jazz Festival was out there meant there was a place to go. Other women

gave me encouragement, but it was important that [the festival was] there. It will go on in another form."

I was fortunate enough to attend three festivals. The influence of it has enhanced my life and profession as a musician and disc jockey. In an effort to share what the festival gave me, and to further its memory and spirit, I'd like to set down some of the historic facts.

The festival was founded in 1977 by Carol Comer and Dianne Gregg who tirelessly kept it going until 1984. The first festival, a one-day event, was held in March 1978. Following festivals expanded and in 1983 the festival was five days in length, with 17 separate events. The final festival, held in 1985, followed a year of having no festival. Julie Hanson, board president, was coordinator of the last gathering.

The purposes of the festival were to create a market for the

increasing number of female jazz artists and to stimulate a general interest in jazz. The original plan was to accomplish these goals by sponsorship of concerts, clinics, workshop sessions, lectures, film series, student activities, competitions, and scholarships.

They managed to do it all in seven festivals over an eight-year span. The events of the festival included programs for young children as well as a student big band concert for junior high, high school, and college bands. There was always a jazz film presentation with a lecture, showing rare film clips of women like Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, and Ethel Waters. These were presented by noted jazz historians Rosetta Reitz and Leonard Feather.

A regular feature for Friday nights was the TNT (Top New Talent) concert which gave exposure to talent deserving wider recognition. Not all of the women presented were new; indeed many of them had been performing for years. However, they all deserved a chance to be heard by the audience. Some of the TNT talent over the years: Deuce (with Ellen Seeling and Jean Fineberg); Joyce Collins; The Swing Sisters (from Canada); Sweet Honey In The Rock; Tintomara (from Sweden); Sheila Jordan; Alive!; Bougainvillea (Boston); and Ida McBeth (a Kansas City favorite).

Jam sessions were an essential part of the happening for all musicians, regardless of their level of experience. There was a genesis jam for beginners; a jam for women who desired or needed to be in a women-only situation; and an integrated jam with men in attendance. Although the main focus of the festival was to showcase female talent, men participated in clinics and workshops, as members of student bands, in Sunday afternoon free concert groups, as participants in jam sessions, and by volunteering services on the board and with actual festival operation.

A page in the 1985 festival program lists 80 jazzwomen who have performed at the seven festivals. Among the headliners were Mary Lou Williams, Marian McPartland, Shirley Scott, Carmen



Marian McPartland at the First Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival, 1978

Gail Indvik/PAID MY DUES spring 1978

“Every time I sing or play a note on my violin, somewhere the influence of the festival is present.”



Betty Carter: one of 80 headliners to play the K.C. Women's Jazz Fest during its heyday.

Gail Indvik/PAID MY DUES spring 1978

McRae, Anita O'Day, Toshiko Akyoshi, Betty Carter, Nancy Wilson, Rare Silk, Maiden Voyage, and Mary Osborne.

The festival received national media attention and was viewed by musicians, fans, promoters, and jazz educators as an opportunity to meet, talk, perform, and make business connections. The festival held a well-deserved reputation of respect on an international as well as national level.

There couldn't have been a better place for all this to happen than in Kansas City, with its great jazz heritage and local pride. This was the nurturing source for the event. The festival became an integral and influential part of the jazz scene, and now occupies its own unique niche in the music history of Kansas City.

There's so much of the festival spirit being kept alive in all who were touched by it. In 1985 I attended the festival as a paid performer working in conjunction with Susan Freundlich. Susan is well-known for working with musicians to bring music to the hearing impaired. She combines American Sign Language, dance, and mime to interpret the lyrics, rhythm, and other elements of the music. We performed for about 500 people with a sixth of the audience being either deaf or hearing impaired. What a joy!

Every time I sing or play a note on my violin—somewhere the influence of the festival is present. The greatest thing for me was finding that I wasn't alone—there were a lot of other women out there playing jazz. What a shot of courage I received to step forward and express myself, to deliver my musical message, to share the beauty from within. I discovered I am part of a movement of women paving the way for other women. ●

My thanks to Mary Hodges, acting president, for making available the material to write this article.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Betty MacDonald is in her sixth year as a jazz disc jockey, on the air six nights a week at WDST in Woodstock, NY. In addition to freelance writing and performing, she recently produced and recorded 'Waltzing in the Sagebrush,' a cassette of her singing and violin playing.

REDWOOD RECORDS

More Than Just "Holly's Label"

By Toni L. Armstrong

Imagine Holly Near on tour in a new city, looking in the yellow pages for information about record outlets, and sending it home to her parents so that they could send information about their one album to these places. How did Redwood Records get from there to being a record company with international distribution that has sold over 1 million records?

THE EARLY DAYS

Redwood Records started in 1972 when Holly recorded Hang In There. The intent was not to start a record company per se; but Holly realized when she was touring that the fans wanted the music to take home. She and her parents pressed 2,000 copies, and expected to sell them gradually. They were very surprised when the record sold out quickly (and it has now sold close to 50,000 copies). In the early days, Holly used her parents' Ukiah, California address, doing shipping out of the Near's garage.

Holly became involved with the women's music movement in the mid 1970s. She began doing concerts for women's music audiences, worked with Meg Christian, and released the woman-identified Imagine My Surprise (Redwood, 1979). Her blending of progressive politics, lesbian-feminism, and professional entertainment skills gained her immediate and lasting appreciation from thousands of supporters and women's music fans.

Redwood gradually outgrew the Ukiah location, and the company moved to the Bay Area. The decision was made to form a collective organization, though Redwood was technically still a sole proprietorship. During that time, several women—including Torie Os-



(Left to right) Bottom row: Jo Palumbo, Cynthia Frenz, Joanie Shoemaker, Renee Gaumont (on bottom step). Second row: Mojdeh Marashi, Suzanne Harkless. Third row: Ayne Shore, Melissa Howden. Top row: Loey Powell, Jo-Lynne Worley. Not pictured: Lisa Belenky and Marti Morgensen.

born, Carol Orshan, Marsha Cummings, and Trudy Fulton—were involved. Holly's parents were very supportive of this new direction.

The company continued to expand, and internal problems developed within the collective. When Holly's parents were no longer involved, she was looking to have a group of women run it so that the business would be democratically owned and managed. Redwood was approximately \$60,000 in debt at that time, chiefly from the production of the Imagine My Surprise album, and the women in the collective had personal and professional goals other than choosing to make careers out of working at Redwood Records. They did not want to make the commitment to the company that would have been necessary.

Meanwhile, Jo-Lynne Worley and Joanie Shoemaker were in

Kansas City, owning New Earth Books & Records. They had been record distributors since 1977, and had been producing Holly in concert at least once a year through Willow Productions, their non-profit company, since 1976.

THE NEW PARTNERSHIP

"In early 1979," says Jo-Lynne, "Holly called from Texas and said she had three days off and would like to come and stay with us. Every morning we left for work and she would stay there. When we'd come home, she'd have a million questions for us about our work styles and business skills. She had been talking with Amy Horowitz [of Roadwork] about doing a national No-Nukes tour, and she thought it would be great to do eight or maybe 10 cities."

Joanie and Jo-Lynne, however,

recommended a 25-city tour, and Holly asked them to coordinate it.

"Holly told us that she wasn't sure what she was going to do, but that she may fold Redwood. We began to consider and discuss what it would entail if the three of us became partners and co-owned the business," Jo-Lynne adds. They wanted to be equal partners, and had no interest in running the business as a collective.

"Joanie and I had been really wanting to move out of Kansas City. We both grew up there and I had come out to California and gone to college. You know how you sometimes really need a change in your life? We were at that point. We sold our businesses and did this national No-Nukes tour in 1979. It was very successful."

They formed a California partnership at the end of the tour. The \$60,000 debt was retired in the first year and a half of Redwood's new structure.

"After we paid off that debt," Joanie says, "we made a decision to go into more debt in order to produce albums, to have a staff, to tour, and to expand. We have an operating debt that outside financial consultants don't feel is bad in terms of our debt-equity ratio—but of course we don't like it. Part of what we're interested in doing is to figure out how to capitalize ourselves in a different way than through debt.

"In the next few months, we'll be doing some work with joint ventures or with limited partnerships. In the past we've always just taken loans from people. We have an impeccable record on loans—we've never defaulted and I don't think we've ever been late. It's worked very well for us, and we have more people who want to loan us money than we've been able to utilize. It's quite a testament to this network and to this way of working with people who are very supportive—especially of Holly Near.

"We have never had investors. We've had people who wanted to do limited partnerships on specific records, where they would invest their money and if the record broke even, they would continue to get a royalty. In this way, they

could get a lot more money than they originally invested. Or they could make less money back. It's a risk-type of category, and it's different than a loan because we are obligated to pay the loans back. We have always decided not to do this until now; we have wanted to keep ownership and control over our products," Joanie explains.

Since Joanie, Jo-Lynne, and Holly became partners, Redwood's expansion has been continual. They moved to the Bay Area to eliminate the Ukiah-to-Bay Area commute, where they worked out of their home. In early 1983, they moved to MacArthur, where their offices, in two buildings situated next to each other, are located.

They are bursting at the seams again. In the last few years, they have expanded their catalog, and expect to have about 45 albums available by the end of 1986. According to Jo-Lynne, they have an operating budget of approximately \$800,000 per year. It's come a long way from being a garage-based enterprise with a catalog of one Holly Near record.

PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

"People ask me where I work," says staff member Melissa Howden, "and I want to say 'at a small independent record company.' But we have international exposure, so it becomes funny. Among independent record companies, we're probably in the top five, along with Flying Fish and Folkways. Windham Hill is not strictly 'independent' now that they've become affiliated with A&M. That means they have the support and resources of A&M; there's a lot more money now."

In terms of the market, Redwood fills a niche that no one else does, in terms of alternative progressive music. Under that general umbrella comes women's music, New Song, and a lot of other categories.

"A lot of our music is progressive," says Jo-Lynne. "We're not strictly a women's music company, but we want at least 50 percent—or more—of our records to be by women, and the material must be non-sexist.

"One thing that's important to us is to advance social change

and humanitarian ideals through music. We do that overtly—like what Holly does—and covertly. Linda Tillery, for example, does not usually espouse politics from the stage, but she's a very political woman. She has some definite political views about the way we live our lives and how the world is. It manifests itself sometimes on stage and sometimes in just who she is in this—and in the mainstream—music industry.

"The Nicaraguan music we produce, for example, is primarily love songs about the country or about the people. The personal is political."

Joanie reiterates, "We feel committed to politics being present, but the presence of politics is not always there in the lyrics. The artist herself, and the significance of what it took to get that person to this spot in history, can be very important. Inti-Illimani, for example, are Chilean exiles. They happened to be out of the country at the time of the coup, when a lot of people—like Victor Jara—were murdered. They can't return to Chile, and haven't been able to for 11 years, because of the politics of the situation. There is a list of people who are never allowed to go back because the right wing government does not want anyone associated with culture or left wing politics to return. A lot of Central and South American countries have that kind of exile community. Their music is inspiring and moving. They are musicians who struggle with various movements and politics in the world."

According to Jo-Lynne, there was a lot of coalition building between Holly as an artist and Inti as a group. She also says, "The tour was successful in consciousness-raising, but it was terrible economically. There was a \$10,000 hard-cash loss. Then there was the expense of bringing them over and putting Holly on the road with them. That meant she could not go back to those cities for a year, which could mean a loss of up to \$100,000. But," she adds, "we make those political choices."

Another way in which their political goals are addressed is through the Redwood Records Cultural and Educational Fund, a non-profit organization formed

to coordinate the non-commercial educational and organizing work that is part of Redwood's commitment to progressive cultural work. RRCEP sponsored Holly and Inti's "Singing For Peace In The Americas" tour. The organizing campaign they coordinated raised nearly \$40,000 for humanitarian projects in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Chile.

"One thing we want to do is to expand the audience, both the record-buying and concert-going audiences," says Jo-Lynne. "In order to survive as a business and to have as much of a positive effect on as many lives as possible, we need to get the music out. Everybody here feels that culture is a very important thing in the world. This belief is a mainstay at Redwood."

Melissa says, "This year we're making a shift to being much more of a record company, rather than a management company that records the artists' albums."

"Though Holly was the founder and she has more albums in the catalog than anyone else, Redwood is now more than just 'Holly's label.' That is for her good as well as ours, because the weight of the company used to be all on her financially. We would rely on her album sales and tour income for the survival of the company, and to pay everyone. That really put a lot of stress on her."

"The reality for a company our size and in our position is that we need to find new markets in order to survive. This is not to say we're leaving behind the old ones," Melissa stresses. "They have to come with us, too, because the new audiences and markets by themselves won't do it for us. Some people have felt like we're leaving them behind or wanting to forget our roots. Our day-to-day reality is that we know we need what's ahead, but we also need where we've come from. Trying to make the two, three, or however many elements there are live together in harmony is something we work with daily."

WOMEN'S MUSIC AND REDWOOD RECORDS

Redwood's expansion to include artists other than Holly—including men—has been controversial, even

though Holly has continued to be uncompromising on stage in her identity as a lesbian-feminist and in her openness about her politics.

"In the women's community," says Joanie, "there are some women who agree with us and some who don't. The women whose number one political perspective is women-focused do not necessarily find total compatibility with our brand of politics—which is not to say that they don't buy certain of our albums. The major problem has been some level of disappointment on the part of women who feel like we have strayed from separatism. Whether we hear it or not, we know the criticism is there from women who are more separatist in terms of women's music than we are. Regardless of the sexual preference of everyone who works here,



Renee Gaumont

Warehouse manager Jo Palumbo, with Ayne Shore

we don't define ourselves as a lesbian company, and we don't really even draw the line in terms of defining it as a 'women's company.' It's a women-owned company, and even that could change, though everyone who works here directly with us now is a woman. Any of those things could change and it would not be totally contradictory to us.

"It's been hard," she says. "We all have soft skins at certain times. I think we are able to take it now with a grain of salt."

Part of what the women at Redwood want to do is to be more prolific in vocalizing about the internal changes. They want everyone to understand what is going on, rather than be confused.

"We don't try to pull the wool over anyone's eyes," continues Joanie. "We try to be clear in our advertising if it's a Latin American men's group. On the other hand, it's real important to us to carry a broad variety of artists."

We feel like we're achieving that now, and we're happy. But we're also real happy that we're putting out Hunter Davis's new album. We haven't had an album from a sort-of-new-to-the-circuit artist who is woman-focused for awhile."

From time to time over the years, complaints about working with Redwood have been voiced by various producers in the women's music network—primarily that Redwood may choose to work with other (male) production groups in cities where the women producers have already put considerable effort into building Holly's audience. Some producers have said, at the annual Music Industry Conference in Bloomington and in other gatherings, that the efforts of the women's music production companies have contributed a great deal to Holly's large following, and that it's time to reap the profits of that labor. These producers feel that the money should stay in the women's music circuit, not go to other producers.

How does Redwood make decisions about which producers to work with? What factors other than bottom-line dollars influence who gets the final contract?

"Sometimes," says Jo-Lynne, "it's as simple as who has written us and what they want to do. I love it when we don't have to initiate bookings, when we only have to respond."

"Sometimes we have multiple requests from the same city. Maybe we've been back twice with the same political organization and now we have letters from five...it might be as simple as what they want to accomplish in that city, what the goals of the event are. Sometimes it's our need to take Holly to a city because we're in that region, and the last production company we worked with doesn't want to do her again for another six months. Sometimes it's fairly cut and dried, like an issue of money."

"With women producers, there were only two or three specific instances where we felt like we needed to make a change. Either we had been through a process with the production company which couldn't be resolved in a way that we would all get our needs met, or we felt the need to go with a particular political

group. In some instances the production company didn't want to, for example, do Holly and Ronnie in a large enough hall, or the only way they'd do it is if we brought Pete [Seeger]—which was not acceptable to us—so we went with another production company. They have to make those choices. Or maybe they didn't want to do Hunter—they'd rather do somebody bigger. Everyone puts a lot of work into this industry and business, and there are always reasons to be disgruntled," Jo-Lynne says.

NEW ARTISTS

Redwood has made a commitment to making their resources available to artists from other countries, including Central and South America, Australia, and Canada.

"We feel," says Melissa, "that the Women's Independent Label Distribution network really works. If you're an artist like Judy Small coming over from Australia, the network of bookers, producers, festivals, and all the stuff that comes up at Bloomington provides a machine whereby someone who is relatively unknown can come in and find places to perform. She can find outlets for her records, which can receive radio airplay. She says it's like a second family, and there's nothing like it in Australia.

"Also, we have moved into the New Song movement, which is coming out of Central America. It basically talks about conditions now. There are a lot of different definitions of it. Holly and I were in Ecuador at the New Song festival in July 1985, and if you're in South America they see it as strictly Central and South American tradition, talking about what's going on in their lives socially and politically, that sort of thing. Not to fly in the face of that, but we also see that there is a genre of New Song in this country. It is an expansion of the political folk song, dealing with right now, not telling stories of the past. There are a lot of people who are categorized as folk singers who are doing that sort of thing. What Sweet Honey In The Rock [who were also at that festival] is doing could be considered New Song, though they prefer to call

it black women's sound. Sabia is definitely doing New Song, and probably a more traditional form of it since they are based in the Central and South American tradition."

Among the Redwood international artists are Ferron and Connie Kaldor from Canada; Judy Small from Australia; Inti-Illimani is from Chile, though they are now exiled in Italy; the brother and sister duo called Guadabaranco, and Salvador Bustos, both from Nicaragua; and Roy Brown from Puerto Rico.

ARTIST SELECTION

More and more women have the goal to record on the Redwood label. The company presently receives more than 10 tapes per month, and the volume is steadily increasing. Though it is a buyer's market, choosing which artists will next have the benefits of the company's powerful, if limited, resources is not an easy task.

"We have a whole procedure for decision making here as to what we take on and how we prioritize what we take on," explains Jo-Lynne. "Somebody sends a tape and initially a board of four people here listen to it. There's a form with a rating system that we fill out when we listen to the tape. We tried other ways, like having one person on staff listen and decide if anyone else should listen, and like letting them pile up in a corner. We like this new system. We feel that if we're going to take a product on, the whole staff has to be behind it. Everybody has to know what they are getting into because it impacts on everyone. The rating system is for the four raters, but everybody is invited to listen." [See "Artist Selection" insert.]

They may decide to produce a record completely, from raising the funds to handling the marketing campaign. Or they may decide to distribute artists who have produced the albums on their own labels, as in the case of Linda's Secrets on her own 411 label, or Ferron's Shadows on a Dime on Lucy Records. Regardless of the contractual specifics, though, Redwood makes a major marketing and promotional commitment to the records.

ARTIST SELECTION

Very few of the tapes that Redwood receives get rated high enough by all four raters to even be considered.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE THIS TAPE IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES? (0-3 POINTS)

1. **The art, the music, etc.**
2. **The politics** (which may be manifested on the tape or may be evident in who the artist is in the world.)
3. **The production** (which includes the whole package: the producer, the engineer, the musicians, the cover art, the design, and the name value if there is a "name.")
4. **Does this album fit into one of Redwood's already developed markets?** (Is it promotable and marketable given Redwood's standards and experiences, i.e., women's music, progressive, black, Latin, New Age? A children's album would be given a 0 because Redwood does not have that market.)
5. **Realistically, does this artist have the management, booking, financing, and organization to plan and pull off a release tour to at least 10 cities?** (Is she willing to continue this type of work for at least three years?)
6. **Does this album have the potential to sell 10,000 units or more through Redwood?** (If there is a previous album, its sales figures indicate a strong precedent.)
7. **Are there any extenuating circumstances that should be considered by Redwood in the evaluation of this album?** (People with strong opinions can comment.)

MARKETING

According to Jo-Lynne, a major label can easily spend \$150,000 on promoting an act they think is going to break out and do something. "They may put out the \$150,000 and expect to see it back in three years, with the next two albums doing significantly better. This is called 'front loading,' putting a large quantity of money into an artist's career that you have a three-year deal with, hoping to see the return three years down the line."

Redwood, by comparison, may have \$20-25,000 for promotion initially in a contract. This figure

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Toni L. Armstrong teaches special education in a high school and is pursuing a second Masters degree in addition to publishing 'HOT WIRE.'

MARY WATKINS

Now on the far side of 40, Mary Watkins began her jazz career in earnest more than a decade ago, perceiving herself primarily as a composer.

Born in Denver, Colorado and raised in Pueblo, Mary was playing the piano at four, and accompanying the Children's Choir with her own improvised compositions by age eight.

Mary moved to California in 1976 from Washington, DC, and she now lives in Oakland. In Washington she had been composing, arranging, playing club dates, and driving a taxi to make ends meet. One of her first jobs in California was packing records in the shipping department of the then-new independent company, Olivia Records, in Los Angeles. It was at Olivia that she had her first opportunity to arrange and record her music.

Her musical roots go back to the church, where she picked up a solid grounding in gospel-style

piano and organ.

"My mother played the piano for the African Methodist Church, and I started playing the piano for the junior choir when I was eight," said Mary in a 1983 interview. "But I think I got the music mixed up with self-expression, and it was the hardest thing in the world not to add something, to put more in the music than was on the page.

"They tried to stop me from doing that, but I didn't see what was wrong with it. So it was in church that I got my first experience with accompanying people. I noticed very early that certain chordal progressions made me feel certain things; certain arrangements of instruments made me feel different things."

She majored in Music Education at what is now Southern California State University. There she began to hear jazz regularly.

After college, marriage and motherhood brought Mary, to

Washington, DC, where she enrolled at Howard University as a composition student, and was the only one in her class to graduate in composition.

Howard University's music education was a classical twentieth century one: heavy emphasis on Hindemith, Stravinsky, and Bartok. At the same time she was absorbing serial composition and polytonality, she was gigging around Washington, playing in combos, clubs, music theaters, and was working as musical director for



Irene Young

NANCY VOGL

As a 10-year-old, Nancy Vogl's big desire was to play drums. She didn't pursue it, though, as she felt her friends would have laughed at her.

There was slightly more exposure to the idea of women as guitar players. "From the time I was 10 to 25," Nancy said in an interview with the *Oakland Tribune*, "the only two women I saw play guitar on TV were Nancy Ames and Charro. Then Nancy Ames got married and quit music, so I never knew playing guitar was a career option."

Nonetheless, at 13 she began picking out tunes on a beat-up nylon string guitar. She copied her brother's class exercises as she listened through the heating vent in her parents' home. She taught herself how to play guitar, and at 20 decided that she wanted to write music more than anything else.

In 1973, she moved to Berkeley and, with three other women, founded the Berkeley Women's Music Collective, one of the first



Irene Young

feminist bands. They made five national tours and produced two albums, including Berkeley Women's Music Collective and Trying To Survive.

Nancy has frequently worked as a duo with former BWMC-member Suzanne Shanbaum. Both have extensive recording and touring credits. In addition to solo work and work with Suzanne, Nancy has recorded and toured with many women's music artists, including Robin Flower, Woody Simmons, and Holly Near. Her appearance as bassist with the Lynn Messenger Band at the First Inter-

national Women's Rock Festival in West Berlin brought rave reviews from the press and the RCA European president.

Touring since 1973, her travels include the 27-city tour with Robin Flower and Barbara Higbie in 1980, a West Coast tour with Holly Near, and several national tours between 1981 and 1986, in addition to the five Berkeley Women's Music Collective tours. She has played more than 30 colleges and universities, numerous state prisons, and clubs and concerts in the U.S. as well as in Europe. She has performed at most of the national women's music festivals.

Something To Go On is her latest release. Her first solo album, on Redwood Records, features one side of all instrumental pieces and one side of songs, both love songs and political songs.

Nancy has always been committed to women's music. "In the 1970s," she said, "we fulfilled a need that hadn't existed...of women making music written by women for women...when we started, nobody wanted to hear about lesbians or feminist politics,

HUNTER DAVIS

the black theater group Ebony Impromptu.

"I didn't care for a lot of pop music," said Mary in The Montclarion, "but at the time I was really into Motown, especially when they started doing these really nice productions. I'd listen to the records and say, 'Ah, somebody at Motown really likes Handel!'"

Mary feels the big change in her career came with her first album, when she began to present herself as a performer. Something Moving on Olivia Records, which received an unusual amount of radio airplay for an album on an independent label, was nominated for a Bay Area Music Award.

Following the release, Mary formed her own quintet, and performed at various music festivals around the country, including the legendary Monterey Jazz Festival in 1981.

For her follow-up album, she switched to the Palo Alto Jazz label. Palo Alto Jazz is a third-world owned record company that

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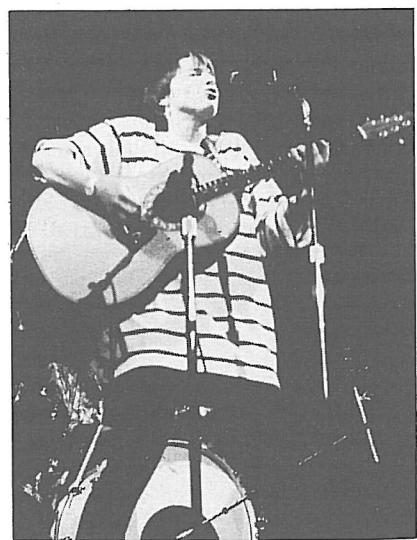
but now people are open to the issues."

Politically, Nancy has been outspoken about runaway militarism, the rise of the New Right, and the effect of increasing surveillance and oppression on the most powerless groups: women, people of color, and the working class. In addition to her standard two-set performance of music and stories, she presents workshops on progressive politics, women's culture, the role of the artist in society, and one entitled "The New Right—Is It Really New?"

1986 has been hectic. Nancy was on a 45-city tour through the South, Midwest, and Northeast from February through mid June. She will be going to Nashville to record demo tapes of songs that she will be selling to other artists. She has two Nashville producers lined up, and plans to use Nashville studio musicians. The demo tapes will be of 10 commercially-viable songs, including "Another Country Song" and "Fight Like A Dancer."

This summer, look for a two-song cassette kit of children's

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Lucinda Smith

It all started, Hunter says, in a cabin on Kerr Lake with a floor full of teenage guitar players and one of those made-up, silly rhymes that turned into the "Honky Get Nekkid Blues."

Actually, her musical career started at age five, when Hunter first began to play the blues on a plastic toy banjo. Unable to play anybody else's music, Hunter started writing her own. She learned to play the ukelele, and picked up the guitar while in high school at Fairfax Hall, a boarding school in Waynesboro, Virginia.

She continued playing, singing, and writing through her time at Sweetbriar College, where she produced her first album, The Horseshow at Midnight (Lark, 1977). The record was partially financed by Sweetbriar, and included a song memorializing a fellow student who died in a riding accident.

After college, Hunter traveled to Vail, Colorado, where she spent a year playing in clubs. She then returned to North Carolina, to a hometown so small that, as she puts it, "if two lesbians met, they said, 'Let's get married!'" While in Henderson, she ran a women's clothing shop called The Foxfield.

Hunter's second album, Girl's Best Friend (1982, Hunter), was recorded during this time, when Hunter decided to embark on a full-time music career.

Now living in California, her performance credits have quickly multiplied. She has been seen at

most of the national women's music festivals, and has performed with women's music favorites like Ferron, Mary Watkins, Holly Near, Linda Tillery, Alix Dobkin, Kate Clinton, Gayle Marie, and Teresa Trull. She has toured the country solo and with British keyboardist Julie Homi, whose credits include work with a 25-voice gospel group and the New York jazz fusion band Deuce.

Additionally, she has performed with mainstream entertainers such as George Winston and Harry Chapin. Her television credits include "Charlie's Angels."

Influenced by James Taylor, Hunter is part of the vanguard of Southern musicians who are breaking down traditional barriers. She sings about relationships that don't work any more, the special love for mothers, partying with "the girls." Her repertoire includes folk, blues, jazz, and a little R&B. She sometimes sings a capella in concert on numbers like "Sweet Inspiration" and "Harriet Tubman." Many of the original songs speak of women's relationships. "The Woman Doesn't Love You (The Way I Do)" asks her lover to come back home, and she does songs about the loneliness of one night stands, and about lesbian fusion. She tells the story of a phone call she received from her father, who complained, "You women in San Francisco don't like men much, do you?"

"But," she told him, "I love my daddy!"

Hunter makes a point of recognizing and appreciating other entertainers and writers during her performances. She has mentioned admiration for Nancy Vogel and Suzanne Shanbaum, and has dedicated the beautiful "Sunday Morning Rain" to author Rita Mae Brown. "Rita made me love myself, and that's what I want to do for others through music," says Hunter.

According to her friend Armistead Maupin, author of the Tales of the City books, Hunter's voice "can be champagne one moment and hot buttered rum the next—all-purpose instrument equipped to conjure, comfort, and seduce."

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LINDA TILLERY

Linda Tillery, deeply involved with women's music for more than a decade, was still at Lowell High in 1967 when she sang with a band at the Fillmore as the opening act for Big Brother and the Holding Company featuring Janis Joplin. Linda was among the first local young black women to have sung at the Fillmore, and she was so sensational that the reviewer compared Janis unfavorably to Linda. Years later, the same reviewer remembers the incident well, and remarks that Janis flew into a rage after the review appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner*, saying she would never again appear on the same bill with Linda.

Ever since, Linda has continued to pay dues in the music scene. She spent five years from 1968 to 1973 as lead singer with the psychedelic rock band The Loading Zone, sharing bills with Iron Butterfly, John Mayall, Tiny Tim, and others in the late '60s/early '70s

San Francisco scene. Although the group recorded an album for a major label (*The Loading Zone*, RCA 1969), they never "made it big" despite national touring.

In 1970, Linda recorded a solo album, *Sweet Linda Divine*, on CBS. And, after The Loading Zone broke up, she concentrated on



studio work, backing up people like Boz Scaggs, Carlos Santana, and Coke Escovedo. A partial list of performers she has appeared with includes Cream, B.B. King, Bonnie Raitt, Ray Charles, Martin Mull, Arlo Guthrie, and Odetta.

In 1975, Linda's career took a significant turn in our direction as she began working with Olivia Records in Oakland. Known as Tui, she played drums and sang on several albums, including those by Mary Watkins and Teresa Trull. She produced the BeBe K' Roche album. Her next solo album, *Linda Tillery*, was released on the Olivia label in 1978. She became an important, influential figure in the emerging women's music scene, eventually appearing with most of the well-known performers, including Holly Near, Ferron, Mary Watkins, Alive!, Hunter Davis, Sweet Honey In The Rock, Vicki Randle, and Kate Clinton. She was a part of the 1982 Olivia Records bash featuring Meg Christian and Cris Williamson at Carnegie Hall.

Though she has toured nation-

FERRON

Ferron was born June 1, 1952 in Toronto, Ontario. She grew up on the West Coast of Canada in Richmond, a semi-rural suburb of Vancouver, B.C. where, she recalls, "couples bought homes and washed cars and paved driveways, made plans for the rec room, and looked forward to two weeks holiday somewhere else."

The oldest of seven children, Ferron grew up in a struggling, working-class environment. Home entertainment consisted mainly of listening to the local country and western radio station, and the Canadian singer/songwriter remembers being profoundly influenced by the music of the Carter Family, Kitty Wells, and Hank Williams.

When she was 14, she bought her own guitar, financed by mowing the neighborhood lawns. One year later she had written more than 100 songs. The only copies of these first songs were kept in a notebook which was stolen from her school locker and never returned.

At the age of 16, Ferron summoned the courage to audition for a local country and western band. At her debut in the Legion Hall, she was so nervous onstage that she tripped on a cord, pulling down the microphone and falling into the drum set.

Ferron left school at 15 to go to work, but she continued to write songs and practice the guitar. In those years her musical influences were mainly Canadian singers like Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Gordon Lightfoot, and Bruce Cockburn, songwriters who talked about "emotional travel." It wasn't until she was 19, having gone back to school to get her diploma, that she was actively encouraged in her writing for the first time by one of her teachers.

When Ferron was 22, she shared a house with two women friends, "one of whom had a dream set in medieval times in which she appeared with the name "Ferron" (which translates loosely in French to "iron and rust"). Her friends began to call her by that name, and when she applied to sing in a club a month later, she told them her name was Ferron.



Vada Vernee

She performed her first real show in 1975 as part of a women's benefit concert in Vancouver, and then continued to play small gatherings and coffeehouses around the city while holding down various jobs in factories and restaurants.

For many years Ferron found it difficult to make ends meet, and had to support herself working as a waitress, driving a cab, and shoveling gravel.

Ferron says she would have

HOLLY NEAR

ally and played the women's music festivals, she has concentrated her efforts on the Bay Area. In 1978 she received the BAMBIE (Bay Area Music Award) for Best Independently Produced Album, and she received two consecutive JAMMIEs (Bay Area Jazz Award) in 1983 and 1984 for Best Female Jazz Vocalist. Also, she worked with the jazz-funk-fusion band Kick, playing most of the local clubs and bars.

Linda has appeared on more than 30 albums, not counting her own four. A partial list includes Santana (1972); Love For Love (The Whispers, 1983); Runnin' (June Millington, 1984); Don't Doubt It (Deidre McCalla, 1984); Songwriter (Margie Adam, 1976); Unexpected (Teresa Trull & Barbara Higbie, 1983); Something Moving (Mary Watkins, 1978); and Meg and Cris Live at Carnegie (1983).

In 1985, Linda released Secrets on her own 411 label. She raised all the funds for the record, which is distributed by Redwood. Secrets has been well reviewed,

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been shocked 10 years ago if anyone had said she would have a concert tour promoting records.

"I started to get invited to play at this or that for very little money," she says. "They loved it, but I was very shy, and in the old days I couldn't even look at anybody. I would just sort of sit there and mumble away at these songs and walk out and wonder what I was doing there.

"When I first started touring, I felt like each time I went on-stage I was going into the fighting ring. But I hide less now, and I'm glad to see more of myself out in the world. I've gotten a bit braver with my lyrics: I use three-syllable words, and audiences actually like that, I think."

In 1977, at the urging of her friends, Ferron recorded her first album, printing 1,000 copies of Ferron on her own label, Lucy Records, and distributing them out of her basement. This two-track acoustic album was followed up in 1978 by Ferron Backed Up, on which she was joined by a few Vancouver friends and musicians. Ferron Backed Up sold another

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Holly Near has carved out a distinctive niche on the cultural scene. She defies categories. Her 15 years of performing live at concerts, outdoor rallies, festivals, campuses and clubs, along with her 11 record albums, have won her a diverse and loyal following.

Her early performances included some of her most moving experiences: performing in prisons and mental hospitals. Places where "music could make this almost magical bridge between people," Holly said in the January 1985 Ms. interview. "And when people ask me today about becoming a 'political artist,' I have to say that it's not a totally intellectual choice. At the time I was singing



Ellen Spiro

in prisons and mental hospitals, I was also playing Eliza Dolittle in my high school play and dreaming of becoming a Broadway star. It's just that I kept being drawn back to those situations where music could make a difference."

Before Holly was a "political artist"—but after Eliza Dolittle—she appeared in the Broadway production of Hair, in the film Slaughterhouse Five, and on TV's Sesame Street, All in the Family, The Partridge Family, and The Mod Squad.

While at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1969 studying theater and the arts (with a minor in political science), a talent scout gave her a role in a film called Angel Angel Down We Go, a comeback vehicle

for Jennifer Jones which also featured Roddy McDowall. She also appeared in Minnie and Moskowitz.

In 1971, however, Holly stepped out of the mainstream when she joined Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland on their notoriously controversial "Free The Army" anti-war tour for American troops in Asia.

This tour was a turning point in Holly's career, though she was nurtured early on by the social consciousness of her activist parents, who were involved in the progressive labor movement which was all but wiped out in the McCarthy witchhunts.

Social activism within the music community has been central to Holly's work. She turned her back on conventional career avenues by declaring her lesbianism and her commercial independence (she has released all of her own solo work through her own Redwood label). She addresses a wide range of social concerns in her music, including peace, nuclear disarmament, ageism, racism, imperialism, sexism, Third World political turmoil, and gay and lesbian solidarity.

Holly has developed and maintained a huge following among women's music fans. Imagine My Surprise (1979) is Holly's most woman-identified album, featuring "Something About The Women," "Fight Back," and several collaborations with Meg Christian. Since its release, Holly has been uncompromising in consistently presenting herself as a feminist and a lesbian in her performances—something many other women's music performers choose to imply rather than stress.

Holly began touring in 1983 with Ronnie Gilbert, formerly of the Weavers, and they blended voices and political convictions into an alliance across generations and social concerns. Together, Holly says, they are trying "to destroy the rumor that there has been no progressive culture since 1965." She appeared in Wasn't That A Time!, the film about the Weavers. The Holly-Ronnie tour had sell-out concerts, and the

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CONNIE KALDOR

"I'm not a drug addict. I'm not crazy. I'm not in it for sex. I have a strong family. I'm not willing to sacrifice my whole life to the music business," said Connie Kaldor during a break in a picture-taking session for the jacket of her new Moonlight Grocery album.

Connie was born in Regina, and she claims that, according to her mother, she "started to sing in the cradle." She grew up on the prairies, and feels that the West is alive and that she has a kinship to it. It's always been a part of her life, and she loves the space and freedom the open prairies offer.

At the time Connie moved to Edmonton to study theater, Vancouver had been an alternative choice, but she decided against going there because it was, at the time, "too West Coast" for her.

She worked in professional theater across Canada. In 1978, she started singing professionally,

and has become well-established on the Canadian folk festival and touring circuits.

Now based on the Canadian West Coast, Connie has appeared in Scotland and in many major U.S. cities, including Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago.

She says she thinks of life as "a series of rooms," and she has been moving through them since she was able. Her native Saskatchewan prairies ("serious boonies," she says) could not hold her, nor could the theater (her



theater career finally ended with "86 one-night stands in a row" with "Teatre Passe Muraille").

Connie writes and performs her own material on guitar and keyboard, as well as children's songs and music for theater and dance. She recorded One of These Days (Coyote) in 1981, and her songs are performed by other artists, including Heather Bishop and Ronnie Gilbert.

Connie's music is changing, from solo acoustic music to band-backed mainstream pop. She says the change is "basically less of a departure and more of a transition." Moonlight Grocery (Coyote, 1984, distributed in the U.S. by Redwood and in Canada by Festival) is getting airplay in Canada and combines the singing and songwriting talents of Connie and Bim (Roy Forbes).

Connie occasionally mixes social commentary with her music. After re-enacting various bra and tampon commercials, she'll go into the anti-commercialism song "Buy Buy." Her "Nice Little World" is a melodic anti-nuclear protest.

JUDY SMALL

Judy Small tours regularly in Australia as a solo performer on the capital cities circuit. She sometimes shares the stage with other Australian entertainers, such as Margret RoadKnight, Eric Bogle, and The Bushwackers.

Judy grew up listening to the songs of the 1960s folk music boom. At age 14, she saved money to buy her first guitar, and spent many hours holed up in her room singing her favorite songs. While at the University in Sydney, Judy sang occasionally in folk clubs, wine bars, and at parties.

In 1982, she toured outside of Australia, playing in the Portland and Vancouver Folk Festivals, at Folk City and at La Papaya in New York, and as a headliner at London's Drill Hall.

One of Australia's well-known and well-respected singer-songwriters, Judy successfully toured the U.S. and Canada during the summer of 1984 to enthusiastic audiences at several folk festivals including the Philadelphia Folk Festival, the Portland World Music

Festival, and the Michigan Women's Music Festival.

Judy's first album, A Natural Selection, was released in 1982. She wrote eight of the 10 songs on the record. Her next album, Mothers, Daughters, Wives, came out in Australia on the Plaza label under the title Ladies and Gems. Holly Near sings harmony on two of the 12 songs, and Redwood Records distributes it, along with Judy's newest, One Voice in the Crowd.

The song "Mothers, Daughters, Wives," written in this decade, has already begun to pass into folk tradition. Australian Eric Bogle, along with New Yorker Priscilla Herdman who tours in Australia, brought the song to this continent in 1982. The song, about the women who have seen three generations of men go off to war, is now sung by Holly Near, Pete Seeger, Frankie Armstrong, and Ronnie Gilbert.

"I grew up in a conservative house," says Judy, who was born in Coffs Harbour, New South



Lucinda Smith

Wales. She now lives in Sydney.

"I was very much influenced by the 1960s and the music of Joan Baez, Peter, Paul, and Mary, and The Seekers. I knew that was what I wanted to do."

Part of the appeal of Judy's music is its political content,

RONNIE GILBERT

In a review of One of These Days that appeared in The Boston Phoenix, the reviewer comments specifically on her brand of social consciousness. "She demeans the villains without diminishing the villainy, and she steps out with a few painfully poignant lines: 'They're standing at the corner just to watch you walk/Don't meet their eyes or they'll plague you for blocks'." (From "Jerks," one of her most commercial numbers, in which she nails men who leer at passing women.)

Connie hopes that fans who have come to like her acoustic music will also appreciate her new sound.

"My life has changed," she says, "but it's still my personality coming through. I'm shaping my music, maybe, in a different way, but I'm not doing anything different." ●

To contact Redwood artists:
 REDWOOD RECORDS
 476 W. MacArthur Blvd.
 Oakland, CA 94609

artistically expressed. "I'm the classic example of conservative being turned radical by a police truncheon," she said in a 1984 interview. "I even remember the date—March 23, 1976. We were already out of the [Vietnam] war. There was a demonstration going on [on campus] against a visit by Nelson Rockefeller. I was 23. I wasn't doing anything. I was just there, and I got hit. It was a whole revelation, that they could do that to me, and I wasn't doing anything.

"Until I got hit over the head, I was into feminism, but that event brought everything together.

"I've been called a gentle rebel who sings songs of human issues and social change," says Judy. "I'd say that's a very concise definition of what I do. When I can't find a song about an issue, then I write one. The political work I do is sing songs."

In addition to her handling of issues, Judy's work has received praise in media reviews for its "knack of portraying people in song." Mothers, Daughters, Wives has five such songs, including the

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Until 1983, Ronnie Gilbert was remembered primarily as a founding member of the Weavers, the legendary folk-singing group with whom she sang from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. The Weavers (including Pete Seeger, Lee Hays, and Fred Hellerman) began recording with Decca, and made songs such as "On Top of Old Smokey" and "Kisses Sweeter Than Wine" famous. Their classic "Goodnight Irene" was the top-selling record of 1950.

By 1952, the Weavers had sold more than four million records and were high on the musical charts. But this was the year they recorded their last record for Decca.

Fame could not prevent the Weavers from being blacklisted as "subversives" by the House Un-American Activities Committee during the Joseph McCarthy witchhunts during the early 1950s. Even the singing of their hit song "Goodnight Irene" was suspect, because it had been written by a black convict. It was clear that the members of the Weavers supported progressive causes, and the subsequent blacklisting effectively ground their career to a halt. The group that had been offered a national weekly TV spot on NBC now could not get bookings.

They took a sabbatical for a few years, and reunited for a Carnegie Hall concert in 1955. Holly Near credits this concert with convincing her to become a singer.

In 1957, Pete Seeger left the group for good, and there were three replacements before the Weavers finally disbanded in 1963.

Ronnie Gilbert was born in New York, and was nine when she abandoned her given name (not Veronica, although she won't be specific) in favor of "Ronnie," which she has used ever since.

The daughter of immigrants, Ronnie's work life began at age 13 doing office work in Brooklyn. At 16, she went to Washington, DC for a government job during World War II. There she joined a folk-singing group called the Priority Ramblers, which sang songs of social protest and for the war effort. Her graduation

from high school was almost blocked when she refused to participate in the school's minstrel show.

After graduation, she returned to New York, where she organized for the Office Workers Union, worked for the Textile Workers Union, for a bra and girdle company, and for the March of Dimes campaign.

During her years as a Weaver, Ronnie married, had a daughter, and got divorced. After the Weavers disbanded, she recorded Come and Go With Me (Vanguard) and Alone With Ronnie Gilbert (Mercury). Also, she earned an MA in Clinical Psychology and had her



Vada Vernee

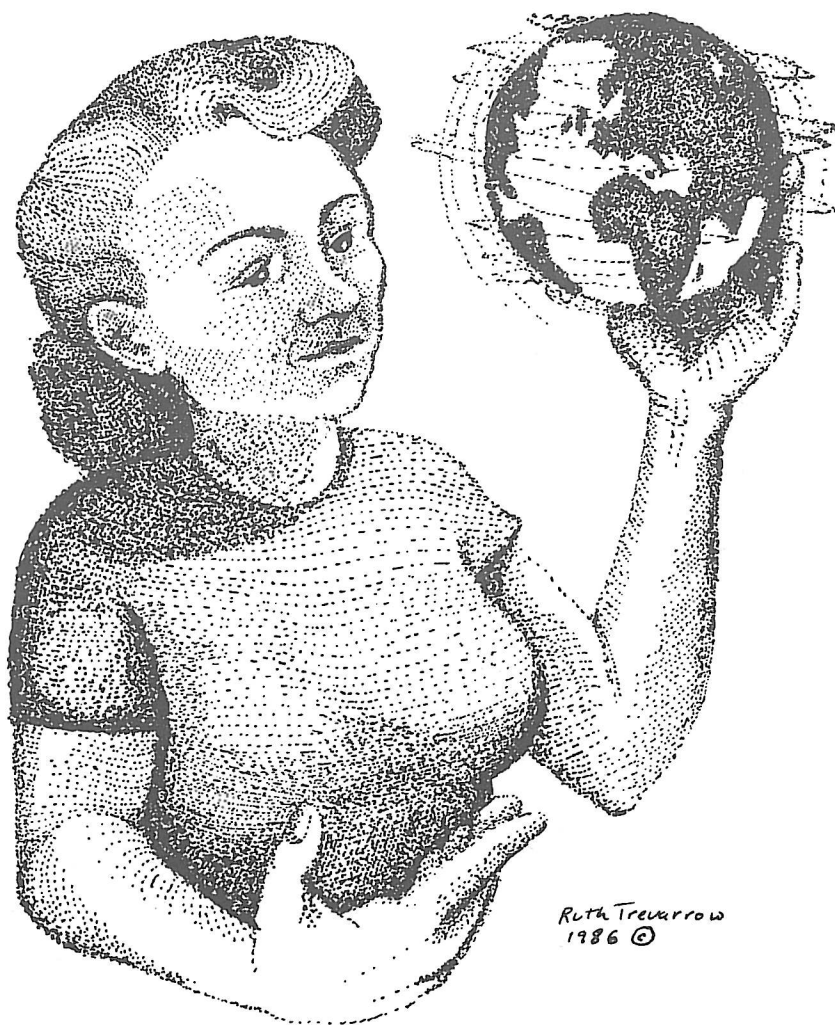
own therapy practice in California and British Columbia.

Beginning in 1964, Ronnie turned her attention to "that big stretch of open stage space which we had never used." Her theater credits include working with Peter Brook in London and Paris, Joseph Chaikin in The Open Theatre and later in The Winter Project, with Harold Pinter on Broadway, Meredith Monk in New York, Elizabeth Swados, and doing plays from Broadway to the mountains of British Columbia.

While women who mix politics and show business are rare—with the occasional Lily Tomlin, Holly Near, Whoopie Goldberg, or Joan Baez achieving success—Ronnie grew up in the late 1920s and 1930s with no such female stage personalities to emulate.

"What I had instead," she said in a 1983 interview, "was my mother. She used to come home with these union songbooks, like

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WOMEN IN UTOPIA

By Rena Yount

There has been a resurgence of utopian literature in the 70's and 80's, much of it written by women. The feminist movement has encouraged women to challenge society's givens, to think and dream about how different the world could be. Often, novels are the expression of those dreams.

I am considering novels of utopia and of all-women cultures together. They are not necessarily

the same, but they serve the same purposes for women, ranging from escape and refreshment to debate about what kind of world we want to live in.

To have an all-woman culture, of course, you must solve two problems. First, get rid of the men, or get away from them. (Plagues, war, and an occasional volcano come in handy here.) Second, find a way to have babies. This may range from genetic

surgery to a mysterious herb.

But these are merely ways of setting the stage. The real question is, what do the women do then? What are women like, apart from any need to hide, to please or placate men?

Bi-sexual utopian novels assume that society can change, that women do not need to withdraw to find freedom. The question then becomes: what would such a society look like?

Every utopian novel is a laboratory of the imagination. What would people be like if we redid things this way? Is this where you thought you wanted to go? Is anything missing? What is essential, and what are you willing to give up to get it?

Though utopian and all-woman novels vary widely, there are some themes that emerge over and over. So here are some current utopias—and one old one—for consideration, and a glance at some of the common threads that run through them.

Herland, written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman in 1915, describes a country of parthenogenic women isolated from the rest of the world for 2,000 years. Herland is different from utopias envisioned today. There is no sex, virtually no conflict, no wilderness. The country is a garden of peace, plenty, and order. Writers of our generation are less hopeful of perfection, less trusting of order.

In other ways the vision is quite familiar: cooperative work; communal child-rearing (though a close, special bond with the mother remains); an assumption that it is natural for people to work and learn together without compulsion. Even the clothes. All women utopians, apparently, dream of comfortable utilitarian clothes with lots of pockets.

The women of Herland have a lasting charm, a delightful self-assurance. The appearance of three men, alien beings with unknown weapons, does not throw them off balance in the slightest. They remain grave, serene, kind, and unflinchingly competent. The exchanges between the Herland women and the American men are funny, apt, and stinging. Much of the critique of our culture remains applicable today.

A QUICK TRIP THROUGH SOME OF THE UTOPIAS

The Wanderground, by Sally Miller Gearhart (1979), is set in North America, an unstated number of years from now. Men, and the women they retain with them, have withdrawn into isolated, decaying cities, after a mysterious "revolt of the earth" causes machines to fail—and men to become impotent—outside the cities. In the resurging wilderness are the hill women, living in harmony with the earth and developing remarkable psychic abilities.

Gearhart has lovingly sketched out the culture created through these psychic powers. The hill women have developed complex, sometimes ritualized patterns of relationships, based on the intimacy mindstretch makes possible. They have the most fully communal decision-making imaginable. They also talk with animals, trees, rivers, clouds. They consciously draw strength from the earth, which they know they will feed when their time comes.

One of the best-known of all-women utopias, The Wanderground draws mixed reactions. Praised for its bold imagination, it is also criticized for simplistic attitudes. Its descriptions of communion with nature are sometimes very beautiful, as in the girlchild Clana's visionary dance with the snakes. At other times they become oddly superficial, as when a sparrow chats away in such human terms that it seems it is simply a woman with feathers. Although the hill women are mostly non-white, their "Remember Rooms" seem to carry only the history of sexist oppression, as if other forms were minor, or irrelevant to women. In regard to men, the hill women teach their daughters, "It is too simple to condemn them all or to praise all of us. But for the sake of the earth and all she holds, that simplicity must be our creed." It's a dubious creed. Deliberate oversimplification is a route that's been tried too many times before.

Whatever its flaws, though, The Wanderground offers a mind-opening sense that the future could be genuinely, profoundly different from today. The hill women

have just begun to explore their powers, from healing to windriding. Those powers touch a special nerve in many women: a half-sacred, half-delighted suspicion that maybe we should begin exploring too.

Another highly distinctive all-woman culture is found in Motherlines, by Suzy McKee Charnas. In this post-holocaust world, a brutal patriarchy survives in a coastal area called Holdfast. Inland, on the grassy plains, are the parthenogenic Riding Women, the Motherlines.

The Motherlines were founded by women who seized control of a laboratory during the Wasting. They wanted their daughters to survive and be free; they did not have leisure to design an ideal society. The Riding Women are tribal nomads, whose herds of horses are their livelihood and their pride.

Yet Motherlines is as engrossing as any utopia, and carries some of the same sense of liberation. It is rich with knowledge of nomadic life, and the characterizations are unusually fine, filling the book with memorable women. Though the Riding Women's world is spartan and limited, it is their world. They work, fight, tell their stories, bear children, love, govern themselves, without outside constraint. If that isn't utopia, it looks like a running start from here.

The Female Man, by Joanna Russ (1975), presents us with four alternate Earths. There is an all-woman future Earth called Whileaway; an Earth where the war between the sexes has become a literal war; another where the Depression still lingers and traditional sex roles haven't begun to crack; and our Earth, where the character Joanna is caught in the throes of the women's movement in 1969. On each of these parallel worlds there is a woman whose name starts with J. The J's find themselves slipping across the boundaries into one another's worlds, experiencing those different possibilities.

In one sense the heart of the novel is in the descriptions of Joanna's emerging feminism, which includes brilliantly funny, biting descriptions of male/female interactions, as well as moments of

defiance and pain.

In another sense the heart of the novel is the Whileawayan, Janet. She is the product of an eccentric, engaging society, where women mix high technology and rural lifestyles, teach their cows to talk, put a statue of God in the plaza to make the 11-year-olds laugh, fight duels, pamper their daughters for the first five years and then send them away from home (thus giving them the combination of optimism and discontent that Whileawayans value). Janet is direct, self-possessed, and confident. She is happily lesbian, and frankly perplexed at the ways men and women contrive to treat each other. Janet is a foil against which Jeannine's soft voice and apathy, Joanna's painful contradictions, Jael's bloody hatred, become visible as scars. She is the mirror of their potential. "Living in a blessedness none of us will ever know, she is nonetheless Everywoman."

Ursula LeGuin has written two quite different novels that can be called utopian, though she would probably object to the label (being a firm believer in unending process). The Dispossessed (1974) takes place on Anarres, a planet colonized by anarchists. Just when the book has made anarchist social structure and mores vivid enough that you think they might really work, it begins to examine the ways power inevitably threatens to centralize again.

The main character, Shevek, is both passionately loyal to his society and a rebel against it. He embodies LeGuin's conviction that freedom can only survive through a continual renewal, which begins in the individual conscience.

Always Coming Home (1985), LeGuin's latest work, looks thousands of years ahead and finds, among the hills of northern California, a people called the Kesh. Their culture has deep parallels to Native American traditions. Though technical knowledge (and a planet-wide computer network) are available to them, they choose to live simply, travelling by foot

continued on next page

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Rena Yount is a freelance writer in Washington, DC. She is a member of the women's poetry group Stone Soup, and recently published her first fiction.

and making most of their goods by hand. The web of relationships is based on matrilineal clans. Their lives are rich with omens and visions, ceremony and dance; they are intimately connected to animals, plants, the elements, the sacredness of all being.

Always Coming Home is not exactly a novel. It is 500 pages long, and there is a novel within it: the story of a woman named Stone Telling. There are also folktales and songs, short stories about people unconnected to Stone Telling, notes of a rather puzzled anthropologist, bits of history, a play. LeGuin has created a language for the Kesh: the possessive is never used for a living being, and the term "to be rich" is the same as "to give." A tape of Kesh songs and poems comes with the book. All these details and fragments, taken together, create a many-layered sense of a way of life that is genuinely foreign, yet full of attraction and compelling resonances. Always Coming Home is a remarkable creation.

Woman on the Edge of Time, by Marge Piercy (1976), is the story of Connie Ramos, an impoverished Hispanic woman locked in a New York mental hospital. She is telepathically sensitive, and finds herself transported for short periods to the future village of Mattapoisett.

She is disappointed, at first, when she gets there. There are no rocket ships in sight, no towering cities. There are many gardens, chickens running free, and shirts drying on a clothes line. She can't always tell the men from the women. They wear the same gay assortment of clothes; the women "walk in strength like a man"; the men laugh and weep and hug each other like women; and the only third person pronoun is "per."

A careful blend of science and environmental conscience lies behind the easy-going village scene. There are automated factories tucked out of sight. Windmills and solar panels gather energy, and everything from the bricks to the shirts on the line is biodegradable.

Piercy's future is one of the most completely thought-out of recent utopias. We glimpse their arguments and celebrations, their

wonderful child house, their economic planning councils. Planning council members are chosen by lot. There are also elected representatives, Earth Advocates and Animal Advocates chosen by dream, arbitrators, town meetings—a supple web of structures with no permanent authorities. "Luciente can show you government," someone tells Connie, "but nobody's working there today."

The warm vitality of life in Mattapoisett shows all the more vividly in contrast to Connie's life in a locked ward, where patients are subjected to grotesque experiments in mind control. And she comes to realize that Mattapoisett is only one of the possible futures, that the choice between renewal and ruin will be made in her time.

Connie's time, of course, is ours. Many of us share the sense of standing at a crossroads, with limited time to choose our route. Novels cannot give us step-by-step directions on how to proceed from here, but there are surprisingly strong commonalities in these books' views of where we should be going.

THE COMMON THREADS

Breaking away from confining sex roles is basic to the feminist vision, of course. Much of the sustenance these books give comes simply from seeing women do everything there is to be done.

In the all-woman cultures, lesbian love is the accepted norm, often described with great tenderness. In the bi-sexual utopias, it remains a choice open to women. Piercy is the most explicit about this: in Mattapoisett homosexual and heterosexual love affairs are equally welcomed, flaunted, and treasured—as is freely chosen celibacy.

While strong personal bonds are valued, monogamy is almost universally distrusted. Only The Dispossessed gives it unqualified approval.

Cooperative forms of work are given in every one of these books. Male science fiction writers may still dream about the glories of free enterprise spreading through the galaxy, but nobody here is convinced. Work may be organized along anarchist, social-

ist, or tribal lines. But the division between workers and owners is gone, and differences in wealth—if they exist at all—are small.

Modern technology gets a cool reception in Utopia. The Wanderground rejects it all; the Kesh reject most of it. Woman on the Edge of Time, Russ's Whileaway, and The Dispossessed are more positive. They weave technology into their cultures, and savor the special kinds of creativity it makes possible, from theoretical physics to holographic art. But all authors agree that technology must be drastically reshaped to be less disruptive of human life rhythms and the natural environment.

Respect for the natural world is a passionate theme running through most of these books.

Semi-communal living is popular, though most authors want to assure room for privacy too. Communal cooking and childcare are extremely popular (a sure sign that women are speaking).

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THE OZARK CENTER FOR LANGUAGE STUDIES

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THE 1980s: WHAT HAPPENED?

Where did the "good old days" of women's music go?

By Kitty Barber

Reader responses to this article are welcomed. Letters received before September 5, 1986 will be considered for publication.

August 1985

I sit down at the typewriter today, the here and now, 1985, in an attempt to put my thoughts into words. Summer is over, it's time now to criticize the various festivals, yes? Every year about this time the letters start appearing in my favorite publications, passionate letters, full of joy and pain, euphoria and despair. I've written a few of them myself, but...

This year I'm different; everything seems different. I'm further removed from involvement in the music business than ever, further away from any community than I've ever been. Time for a dispassionate look at our movement, our culture, myself in relation to those things. I spent about a month at "Michigan" in 1977. We were free to come early and stay late; we drank and doped it up, worked hard, partied a lot, had access to everything the festival had to offer. The atmosphere was loose and sisterly, we mingled with the "stars," and generally enjoyed the self-appointed status of workers, even though at that time there was no real distinction—you see, everyone was a worker, it was our festival. We were a community, it was communal if not communist. I thought it was heaven.

This article originally appeared in 'Lesbian Connection' and is reprinted with permission. 'LC' is a free nationwide newsletter for lesbians (P.O. Box 811, East Lansing, MI 48823).

It was a time when a minstrel such as I could make a tape of me and my guitar in my living room, send it off to the National Festival in Champaign, and be invited to play on the Main Stage there. It was a time when I could arrange a tour by placing an ad in Lesbian Connection, asking for room and board in return for a concert. A time when a young Lesbian could travel all over the country visiting friends she met

**I don't want to
be a foremother!
For crying out
loud, I'm only
30 years old!**

at festivals and be welcomed as a sister. When money didn't matter much and I didn't mind sleeping in my tent or on the floor.

Well, I went alone to the festival at Bloomington this year, looking for that community, that sisterhood, those good times. Expecting nothing to have changed all that much. Expecting to be at one very big, long party. I was disappointed — everything had changed. Including me.

I got a room because I don't like sleeping on the floor any more. I have a trick hip now, and bursitis. I was angry that they didn't take Mastercard for my fee (but not to worry, I had enough cash) and because the dorm wasn't cleaner. I didn't know how to party any more. I've been treated for alcoholism and drug addiction and I'm clean and sober now. And I don't have fun the way I used to. I expected a celebration of our culture. What I

found was the celebration of a multi-million-dollar industry. The only performers who mentioned the word "lesbian" were the comics. Is it only a joke now? And politics? Are you kidding? There was a lot more energy put into hair styles and hip outfits. All the artists had slick promotional packs set up instead of themselves. One could, in places, listen to professional recordings of their work.

Workshops? Come on, since when is a lecture a workshop? Alix Dobkin was the only one there with the insight to call it what it was. Round Robins? Please! A round robin is going around, sharing jokes and stuff! The comedy round robin was just a mini-concert! Silly me, I came prepared to participate. I came looking to be something more than a consumer. I don't particularly enjoy being a consumer. I came expecting—what? Did I think that time would stand still? I have changed, why not everything else too? Is it only nostalgia that makes me want to criticize?

I ran into a few friends from the "old days" who felt the same way. "What are we doing here?" we asked each other. Are we just anachronisms now? Have we, the radical lesbian-feminists of old, no place in this new age? Is our culture no longer a political statement? Has it been reduced to a multi-million-dollar industry? Are we judged only by the number of records we can make and sell? Isn't there anyone left who thinks that there are perhaps too many men working in this industry—or have all the available womyn been trained and hired so that we must start hiring men now? Goddess forbid I should say the word "separatist." It's bad

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NOVEMBERMOON

By Annie Leveritt and Celia Guse

We tend—especially those of us born after World War II ended—to sometimes think that a long time now separates us from the atrocities of that awful war. So many books and movies have appeared about it—not to mention the romanticizing games, toys, and comic books on the subject—that the emotional impact of the war can seem more and more distant, almost fictional. Books and articles have been published which assert that the Nazi Holocaust was, in fact, a hoax.

Feminism as a movement tries to address oppression in its many ugly forms: sexism, racism, homophobia, classism, and so on. In the

with the same subject as Marcel Ophuls' devastating documentary The Sorrow and the Pity: the German occupation of France during World War II. But Novembermoon does it on the more intimate level of personal narrative. And to the story of the evacuation of Paris, the Nazi takeover of the Free Zone, the severe anti-Semitism among the French as well as the Germans, the complicity of many French people, and above all to the systematic persecution of the Jews, Novembermoon adds the element of a strong lesbian relationship between two courageous women.

This is the first German fea-

accompanies her to a nearby cafe. The rescuer turns out to be Laurent's sister Ferial (Christiane Millet).

Von Grote is particularly good at portraying the small, intimate moments that enrich the relationship that develops between these two fascinating women. A deep full look, a gentle touch, the exchange of a scarf at their parting with one another—it's these details that draw us into the film.

In a scene early in their courtship, November and Ferial are sitting together on a couch with the lights low, deep in conversation. Ferial vows that the Nazis will never get November.

**“Yes, lesbians were there.
This is how it might have been.”**

book Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology, Irena Klepfisz says, "...anti-Semitism, like any other ideology of oppression, must never be tolerated, must never be hushed up, must never be ignored...it must always be exposed and resisted."

The film Novembermoon (in German with English subtitles, directed by Alexandra von Grote of Depart to Arrive), provides another reminder that Hitler's legacy follows us, is still with us. Movies like Novembermoon are all the more necessary in today's political climate, dramatizing the dangers of complacency.

Novembermoon is an excellent film, and though it covers themes that are quite familiar from other movies, biographies, documentaries, and personal accounts of the period, it is never boring. It deals

ture film about the Nazi occupation of France. It focuses first on a German Jewish woman named November (Gabriele Osburg, also of Depart to Arrive) who has left her country with her father, a political cartoonist, and settled in Paris. Her grief at her father's death is compounded by her difficulties as a resident alien in France as the German Army is encroaching. Nevertheless, she manages to get a job waitressing in a small cafe through the kindness of the woman owner, Chantal (Louise Martini).

At the cafe, November meets Laurent, a young man who falls in love with her. Soon thereafter, she is harassed while waiting in a line by young, Nazi-like thugs. They make rude comments, and another woman waiting in the line interrupts the abuse. November

They don't even notice when Laurent opens the door and quietly retreats as he realizes the intimacy of the moment.

The following morning, sister and brother converse in the bathroom. Laurent says, as he shaves, that he never dreamed he would have his sister for a rival. In von Grote's dry manner of handling the lesbian aspects of the film, Ferial shrugs and says, "These things happen."

In another scene, Ferial and November are dining in a small restaurant with music playing in the background. Carried away by their joy in each other's company, they begin to playfully dance together. When the other diners express shock and dismay—in one of the movie's most delightful scenes—the manager shoos the two women out. In front of the res-

taurant, they dissolve into laughter, knowing they have skipped out on the bill.

As the war engulfs them, the film gradually shifts to focus on Ferial's efforts to fulfill her promise. First they get Ferial's relatives to agree to hide November on their farm, where she is eventually captured by the Nazis. She escapes, and arrives at the apartment in Paris where Ferial lives with her mother, who is reluctant to jeopardize their safety by allowing November to hide in the apartment. She cannot, however, bring herself to turn November out on the street. By this time, there are no more safe places for Jews, and the Nazis have made it clear that they will be merciless in dealing with people who try to protect Jews.

Though Ferial finds the Nazis and the Vichy government despicable, she takes a job working for a collaborationist newspaper so she will, she reasons, minimize the likelihood of a Gestapo search of her apartment. Her brother Laurent has, by then, joined the resistance fighters and is wanted, thereby increasing the danger that the Nazis will have an eye on the comings and goings at Ferial's apartment. She wants to be in the best position possible to keep November from further harm. One chilling scene shows her at work, taking dictation from her boss, a pre-war suitor of hers. He spouts the most vile anti-Semitic propaganda at the same time he leers at her and takes every opportunity to squeeze her arms and touch her. Every moment away from November must be spent carefully keeping up the act. The movie pointedly shows the ambiguous positions many people are put in as a result of trying to do what's right to protect themselves and those they love when oppression in the world around them has been carried to the nth degree.

Novembermoon is not a "lesbian" film so much as a film in which the main characters happen to be lesbians. The casualness of the handling of the lesbian element of the film is increasingly seen in films and on TV. Marcia Pally, in the April issue of Film Comment magazine, discusses this trend. Meryl Streep made a brief appearance as Woody Allen's les-

bian ex-wife in Manhattan; Robert Altman's The Perfect Couple has in it a lesbian duo, and lesbian neighbors are off-handedly discussed in On Golden Pond; in Salvatore Piscicelli's Immacolata and Concetta, two women fall in love in prison and then try to live together openly in an Italian town. A lesbian subplot in the recent To Live and Die in L.A. is not even hinted at in the publicity. And Domestic Bliss, a British TV sitcom, features a couple who are constantly prevented from having any privacy, due to the interruptions of children, exes, neighbors, and friends. The couple happens to be two women.

In Novembermoon, the lesbianism is never treated as surprising. And the lovers are never torn with doubt about their passion for and commitment to each other. What makes life utterly terrifying



November (Gabriele Osburg) and Ferial (Christiane Millet): surviving the Nazi Holocaust

and terrible is the Nazis and the war. They do not spend time trying to sort out their relationship, or to defend or explain it to the other characters in the movie. Ferial has no qualms about her love—she risks her life and devotes herself to saving the life of her lover. This is a refreshing theme to see on the screen.

It's the love and strength of this relationship that allows the women to survive. November is either hiding or struggling for her life through much of the time that we see her. She is dependent on the good will of others for her survival, and highly at risk because of the overt anti-Semitism that pervades France at this time. The film conveys the bore-

dom and frustration of hiding and waiting, of what happens when the boundaries of one's personal freedom and safety shrink to the confines of one tiny apartment.

The dual themes of hiding from and collaborating with the enemy are strong issues for anyone who feels oppressed by the dominant power structure of the world around them. Novembermoon opens the door to examining the degrees to which one must hide and collaborate to survive in a culture where being labeled an outsider—be it Jew, lesbian, person of color, feminist—puts one at risk. This movie makes a case for not quickly judging those who are compromising, who appear to be "selling out" their principles in order to survive. Ferial's "collaboration" with the enemy costs her in the end—though her actions have saved November's life—and vividly shows the complexities of such choices.

In a world history primarily recorded by men, it is difficult to have a sense that women—let alone lesbian women—have been a part of the world and its dramatic events. And often it is close to impossible to imagine what their lives were like during past times and in diverse cultures. Novembermoon shows that yes, lesbians were there, and this is how it might have been. It's a gift to have someone like von Grote who has the courage and talent to bring this work to the world. She clearly has the slogan "The Personal is Political" engraved on her heart. ●

Novembermoon has only been shown three times in the United States, at the New York and San Francisco Gay & Lesbian Film Festivals and during a short run in Chicago sponsored by Women in the Director's Chair. There are no plans for a theatrical release in the States. However, anyone interested in bringing the film to their area can contact Women in the Director's Chair, P.O. Box 4044, Chicago, IL 60654 for information.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Annie Leveritt is one of the production coordinators for 'HOT WIRE,' in addition to being a photographer, printer, and avid film-goer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Celia Guse lives with her boxer dog Babs. They both enjoy listening to salsa music.



Tour Booking and Promotion

By Susie Gaynes, Penny Rosenwasser,
Jill Davey, and Trudy Wood

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

WHY

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

NOTE: This article originally appeared in *HOT WIRE* Vol. 1 No. 1, Nov. 1984, which is out of print indefinitely. Due to popular demand, we will be reprinting selected articles from that volume in future issues.

Once touched, hopefully we will move to fight the oppression that hangs over us—to change our lives. And culture also gives us solace and healing strength in the process of our struggle. So don't think of yourself as a booking agent so much as a cultural organizer!

“Trying to get gigs from the local Rotary Club if you are a lesbian separatist is a waste of time and energy.”

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

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

From the very start, have a clear understanding with your artist of why you are organizing this tour. To sell a product? Gain exposure and reviews? Earn money? Spread political ideas? Work in coalition? Every other decision will flow from this focus. You can have more than one focus, but the priorities should be clear.

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

Remember that the connections you build can be lasting. Nurture your relationships with other bookers, the press, club owners, production companies, community and organizational leaders, record labels, and technicians. And almost most important,

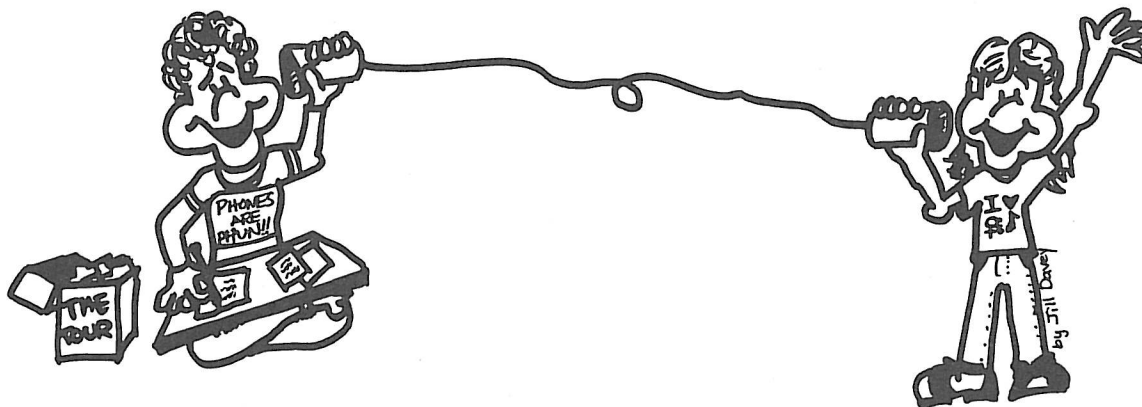
keep in close touch with the women's music distributor in your area. She is in a position to know the resources in her area well, and can be an invaluable resource to you. Trust her, cooperate with her, and both you and your artist will have a much easier time of it. Contact WILD, the Women's Independent Label Distribution network.

The network we are all building is more than unique—it's a treasure. And just as any chest of gold may be deeply buried, or rusty, or a little moldy, of course there are problems. But in the past 15 years, thousands of women have participated in building a new women's culture that has incorporated exciting new ideas, skills, and ways of doing things, and has in fact become a cultural model for some of the "mainstream." (Just ask some of the

a million annually? That these albums have a retail value of \$2,000,000? (The distributors at Midwest Music emphasize that women's music distributors do not make \$2,000,000 profit.) Numbers are relative, though. In comparing women's music to the mainstream music industry, consider these figures: Cris Williamson's album The Changer and the Changed, generally acknowledged as the top-selling LP of women's music has sold more than 150,000 so far [1984 statistics]. Bruce Springsteen's recent Nebraska album was considered a "bomb" because it only sold 200,000. On the other hand, women's music holds her own when comparing and contrasting sales in the alternative music circuits such as folk, blues, and jazz. Arloco (Arlo Guthrie's label) considers a good year selling 50,000 records. Redwood (which

WHERE

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



women's production companies about the overground male promoters who have approached them about co-producing together.)

We've created festivals, booked tours, produced concerts, formed record companies, raised funds, developed mailing lists, sold albums, written articles, legally incorporated, taken pictures, made albums, written songs, published magazines, attended concerts, learned sound, lighting, stage, and graphic design skills, laughed, sung, danced, acted—in short, developed a market that in many places exceeds the "folk" market. For example, did you know that current [Ed. note: 1984 statistics] Women's Independent Label Distribution sales exceed a quarter of

began as Holly Near's label) sells about 80,000 records a year [see article in this issue of HOT WIRE about Redwood].

And despite an economy where most of those below the poverty line are women, and a political movement fraught with in-fighting, somehow we've not only persevered, but are in a fairly healthy state overall. We have tremendous strides yet to take in terms of having this culture accessible to all women, and having it truly represent women of color. But we continue to move forward. So please, as we build, feel free to criticize, stretch, and try new ideas—and, as with any treasure, let's still try to handle what we have with love and care.

many places women's culture has barely touched!

WHEN

Ah, the contradictions! Of course, everyone and her sister tours in spring and fall, which means competition is highest then. But in the summer, many people are on vacation, and in the winter, weather can be a problem. You just need to weigh all the variables and figure out what makes the most sense for your situation at the time. For example, summertime is festival time, February is Black History Month, in March many schools have women's weeks, etc. If you tour during peak times, do your best to find

out from all the producers and club owners and other bookers who else will be around when, so you can try to work cooperatively (possibly to do joint publicity, announce each other's gigs, and avoid booking on top of each other). Other ideas are just going out for selected weekends, or when the airlines, buses, or trains offer special package deals. Keep your eyes and ears open!

WHO

Who produces you or your artist is directly related to the whys of touring. If you're touring to gain exposure as a new artist, you might seek a different producer than if you're touring to promote a new album or cassette, or mainly to earn money or to support a political cause or idea. The content of your act will also help you decide where to look for gigs. For instance, if your band plays bluegrass music, there are clubs and festivals that focus strictly on bluegrass. Or if your songs have feminist or lesbian content, there are festivals and a network of producers who support that politic. The same is true for folk and rock music, political songs, jazz, country, rhythm and blues, gospel, comedy, theater, poetry, etc.

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

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

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

Coffeehouses: Usually coffeehouses tend to be more willing to take a chance on new artists, especially if the music or message fits the tone of the place. Often there is not a lot of publicity

done by the coffeehouses (they tend to run on shoestring budgets), so you may want to supplement it with some of your own to insure a good turnout. The fee is usually a percentage of the door.

Alternative producers: These include women's production companies, other political producers, and many of the producers in folk music. In this case, "alternative" means that these producers do not necessarily support themselves solely through production, or they produce concerts in support of a political cause, group of people, or kind of music. Alternative producers are usually a good place for the new artist to look for gigs if her music fits within their more specialized framework or is supportive of their political cause. Sometimes the women's production company can help you get booked into a club; the women promote it, and the club pays you (we hope). It's a good place to begin getting your name out and getting reviews.

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

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

and universities also depend heavily on national and regional entertainment conventions to book a lot of their entertainers. These conventions, like NACA (National Association of College Activities), are costly to go to, and the competition is very stiff; but if you break in, you can get a lot of work at colleges and the money is very good. The Student Activities advisor at your nearest college should be able to tell you how to hook into NACA locally. [Also, see Townsend's article in this issue of HOT WIRE re college gigs.]

Organizations and conferences: Many social service and political organizations produce concerts as fundraisers for their organization or political cause. If you are a new artist wanting to gain exposure, seek these organizations out and offer your services to them for a lower fee or as a benefit. Next time they may produce you for your regular fee or someone else who sees you may be interested. Examples include NOW, National Women's Political Caucus, Gay Task Force, Lawyer's Guild, Women's Studies Conference, and Festivals. Watch the papers, go to the library, ask club owners and schools about local or regional festivals, and even if you don't get paid much, it's wonderful exposure. [Also, see Gribi's article in the Nov. 1985 issue of HOT WIRE re playing the conference circuit.]

These are some ideas that will help get you started. The most important thing is to be creative and persistent; and remember, anyone can be a producer if she has enthusiasm and is well organized and responsible.

HOW

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

work and the work of the artist you're booking.

The first thing one must do in booking a tour (or even a gig or two) is decide if the artist will fly or drive, and where and when they want to go. Once you have determined that, it's time to send out introductory letters to potential producers, colleges, and coffeehouses and clubs. It should be a general letter stating the approximate time your artist will be passing through their area, with a description or flyer about her. You should also say you will be following up the letter with a phone call within two or three weeks to see if they're interested

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

When the producer asks, "How much?" there are several approaches to the question. One common way to handle it is to simply quote a price. The pitfall here is that you may ask for less than the producer had in mind and lose money. Another pitfall is that you ask for far more than the producer had in mind and she

tion exists, when everyone is flexible within reasonable limits, and people do their jobs.

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

Booking can be a lonely job, but it's an essential part of the process that is women's music. It can also be challenging, rewarding, and fun. There's plenty

"Don't think of yourself as a booking agent so much as a cultural organizer."

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

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

Once you've got a "producer" (meaning anyone who will bring your artist to their city) listening, they'll want to know when and how much. If it's a driving tour, the "when" will be a delicate juggling act that requires some give and take on everyone's part. You must make sure your artist can get from one city to another with enough time for emergencies. The cities must be in logical geographic order, and although you can plot out the ideal at the beginning, be prepared for some changes midstream. Common sense is your greatest asset here.

gets freaked out and uncooperative. It's good to be able to lay out some ballpark figures when needed, but sometimes getting the producer to suggest a price first can be useful. If she won't do that, then one can use another common slant—the "let's work backwards and see what you can afford" approach. Here, the booker and producer sit down together and figure out expenses, ticket prices, projected attendance, and the resulting budget. It then becomes clear in which ballpark the ballpark figure lies. It may even become clear that it's a dead-end and the producer can never afford what your artist needs to get. More often than not, though, it gives a realistic framework in which to bargain and work out a producer fee, and to determine if working with percentages as well as guarantees makes sense.

The one term that should sum up the approach to negotiating is mutual respect. If this exists, there is no reason why this aspect of the process need be unpleasant. Booker and producer are not necessarily in adversarial positions. After all, it is in everyone's interest that both the artist and the producer make fair money and the audience gets a good show at a fair price. This can happen when a spirit of coopera-

of room for more of us, so jump in—the phone lines are fine.

PROMOTION

When Trudy Wood first started promoting Kate Clinton, the best advice she got was from author Barbara McDonald, who said that if we didn't put out our own image of ourselves, in our own words, the press would make it up themselves. One of the crucial areas for artists, and often the thing that puts us on the map, is the way we can creatively and effectively promote ourselves, our visions, and our directions. Promotion needs to be directed. An artist must know herself, what she's about, what she's doing and why, and what she wants to accomplish. As a promoter or advertiser, look at promotion being done by other artists who are doing well, getting a lot of jobs, and ask, "Why?" As women we have historically been warned about drawing attention to ourselves, but that is exactly what we need to learn how to do. There is not a performer around who is "making it" who doesn't have a clear, directed idea about how to do just that, and then what to do after that.

It is important in the beginning to identify who your audience is,

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

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

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

The press pack does not have to be expensive or slick, but it should be tasteful, well-written, and to the point, and also convey very clearly who you are (clever? romantic? focused on message?). It is better to have less material, but of high quality, than to have rambling quantity. Cheaper, too. Make sure to include an engaging bio, places you've performed, at least one good photo, opening acts you've done, performers you've shared the bill with, and the best reviews you've gotten. You might

also include a sample press release about your upcoming tour, concert, or album. (If you don't have experience writing these, off to the library! Remember that the first paragraph should include the most vital information.) And with all the promotion you write, the better written it is, the more likely it is that it will be lifted intact and reprinted just as you wrote it. Who could ask for more?

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

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

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

Again, most important: be creative and persistent.

For people to take you seriously, you must demonstrate that you take yourself seriously. Initially this involves money: yours. Press packs, glossies, posters and flyers, phone bills, and money to live on in the interim must all be taken into consideration by the artist as her own operating expenses. There are a lot of extremely talented women trying very hard in this circuit to bridge the chasm between the unem-

ployed and the employed. To become one of the latter, you need more than talent; you need every intelligent thought and scheme you and your friends can come up with, dedication and direction in that belief in yourself, and GUTS!

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

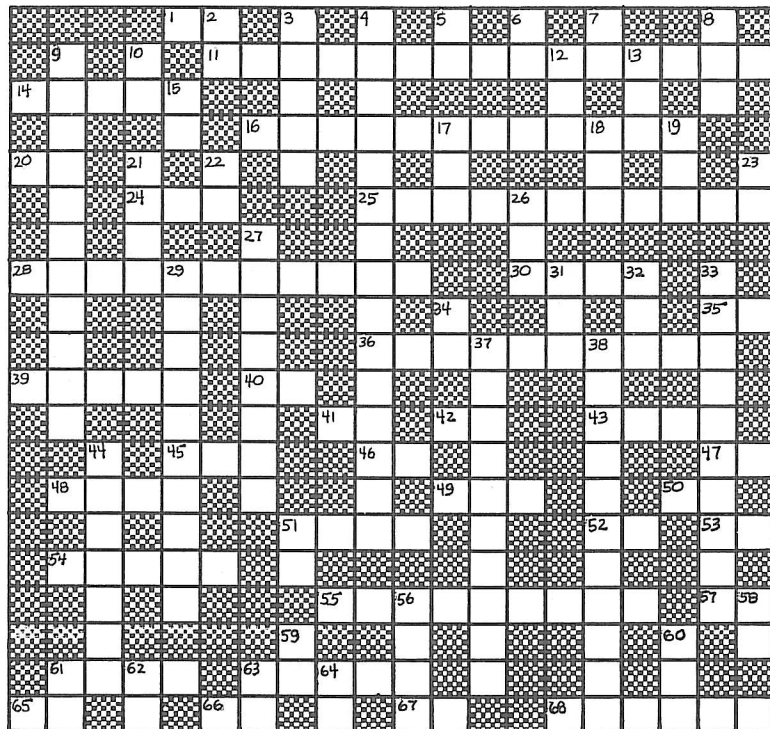
Look at other artists' promotional materials for ideas and interesting angles. Focus your promo on what you want stressed about yourself, what you want highlighted. You can put yourself out into the world in any way you choose, so think about how it is you want to be seen and then go for it! The more professional-looking your materials are, the more professionally you will be treated. Get stationery printed up, as well as business cards, and then start using them. Send out your promo to everyone on any list or directory you can get your hands on, and then follow it up with a phone call. You never know when you're doing promotion how it will come back to you, but

continued to page 60

ABOUT THE AUTHORS: *Jill Davey* took a leave of absence from Redwood Records to take part in the Great Peace March for Nuclear Disarmament. She is marching from Los Angeles to Washington, DC. *Susie Gaynes* continues to be the booking agent for Kate Clinton, and is currently working with the Syracuse Cultural Workers. *Penny Rosenwasser*, formerly of Roadwork, has been a cultural organizer since 1975. She has been a performer, producer, publicist, and festival organizer in addition to coordinating national tours for more than 20 women artists. *Trudy Wood* is co-owner of Whyscrack Records, business manager/road manager for Kate Clinton, and is an excellent photographer.

ACROSS CLUES

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1. cycle and sexual
11. Kay's newest
14. Tyler and Flower
16. Film of Jane Rule's book (2 words)
20. "Keepin' secrets about -- and you"
24. 'The Changer --- The Changed'
25. Home of women's music industry conference
28. Largest mail order selection
30. Sappho, the tenth ----
35. -- men invited
36. Big hit after "Leaping" (2 words)
39. New England fest
40. Location of first fest (abbreviation)
41. Another Spielberg cartoon-like character (initials)
42. Location of West Coast fest (abbreviation)
43. ---- the faith
45. 'HOT WIRE' publisher (initials)</p> | <p>46. Clinton's manager (initials)
47. Emma, seen in 'One Fine Day' (initials)
48. 'Naked ----'
49. Studio --- Top, women's jazz
50. Home of Roadwork (abbreviation)
51. Prairie and Sister
52. Location of Southern Fest (abbreviation)
53. Goldenrod and Horizon boss (initials)
54. Get me these seats at the Deidre McCalla concert
55. Home of Judy Small
57. Bloomington Showcase producer (initials)
61. Computer ---- friendly
63. "We are woman-loving ----"
65. -- art
66. Home of paparazzo Susan Wilson (abbreviation)
67. 'Womansong' is her album (initials)
68. Reel World ----- Band</p> |
|--|---|



- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>2. -- you say so
3. Inquired
4. Carol & Alix collaboration (3 words)
5. Partner of Worley and Near (initials)
6. "Denver to ---" (Flower song)
7. Naiad head honcho (initials)
8. Good luck...break a ---
9. Big-time Bay Area booker
10. It's no longer a threat to be called "----"
12. Country of many women's music fests (abbreviation)
13. '--- WIRE'
15. Home of producer Virginia Giordano (abbreviation)
17. --- good to be true
18. "B'lieve I'll --- On...."
19. Usually one or two a night
21. Mary and Tye
22. Partner of J.C. (initials)
23. Sweet Honey -- The Rock
26. Bernice is to Toshi, Henia is to Doviida</p> | <p>27. Big Mama Festival
29. Mary Watkins' newest
31. Flying saucer
32. Nyro says he's coming
33. Hit for Barbara and Teresa
34. Whyscracker, former of Flight of the Phoenix (initials)
37. Why Jill Davey took leave of absense from Redwood (2 words)
38. Kate's first
44. Tui's latest; got much radio airplay
51. Fourth note of scale
56. "---- of the Soul"
58. This Ramsey has done it all (initials)
59. Home of Jasmine (abbreviation)
60. Wire service
61. Go -- on the US map to find Heather Bishop's country
62. -- lover
63. Upper left on the map (abbreviation)
64. Missiles we hate</p> |
|--|---|

DOWN CLUES

Puzzle answers are on page 51

Casselberry & DuPreé

The Making of Their First Studio Album

By Toni L. Armstrong

Casselberry-DuPreé have finally released their long-awaited studio album, City Down. Though they have toured widely and appeared at women's music festivals across the nation, fans have had to be content with the cassette Casselberry-DuPreé. Even the artists did not feel the tape, first released on their own She Lion label and later remixed and distributed by Icebergg Records, was representative of their unique sound.

THE LONG COURTSHIP

"Bloomington 1984 is when it started really getting in the wind," says Jaque DuPreé. "We were asked by Midwest Music to open for Ferron and Ronnie Gilbert. We were thinking seriously about doing the album, and we courted each other for a year around the idea of doing the record together. Other labels were interested, including Rounder Records, but we were being really careful."

According to Karen Gotzler of Midwest and Icebergg, "It actually started when Pat Reddemann and I saw them in Michigan in the early 1980s. We eventually had them open for concerts we produced in the Midwest. That was before we thought we were record producers. Initially, Icebergg started because we wanted to help Ann Reed get her second album out. It was Casselberry-DuPreé that convinced us that we wanted to become a record company."

A number of factors influenced Icebergg, a new label specializing in artists with pro-feminist, pro-gay consciousness.

Casselberry-DuPreé consistently combine politics and spirituality in their shows. J. Casselberry says, "It's stuff that effects us



Marcy J. Hochberg

directly: the line of -isms, the -isms list. But more than that, we're trying to integrate into what we're doing material that will help people get a sense of their own individual power. That's where the change comes. We like to call attention to specifics, like South Africa or the role of women in Christianity or love, but we try in the end to sum it all up: we all have to rise to our full potential."

Karen agrees. "J. and Jaque have a unique way of blending music and politics which touched us. We feel they're real strong in concert, and are able to bring messages to people in ways that we've never seen any other artists do. They obviously have a strong appeal to a black audience, and they are able to reach out to white audiences in a way that we haven't seen before. That's something they want. They know it's more of a risk to do that, but they feel it's important to who they are. Working with them was

a real priority for us.

"Also, we felt strongly that the work of black women has not been recorded enough in women's music, and a lot of the reason for that is their access to resources. A lot of the women's music labels were started by women who had economic backing from family and friends. Unfortunately because of the politics and economics in the U.S., black women in general don't have those same kinds of advantages. With Casselberry-DuPreé, that was an important consideration for us."

Icebergg offered more to Casselberry-DuPreé, in their estimation, than did the other interested parties. They were given artistic control over the project as well as business incentives like more money and a booking agent.

"We knew," says Jaque, "that we were going to be getting the quality sound that we needed for our first album—which is like a calling card, so it has to be good."

"We also were won over by

the fact that they had the distribution network there to plug into [through Midwest Music], and that there was less chance of communication breakdown because the people who run Icebergg also run Midwest. We try to look at the big picture. For us it was better to be big fish in a small pond."

DECISION-MAKING

Choosing the producer is a crucial decision for any recording project. The diversity of the material on City Down—from "Take It To The Limit"'s country sound to the reggae of "Positive Vibration" to the Afro-Brazilian "War"—required a producer knowledgeable in all genres. Artists and record company were in agreement that Linda Tillery was the woman who could pull the album together, hire the right musicians for the right songs, and do it all within the budget.

"J. and Jaque had a concept of what they wanted their album to look like and sound like," says Karen. "They chose the songs in conjunction with Linda, and they had the idea of the kind of photo they wanted on the jacket. Icebergg and Casselberry-DuPreé decided who to hire to design the jacket, and Icebergg coordinated the work.

"As producer, Linda's job was to oversee the production of the album. She wrote out the checks for the studio and the musicians, worked with the arranger, hired the musicians, and scheduled the studio time. She worked with the artists to help them produce the sound they wanted. J. and Jaque would explain in the studio what they wanted the song to sound like, and Linda would help them make that sound happen."

Linda helped them determine where they could compromise and in what areas they could not. In the end, they chose to protect the quality of the sound over all else. Instead, they cut corners by booking the studio at non-prime-times, and decided to do the record completely in the Bay Area. They had originally wanted to do it on the East Coast where they live, because there were musicians there like Toshi Reagon and Bernice Brooks that they wanted to

work with. But dollars had to be saved somewhere, and they did not want to stay within the budget by compromising the sound. It was cheaper for J. and Jaque to stay with friends on the West Coast than to bring Linda and all the musicians to the East Coast and house them there.

The musicians were selected by Linda from among the artists she works with in the Bay Area.

"She chose the musicians for how accomplished they were in the particular styles for the individual songs," says Jaque. "We asked her to walk us through everything, to hold our hands through the whole ordeal. We knew what we wanted it to sound like. We had been working with Annette Aguilar in California, and we wanted her to be a part of it because that is a lot of what our sound has been. A lot of the bass parts and some of the lead guitar stuff were Toshi Reagon's arrangements from when she played with us at Michigan. That was the first time we had played with a band sound. Bernice Brooks played the drums with us, too, and she used to play with Linda before Bernice moved to the East Coast. A lot of her parts were laid down already, so the musicians Linda picked for the album knew the sound they were going for.

"We felt that Linda Tillery was the best at helping us articulate on the black wax what it is we've been doing all along, and the things that we've heard in our heads. Just tightening up, polishing up. She chose artists who could execute it as quickly as possible in the studio. Time is money."

Once the studio tape was finished, Icebergg assumed the responsibility for the manufacturing. Promotional, distribution, and advertising decisions were also theirs from that point on.

THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Though J. and Jaque have worked in the studio before, City Down was their first full album project complete with a producer that wasn't them. There were surprises.

Jaque says, "We learned a lot about recording our voices, like how it sounds when we sing each other's parts. We did different things, like adding and doubling our voices to get certain sounds."

The speed with which Linda Tillery and sound engineer Leslie Ann Jones recognize chords and tones amazed them. "Leslie Ann Jones has this laser-sharp awareness. There was so much musical potential they gave us.

"The highlight of our recording," she continues, "was when we got a lot of our friends and relatives to come in and chant on Toshi Reagon's 'South Africa.' The rhythm track was put together from what Toshi and J. and I had been doing when we were performing in Michigan, but it all came together with the synthesizer, using bird sounds and waves that make you feel like you're going across the sea. We always try to set the mood when we're performing live, and it's hard to get that in the studio. You have specific timing, and you have to just move into things. It was surprising how they recreated the mood and the sentiment."

J. and Jaque are happy with their decision to record with Icebergg. Says Jaque, "It was good going with someone who felt that they had more of an investment in us than a big label would have. We respected and liked the people we were working with, and they felt the same about us."

"It's a different kind of venture," says Karen, "in that it's the first reggae album we have done. But we're confident. We've done our homework. And a big part of Casselberry-DuPreé's market is the women's music audience, the market Icebergg knows best. We're all a little nervous and a little excited."●

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MOVING?

Please, please, please write to us!
It costs us a lot of money if we mail
HOT WIRE to the wrong address.
Let us know today if you've moved
within the last four months.

REDWOOD from page 29

does not include the amount of money the distributors put in to promote the release. There are albums that are initially promoted for as little as \$5,000.

"There are a lot of different formulas for budgeting promotion," Melissa says. "One is that you should spend 14 percent of the initial budget for promotion. We try and do that proportionately. In some cases we haven't done that much, but we also have some creative marketing schemes. There is a pretty well-developed network out there, and in some ways we get a head start compared to what even some major companies get. We get a lot more for a lot less money, because there's an emotional component which gets people at publications and radio stations involved in a more personal way. I can't quantify it, but we get so many letters that say, 'Keep up the good work! You're putting out great stuff!'"

"Another formula says 80 percent of your gross operating budget should be spent on marketing. We've been operating probably more at about 75 percent, and we're upping that. This does not include manufacturing costs. There are two budgets," she says, "one gross operating budget and one for the manufacturing. It gets complicated, but say we do a Mary Watkins album. We have a contract with her regarding how much we will spend specifically for advertising and promotion of that album. It includes the production of press kits, our labor in getting reviews, sending out promotional copies, and anything else that promotes the album. A portion of the general Redwood promotional efforts—like getting special bin cards in record stores—will also end up in the final budget for Mary's album."

Radio tracking is very expensive, but getting the music on the air is an important marketing strategy.

Melissa says, "We paid about \$2-3,000 a month, depending on who we were using. For Fire in the Rain and the Speed of Light single, we hired a radio tracker. Not to sound really cynical, but I'm finding with mainstream radio

that it takes a lot of money to sustain airplay long enough so that the song totally catches. It takes a lot of kindling to start a fire.

"The money goes to keep the trackers on it, to keep them feeding stations. It does not include the cost of the albums that we are sending to the stations.

"In the case of Linda Tillery, we released a single, since a lot of stations will play singles more than they will play a standard LP. We hired this guy in Los Angeles who has efficient contacts at radio stations all over the country. We purchase his services, and it's his name we're relying on to get in the door. We're buying his contacts—like buying a mailing list in a way. With Speed of Light we used a different company and went after a different set of radio stations. It's expensive but worth it for a good record—it does expand the audience."

Redwood is dependent on record sales for its survival. Because their products appeal to a very specific audience, and because they are an independent label without the major labels' millions of dollars at their disposal, the scale of their operation is proportionately smaller than that of a major mainstream record company.

"Everybody here feels that culture is a very important thing in the world," says co-owner Jo-Lynne Worley.

"This belief is a mainstay at Redwood."

In the recording industry, a "gold" album is one that has had 500,000 units shipped, and a "platinum" record has had a million shipped. Just as Redwood's top promo budgets of \$25,000 do not even come close to the average \$150,000 budgets of major label releases, the Redwood "best selling" album figures are significantly lower. They consider an album that sells 10,000 per year to be "doing not great, but good."

According to Joanie, the two top-selling Redwood albums are close to each other in sales. Fire in the Rain and Holly's A Live

Album have each sold approximately 72,000. Lifeline and Imagine My Surprise have each sold about 64,000. You Can Know All I Am and Speed of Light are both at around 52-53,000.

MAKING HITS: SHADOWS & SECRETS

In addition to Holly's hit records, Ferron's Shadows on a Dime and Linda Tillery's Secrets have received the most attention from the mainstream media. In the case of Shadows, Melissa says, "It's hard to say what we did versus what Ferron did to make that record go so far. The timing was right in her career, and she had built up a following to the point where it was exploding. Testimony had a cult following already."

Joanie agrees. "I think Ferron's time had come. Testimony had been a very good seller on an independent label, quite a hit for a number of years. People were ready for another Ferron album. Also, Ferron and her partner Gayle Scott met the press. They toured and toured, and—given the type of artists we work with—that is a major factor in successful album sales. In fact, when people are disappointed, take a look at the touring pattern and you can trace a lot of it back to that.

"Also, we did a pretty sophisticated print advertising campaign. It's been used as a model; people have since said, 'If you can do the advertising campaign that you did for Ferron, I'll be happy.'"

"Shadows received incredible critical acclaim in literally dozens of papers. At the end of the year, when papers do their 10 Best Albums, she made a lot of those lists, getting compared to major stars, like: 'You gotta have Springsteens and you gotta have Ferrons!'"

Melissa adds, "She got a four-star review in Rolling Stone. We

are always sending albums and letters to everybody, including Rolling Stone, Billboard, etc. Why does it sometimes work? I think the planets are in the right place and people pay attention. I don't think Redwood can take credit for it. It was a combination of everything coming together at the right time.

"Ferron hasn't gotten as much radio airplay as we expected. A lot of it, we're told, has to do with the length of her songs. She gets a lot more airplay in the college stations than even in the alternative stations."

For Linda's Secrets, Melissa says, "We hired a professional tracker and it had what you call in radio 'regional breakouts.' In the South all the major stations were playing it, she was a hit pick at the major R&B station in D.C., and so forth. But she plays with a band, and the expenses are prohibitive in terms of traveling with a band. Her access to the audience has been limited because of this. Her album would be doing twice-to-three-times as well now if she could tour more. Basically in the women's community people know who she is, but she's really branching out into the more mainstream R&B community. She's not leaving the women's community behind, she just really wants to continue growing, and—except for the Bay Area and in L.A.—those people do not know who she is yet."

DISTRIBUTION

Getting the albums into the listeners' hands requires a sophisticated and dedicated distribution network. The nine WILD distributors represent Redwood in a variety of territories. Distributors buy the records on 60-day terms from Redwood and then sell to stores. Print and radio promotion is negotiated on an individual basis—some distributors do not do it at all, and other distributors do it all the time. Redwood hires distributors to do radio tracking, and does cooperative advertising with them.

Jo-Lynne says, "We work with some distributors outside of the WILD network, too. We do business with some black one-stops, which have large warehouses

where record stores order all or most of their records. Either the store owners call in the orders or physically go into the warehouse and decide what they want.

"Some specialize in black music and that's all they carry. They would buy directly from a label rather than go through a distributor. We do it with some New Age distributors who carry only records and tapes that have to do with New Age consciousness. Also, we sell to some Latin distributors who go to stores that WILD distributors don't go to, like to Spanish-speaking stores."

Redwood Records has a variety of distribution outlets throughout the world, including the WILD distributor in the UK, Carolyn Hutton. In Denmark the products are distributed by Polygram, with the Gendle-Danish label as the middle person. They have a band that does political rock, so they do promo, marketing, and in-store displays for Redwood.

"Holly is bigger in Denmark," Jo-Lynne continues, "than she is in the U.S. She's gone back there four years in a row. She had a two-hour TV special on the only Danish TV station, so the general population of Denmark has seen her, which is not true in the U.S."

"In Germany, Holly sells the best because she's been there the most. She's done two tours and she goes over for the huge rallies they have. They decided to release a German version of Journeys, which is different from the U.S. version. They can change the cover and the songs."

They are currently working on increasing the distribution in Europe and in Australia. A new deal with a major label in Japan is underway, and they're getting ready to distribute Holly and Inti-Illimani in South and Central America through a company that's going to press the records.

THE FUTURE

The women of Redwood are determined to keep their political-cultural vision clear while making an economic success of the enterprise. They've made a long-term commitment to sorting through the complexities of this goal, and to juggling the conflicting needs and expectations of the many cul-

tural and political communities with whom they have chosen to become involved.

"People say Holly has a lot of causes," says Jo-Lynne, "and that she likes going out on limbs. Some people think that when she goes out on one limb, she's left behind her last limb. But as she says, 'a limb is a limb is a limb.' When Holly goes out, she does things for different groups. She took the issues of AIDS and Central America and other issues that are important now in making the world a better place to 100,000 people at the NOW March in Washington, DC. The night before, at a concert with Jackson Browne for 4,000 people, she talked about the importance of AIDS in everyone's communities. All of those issues are important, whether it's work for feminists or no-nukes or Central America."

"I look at it as the same tree, different limbs." ●

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 47

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RE:INKING

WISCON 10

By Jorjet Harper



In February of 1986, WISCON, the science fiction convention held in Madison, Wisconsin every year, celebrated its tenth anniversary. Sponsored by a group called SF³ (Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction), it is the only science fiction convention in the country that focuses on women and feminism. As a rule, guests of honor are women writers like Octavia Butler, Lisa Tuttle, and Vonda N. McIntyre, and/or graphic artists like Alicia Austin. The panel discussions have titles like "Women in Speculative Fiction," "Women and Linguistics," "Fat, Feminism, and Fandom," "The Romanticization of Rape in SF," and "Women Writers You Probably Never Heard Of," and are offered alongside the more usual SF convention discussions of Dr. Who, Dungeons and Dragons, Star Wars, space hardware, and J.R.R. Tolkien. In contrast to some other SF conventions, WISCON is a fairly intellectual gathering of bookish people who read reams of science fiction. Many attendees are writers or aspiring writers, and the panels offered are geared to these interests.

WISCON grew out of a group of people who worked on *Janus*, a feminist science fiction magazine in the early 1970s. "We had put a couple of issues out when a number of us went to our first science fiction convention, which happened to be the WorldCon in Kansas City in 1974," said Jeanne Gomoll, one of the 17 women and men on the original WISCON or-

RE:INKING articles deal with women's writing as a cultural phenomenon, including individual writers, women's publishing ventures, and the growing Women-In-Print movement.

ganizing committee. "At that convention we met Amanda Bankier, who was the editor of the very first feminist science fiction fanzine, called *The Witch and the Chameleon*. We met Suzy McKee Charnas (author of *Motherlines*), Susan Wood, and a whole lot of other people. At this convention they had scheduled the first 'Women in Science Fiction' panel that ever was. Susan Wood was a very well-known fan and critic at the time. She fought with the WorldCon committee to have a 'Women in Science Fiction' panel there. They resisted, said there would be no interest in it. But finally they gave her a little room. Well, that room was just packed to overflowing with women. There were also a number of men in there heckling, which was real disturbing, especially since they said first we couldn't do it because no one would be interested—and obviously a lot of people were real interested—and then some men were so upset about it that they were heckling us."

That panel overflowed into another lounge area, said Gomoll, and many who attended spent the rest of that afternoon sitting around talking. "It was just so incredible—all these people who had never realized that there were other people interested in the same thing. We got really ener-

gized from that one panel and from talking afterward. I was out in the hallway—I couldn't even get in the room. I was real involved in the discussion afterwards because I didn't even get to hear a lot of the panel."

From that panel and discussion a women's APA (amateur press association) started. "We got excited about doing *Janus*. Obviously we had tapped into something that was just starting to grow."

Gomoll recalls that they didn't know what sort of community they were getting involved with. "We didn't realize we had been doing something (publishing *Janus*) that was called a 'fanzine.' We had never even heard the word 'fanzine.' We didn't call ourselves 'fans.' We would have associated it with movie fans, that kind of thing. So we sort of backed into it."

"It started partially on our enthusiasm from the WorldCon, that was the triggering thing. Though a number of people in the group were interested in doing a convention, it was the idea of a feminist convention that really got us all excited. It was coincidental with the times. There were a lot of women science fiction writers starting, a lot of women fans starting to come into fandom, and a lot of interest because of these changes in ideas about women in science fiction. And so it all seemed to be coming together at once. We decided that we wanted to do a convention that was a feminist convention right at the outset. It would be a really different convention. We didn't know what it was different from; we just knew that this was the kind of thing we wanted to do. We weren't jaded fans who wanted to change the world into something else, we just had this

great idea."

The first few WISCONs, says Gomoll, were all experiments. "We didn't do a lot of the normal things people do at conventions because we didn't know you did that. We didn't stock beer in the con suite. But right away we had far more programming than any other convention. We now have beer in the con suite, but we still have much more programming than other conventions have."

In the following years, Jan Bogstad (co-editor with Gomoll of Janus and the first WISCON chair) started another journal, New Moon, while most of the people associated with Janus began publishing Janus's successor, Aurora: The Magazine of Speculative Feminism. Still in existence, Aurora is now edited by Diane Martin, another of the original WISCON committee members.

"I've noticed the tendency now for people to talk about the 1970s as kind of boring, dull, 'too academic, too serious'," says Gomoll. "Seems to me these are code words to obscure the fact that they weren't comfortable with feminism, didn't really like it, but don't want to say that." She feels this is a new strategy in suppression of the sort discussed in Joanna Russ's How To Suppress Women's Writing.

Aurora seeks to continue that link with the 1970s. "I don't think women are less feminist. But people are now writing science fiction with strong women characters, and not necessarily feminism first, story second. There are a lot of things we fought for and won in the 1970s that are assumed in the background. But at the same time you can't forget what happened in the 1970s or eventually we're going to have to do it all over."

This year was the second time I'd attended WISCON, and I found it, once again, a unique and interesting event. Being around a lot of literate, imaginative people—both women and men—with a basic feminist understanding is a very different experience from, for instance, a women's music festival. While there are challenges in this type of group that do not occur in all-women gatherings, women interested in writing within the SF/Fantasy genres and

in writing in general can spend much time attending panels and workshops that are pointedly helpful to them. The high visibility of women writers, critics, bookstore owners, librarians, and conference organizers at WISCON is very heartening.

"Publish But Still Perish" was a panel that discussed the economic realities of publishing companies and what happens to a writer when her publisher goes out of business. One of the panelists was Ellen Kozak, a Milwaukee-based lawyer who writes science fiction under a pseudonym, and she faced this very situation when her publisher, Pinnacle Books, recently went bankrupt. She gave valuable information on ways writers can protect themselves in their contracts from this and other catastrophes. She is the author—under her own name—of Every Writer's Practical Guide to Copyright Law. (Available for \$5.95 postpaid from Inkling Publications, Inc., P.O. Box 128, Alexandria MN 56308.)

It was a great pleasure for me to meet Suzette Haden Elgin once again this year. Suzette was one of WISCON 10's Guests of Honor. She is the author of more than 10 published novels, including The Ozark Trilogy and Native Tongue. She is also a linguist (an expert in Native American languages who did her Ph.D. thesis on the grammar of Navajo), has written linguistic texts, and is the originator of Laadan, an artificial language she constructed specifically to express the perceptions of women that are not accounted for in other languages. [See "Laadan" column in each issue of HOT WIRE.]

Suzette gave a lesson in Laadan, and participated in a number of panel discussions including "Fantasy in the Contemporary Setting," "Religious and Paranormal Themes in Recent F&SF," and "Women in Speculative Fiction 1975-85."

The other Guest of Honor this year was Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, who writes in the mystery, supernatural, and horror genres as well as science fiction and fantasy. She is an extraordinarily prolific writer who has published—according to a quick count-up of her bibliography—26 full-length novels

in the last 10 years, and more than 30 works of short fiction. Among her most well-known books are The Saint-Germain Chronicles and False Dawn. While her books are not ones that could be classified as feminist, Chelsea has a very strong sense of herself as a writing professional, and has a wealth of information, expertise, and passionate opinions about her craft.

There were a number of other women writers at the convention, published and unpublished. A Special Guest was Suzy McKee Charnas, author of Walk to the End of the World, Motherlines, and The Vampire Tapestry.

Vampires were, in fact, much talked about this year, especially with the recent publication of Anne Rice's The Vampire Lestat, sequel to her celebrated book Interview With The Vampire. During a panel called "Good Witches and Bad Witches: Archetypal Female Images in F&SF," feminist critic Joan Gordon generated much discussion with her theory that there is a parallel between vampirism and breast feeding. P.C. Hodgell, author of the highly imaginative fantasy novel God Stalk, was also on the panel, and discussed the differences between archetypes and stereotypes.

Another very interesting panel dealt with the topic "Feminism in the Post-Holocaust Environment." In this panel, Jeanne Gomoll observed that while male writers often use the theme of nuclear and/or environmental disaster to set the scene for adventurous survival epics, female science fiction writers have more often used this backdrop as a "clean slate," a narrative device to end the patriarchy as a prelude to exploring the possibilities of a more egalitarian, or more matriarchal, society.

"Women seldom think of [the post-holocaust] in a romantic way, and are often much more aware of the seriousness, the awfulness, how it couldn't be romantic—just another horrible way to die. But

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jorjet Harper writes fiction and non-fiction. She is a regular contributor to 'HOT WIRE' and to 'Windy City Times,' a weekly Chicago newspaper. She is the National Coordinator of the Feminist Writers Guild.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Sandy Ramsey and Barbara "Boo" Price

By Lucy Diamond

SANDY RAMSEY

Women's Music Trivia Question #1: Who played the spoons on Teresa Trull's The Ways A Woman Can Be? If your answer was SANDY RAMSEY, you are absolutely correct. But Sandy's fame in the women's music network goes far beyond her spooning ability.

In fact, Sandy has been in the business since 1974, when she became one of Olivia Records' first distributors. Since that time, Sandy has been actively working to make the network a more professional business. In September of 1975, she started a newsletter for distributors. In July of 1976, she relocated to Los Angeles from her home in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and began work fulltime at Olivia. Her duties varied, and she was office manager, road manager for Meg Christian, distribution manager, and she handled distribution outside of the U.S.

In 1982, she struck out on her own, becoming a business consultant for artists, labels, distributors, and bookers. She has also done work in the area of fundraising. Since 1981, she has done the bookkeeping for Zango Distribution in the Bay Area. In 1984, she became the coordinator of accounting for the Michigan Festival. She continues to do business consultation.

Sandy holds a bachelor's degree from the University of New Mexico in Physical Education. She began work on her master's in recreation, but never quite found the

BEHIND THE SCENES profiles the "unsung" women who keep the women's music network running: producers, distributors, technicians, bookers, back-up musicians, organizers, and dedicated workers of all kinds.



Sandy Ramsey at Olivia Records office, circa 1982.

time to complete it. Born in Denver, Sandy lived in Albuquerque for 15 years. She is the eldest of three children. Her mother is a homemaker and her father was a tool and die maker. Besides her many activities with the women's music network, Sandy works as a marketing director for Camps, Inc., a non-profit community-based organizations that runs camps.

Sandy became involved in the women's music network "because of its tremendous political message and potential." She says she loves working with women whom she respects, and with whom she can share her skills. No one group of women holds a more respected place in Sandy's heart than those in our distribution network. She has had a long and cherished relationship with this group.

As the network continues to grow, Sandy says, "I hope what we sell will remain as important as how we sell it." She envisions a future of greater opportunity for artist development, a larger audience for the music, and a greater impact on mainstream music. She enjoys seeing the network become more professional as our business skills increase.

Sandy has met women from all over the world through her work in women's music. The bond that women share through the

music has provided experiences that Sandy will always hold dear. She has had the opportunity to learn about the struggles of women in different countries, and has been a part of the work these women are doing. One of her most valuable experiences was with a woman named Gaye, a penpal from South Africa. Gaye provided great insight for Sandy concerning the politics of South Africa. Through their time of correspondence, Sandy sent Gaye tapes of women's music and received different items in exchange that helped to express Gaye's cultural experience. One particular gift that Sandy treasures is a book of short stories, banned by the South African government. Although they do not currently correspond, the love and respect for another woman's struggle burns bright in Sandy's mind.

It is with the support of women like Sandy Ramsey that we can all rest assured that the power of women's music will continue to grow and enrich all our lives.

BARBARA PRICE

BARBARA "BOO" PRICE is best known to us today as the coproducer of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Even though the Michigan festival is now her main focus in the women's music network, her roots in women's music go back to the beginning of the network itself.

In the summer of 1974, Boo bumped into her old college friend Ginny Berson in Los Angeles. Ginny suggested she see the "largest women's music event" at the time, with Margie Adam, Cris Williamson, and Vicki Randle. She did, and as you can probably guess, it changed her life. There was no turning back for Boo.

Since the summer of 1974, Boo has been involved in almost every aspect of the network. First and foremost is her role as live performance producer. Her first production, spurred by her attendance at the Margie, Cris, and Vicki show, was with these same women as a fundraiser at the University of California at Davis where she was attending law school. "We were all so new," she says, "we were just making it up as we went."

Boo's live production history includes the Women on Wheels Tour in California, the National Women's Conference in Houston in 1977, and the 1980 National Women's Political Caucus tour with Margie Adam. One of her career highlights was a concert she produced in 1982 with Margie and Sweet Honey In The Rock which was broadcast live by satellite in a radio production by Ginny Berson.

Her festival work began in 1975 at the San Diego Women's Music Festival, and continued at the Boston Women's Music Festival shortly after that. She began her long relationship with the Michigan festival in 1976. She has been the night stage producer every year since, taking only 1979 off. She began to co-produce the entire festival in 1984 with her partner Lisa Vogel. Other festivals that Boo has worked with include NEWMR, The West Coast Women's Music and Comedy Festival, and the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington.



Barbara Price (right) and Lisa Vogel, co-producers of the Michigan festival.

Live performance is not Boo's only experience in the network. She worked with Margie Adam for 10 years as her representative. Through their working relationship, which began in 1975, Boo developed skills as a manager, promoter, and booker. When she began doing this work, very few women in the network performed these tasks. Today, many women fulfill these needs with other artists, which Boo feels "is a tribute to the growth and development of our industry." She was sometimes criticized for putting together press kits with a "too slick" look, but her model was later included in a book on self-recording. Boo took promotion as a personal challenge and, together with Margie, they made many strides to break into major newspaper, radio, and other media coverage, including television talk shows like The Today Show.

Boo's work in record production and distribution again began in the beginnings of our network. She was a record distributor in Davis, California for about one year. Her products were an album by Willie Tyson, the 45 recorded by Meg Christian and Cris Williamson, and Meg's first album I Know You Know.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: *Lucy Diamond, aka Linda Dederman, has been involved with women's music since 1974. She has done concert production, artist management, booking, and record distribution.*

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FREESTYLE

How Did We Get Into This Mess?

An unblinking look at the status of women's music today

By Kay Gardner

Just as I was about to sit down and contemplate the state of women's music—where it has been, where it is now, where it is going—I read an excellent article by Susan Wilson in the March 9, 1986 edition of the Boston Globe. Entitled "Women's Music—Then and Now," the article contained some interesting observations.

The initial impetus for my musings was a letter from Goldenrod Distribution and Horizon Distribution (women's companies serving the Midwest, Northeast, and South). The letter, addressed to record labels, artists' managers, and booking agents, was decrying the fact that recording artists are either just not touring in the distributors' regions or they aren't taking each other's overall economies into account when setting their fee schedules. The letter's tone seemed almost panicked about the situation, but solutions were suggested.

"...We are asking you to:

- Send your performers out here for lower fees,
- Do more shows where you split the risk with the producer,
- Play for smaller houses, and
- [Record labels] help subsidize a concert every now and then...because we need them out here!"

I hope to address some of these problems and perhaps offer some insights into how women's music might have gotten itself into this difficult situation.

Susan Wilson writes: "A decade ago, when 'women's music' was younger, cohesive and militant, pinning it down was simpler. It was a progressive, musical-cultur-



Are we so wrapped up in economic survival that we can't recall our feminist politics and our visions of women's culture?

al phenomenon that grew out of the burgeoning women's movement. It was music by women, for women, and about women's lives, an alternative to what was perceived as the sexist, man-made, commercial music of the day—and a means of support and solace for women changing their roles and images. Its following and leadership were predominantly white, middle-class, lesbian and feminist, and its heroes were folk or acoustic-music oriented singer-songwriters like Cris Williamson, Holly Near, Margie Adam, and Meg Christian."

Because the above-named artists (nicknamed "The Big Four" or "The Big Cheeses" by some of us other artists) were so popular, they were the only ones really getting concert bookings. Producers, afraid of losing money on "unknowns," knew that concerts with these four artists would at least break even financially even though enormous organization was

required to produce them. "The Big Four" also had the most experienced and energetic booking agents, so for a number of years they toured extensively while other artists struggled to survive.

A personal example: During the Big Four Era (approximately 1978-1983), I was booked in April by a production company for an October concert. In late August I was called and told, "We're terribly sorry, but we're going to have to cancel your concert here. We're producing (a Big Cheese) in early November and just won't have the finances or the energy to do your show too."

My feelings were badly hurt, but when sharing the story with other non-cheese performers, I found that each one of them had a similar sad tale to tell.

It's perfectly understandable that producers don't want to lose money, but instead of also producing the lesser-known or less "commercial" artists—thus developing name-recognition for future audiences—the producers put all their eggs into the "cheese" basket. When two of the Big Four burned out—possibly from too many years of exhaustive touring—producers had no "known" artists to fall back upon.

In a section titled "Economics and Politics," Susan Wilson looked at the move of distributors, engineers, producers, and promoters to expand and adapt their businesses to serve a broader support base. Distributing records and producing performers outside women's music became an economic necessity.

Performers have had to redefine their audiences. "Some have 'crossed over' into other musical markets like the folk music circuit. Some have welcomed men in their audiences, or divided

FREESTYLE: the musings of Kay Gardner.

their gigs between women's concerts and mixed concerts. Some have chosen to produce albums or play concerts with male musical colleagues, or record with male-owned-and-operated companies. And in the process, most have redefined at least some of those old women's music ground rules: 'Music by women, for women, and about women's lives'.

"But to some women, especially among ardent followers and fans, the price for such growth has been dear: the loss of an old friend, the loss of a safe space away from the rest of the world, a sense of abandonment or the resentment that comes with sharing something that was once exclusively one's own."

Susan Wilson finished the article with a quote from musician Betsy Rose: "We dug up our old culture and established a new one. Women's music was the glue, in a lot of ways, that kept us bonded..."

"I think the big challenge for women is not to mourn what we lost...We don't need to revive the old women's music world, and we can't. The harder question is:

Where is the cutting edge now? There isn't one! We in women's music have been so successful with our "cross-over" and "outreach" that we've been assimilated into mainstream or coalition circles. So long as we don't compromise who we are in the process, there's nothing necessarily wrong with the move; we are doing important work, and we are beginning to survive economically.

If, as Goldenrod suggests, we do play to smaller audiences, distributors are going to have to make the effort to come sell records at these concerts. Recently it's been like pulling teeth to get some distributors to take performers with audiences of 100 to 300 seriously. If we don't fill halls of 1,000 or more, we're made to feel that we're not worth bothering with. Are we still buying the patriarchal myth "Bigger is Better," i.e., more profit? Are we so wrapped up in economic survival that we can't recall our feminist politics and our visions of women's culture?

Performers and labels must realize that unless there is a tour to promote new releases, not only

are records not going to sell but performers aren't going to have the exposure necessary to bring in future audiences and future income.

Adjusting performers' fees to the economics of areas in which we tour seems fair, as does working with producers on a percentage basis, but there will only be a "cutting edge" when we lose our complacency and establish a true women's music circuit in addition to the folk, mainstream, and progressive audiences we now serve.

I hope this column doesn't seem like a personal harangue. These are thoughts I've had to get off my chest for a long, long time. In trying to think constructively about it all, I've come up with a couple of ideas.

THE ADVANTAGES OF GOING THE NON-PROFIT ROUTE

At this point, most women going into production are looking for profit. If producers would consider incorporating as non-profit (and possibly tax-exempt) women's arts, cultural, and/or educational organizations, they'd qualify for additional funding from their state arts councils and possibly from other non-profit or educational groups (professional and business-women's groups, Association of University Women grants, sororities, local women's clubs, etc.). Running non-profit organizations doesn't necessarily mean that producers don't get paid. Operating staff members may vote to put themselves on salary.

State and regional arts councils often have brainstorming meetings for arts groups, free non-profit business seminars, and advisory personnel who help iron out problems.

Another advantage of being an officially recognized non-profit group is the big break the post office offers for bulk mailings. The current rate per piece in a non-profit bulk mailing is 6¢—a savings of 16¢ per piece over first class rates of 22¢ per item.

I suggest that larger communities consider presenting annual "Women in the Arts" series. Season tickets would be sold each spring and summer for the follow-

ing season, but individual tickets for each event would also be available at the door. This approach has been tried successfully, notably in Hartford, CT and Atlanta, GA. On these series, feminist musicians, dancers, poets, comedienne, and filmmakers could be booked. Possible losses from the lesser-known artists would be offset by profits from the events featuring well-known, money-making artists. There would be a balance. Local performers, too, could open for the nationally-touring artists...thus insuring a training ground and future for women's culture.

Traditional non-profit arts organizations (like community concerts, museums, symphonies, and theater groups) have operated for years knowing that only a small portion of their operating expenses come from ticket sales. Their remaining funding comes from such fund-raising events as auctions, dances, bake sales, craft sales, and from grants.

One such granting organization has helped producers, operating under non-profit auspices, to produce performers who are also composers. Meet The Composer, Inc., 2112 Broadway #505, New York, NY 10023 requires that they be contacted at least eight weeks in advance of each gig and that their funds be channelled through state, local, or regional arts alliances. Up to one-third of artists' fees or full travel expenses may be given. The arts alliances working with Meet the Composer, Inc., are: The National Endowment for the Arts; New York City Dept. of Cultural Affairs; Affiliated State Arts Agencies of the Upper Midwest; Arizona Commission on the Arts; California Arts Council; Great Lakes Arts Alliance; Mid America Arts Alliance; New York State Council on the Arts; New Jersey State Council on the Arts; Pennsylvania Council on the Arts; New England Foundation for the Arts; Texas Commission on the Arts; and Washington, DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Many state and regional arts councils are comprised mostly of women. It may be helpful to lobby these women. These days councils are much more open to granting women's cultural events. For ex-

ample, the Portland Feminist Spiritual Community, a 200-member non-profit organization, received \$10,000 from the Maine State Commission on the Arts and Humanities for a "Women and Power Conference" scheduled for June 1986.

ESTABLISHING A FORMALIZED WOMEN'S COFFEEHOUSE CIRCUIT

A new U.S. and Canada women's coffeehouse circuit could keep women's music and culture alive. Giving performance opportunities to new, just-getting-known, and "established" artists, coffeehouses could be—as they've been in the past—intimate settings where the "cutting edge" of our culture is shined and sharpened.

As it is now, each year there are only a half-dozen women-only performance environments—the regional women's music festivals and a tiny handful of local coffeehouses. If regional women-only coffeehouse circuits could be organized, our culture could begin to thrive again, our political content could be presented undiluted by "outreaching," and we could really re-energize our "movement" again!

Looking at maps of the U.S. and Canada, I see approximately six regions with a dozen major women's communities each. There are: Northeast, including Montreal; Southeast; Upper Midwest, including Toronto and Winnipeg; Lower Midwest, including Texas; Southwest; and Northwest, including Vancouver and Alaska. Each of these 10 to 12 women's communities could commit itself to having a coffeehouse performance series every fall and every spring. Concerts could be booked for every other week or so over two three-month periods or "seasons." This might not necessitate renting on-going space, but could mean having the coffeehouse as an informal women's culture gathering for particular events. Coffeehouses could be held in rented space or even sometimes in someone's large living room. In Virginia there's a group called Every Other Friday Productions, for example, and Chicago's Mountain Moving Coffeehouse (a non-profit organization) has been functioning

for almost 11 years in a church with events almost every Saturday night.

The six-region coffeehouse circuit could be traveled by performers in two- or three-year cycles. For example: in fall 1987, Penny Performer would tour the Northeast; in spring 1988, the Southeast and Lower Midwest; in fall 1988, the Upper Midwest; in spring 1989, the Northwest; and in Fall 1989, the Southwest region. Penny would sign up for these tours and thus be assured of regular work [a performer's dream!]. At the end of the cycle, Penny could sign on for another go-round if she wished. These cycles would give many artists a chance to show their work, would prevent over-exposure of any one artist, and would lend a continuity to artists' lives and to the coffeehouse circuit itself.

Performers who wished to be considered for such a plan could be selected from auditions at the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, IN where special showcases for booking agents and the now-established block booking activities would continue—only on a much larger and more formally organized scale.

Coffeehouse producers could be given a list of artists divided into three categories: well-known (those with five or more years of touring), new (two to four touring years), and unknown (just beginning to tour). The coffeehouses would be required to pick two performers from each category, or groups of six artists would be booked as a package with no artist being ignored and each artist guaranteed an equal number of gigs.

Each performer could be guaranteed 50% of the gate or a fee of not less than \$100 per gig. If there were a standard \$5 door charge, an audience of as few as 50 women could meet the minimum fee, still pay overhead, and offer Penny money toward travel expenses. Performers would also be given clean housing and meals by the sponsoring community. This would mean that Penny, even at minimum fee as a new performer, could make as much as \$1,000 on her two- to four-week tour. With her record and tape sales, workshop bookings, and possibly other

larger mixed-audience gigs, Penny could survive. She might have to stop flying extra-frill airlines and take the bus from gig to gig, but she'd be out doing her cultural work as a minstrel, and we as the women's-community-at-large would benefit from exposure to the diverse artistic expressions Penny and the other artists have to offer.

A professional booking agent, or perhaps one for each region, would have to be hired. Perhaps the coffeehouses, record labels, and distributors could contribute to the bookers' fees. Also, at its beginning, the new coffeehouse circuit would need someone like a political campaign's advance person to instigate the idea and light fires under the local women's communities. She, too, could be funded by a consortium of interested parties.

I realize that this coffeehouse circuit scheme needs a lot of work. Some of my ideas may prove impractical or impossible, but I think it's an idea worth exploring further. Something has to happen, and soon!

Both of these suggestions for the preservation of women's culture require new commitment, organization, and hard work. We, as feminists, must unblinkingly look our current status in the eye. With blinders off, we must see that the gathering of woman-strength for another era of activism is essential for the survival and vision of women's culture.

Women interested in any of the above ideas are invited to contact me directly: Kay Gardner, P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681. (207) 367-5076 ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Kay Gardner, M.Mus., has extensive recording and performing credits. She has been deeply involved in women's music since 1973. She is also in demand as a teacher of the healing properties of music. Her fifth album of original works, 'Fishersdaughter: Troubador Songs' is due for release in mid-July on her own Even Keel Records label.

**PLEASE WRITE TO US
ABOUT WHAT IS
HAPPENING IN YOUR
CITY AND STATE**

UTOPIA from page 38

Racial diversity is part of the feminist vision. Most recent books show women of color in varied and important roles. LeGuin, in *Always Coming Home*, has gone a step farther by envisioning a future rooted in a non-European culture.

There was no violence in Herland; one could hardly imagine a heated argument there. But recent writers accept conflict as a fact of life. The emphasis is on finding ways to handle it well. While the massive violence of our current culture can and should be done away with, violence will remain

a human potential, and in most authors' projections an occasional reality.

Current women utopians have a certain valuable toughmindedness. They do not envision lives without sadness and pain. Still, they imagine that we can do better than we're doing now.

There are many theories about how to improve our lives: socialist, anarchist, neo-capitalist, separatist. But as they say in Mattapoisett, with theory and a nail, you've got a nail.

Novels, however, give form and color to theories. They focus our hopes, our loyalties, our sense of what we lack.

Novels are dreams of what the

world might be. With theory and enough dreams, maybe we can start to move. ●

SAPPHO from page 17

names modern people have tried to put to what she did. She was far more than a priestess in a religion of Aphrodite, teacher to daughters of a dying gynarchy, salon-hostess to a bevy of active artists or just a lyre-playing Lesbian with lots of sexy friends. She wrote from such an integrated female place as we modern women have only begun to imagine." ●

Next issue: Sappho and the Goddess Aphrodite.

WISCON from page 53

women use it to imagine a feminist utopia because it's difficult to figure out how we would get from where we are now to a feminist utopia. It's unfortunate that it's so hard. It's both a measure of our frustration and also a tool that's real important for feminism." [See "Women in Utopia" by Rena Yount in this issue of *HOT WIRE*.]

Gomoll is very optimistic about the future of WISCON,

based on decisions that were made this year. For WISCON 11—to be held in February of 1987—the coordinator and all department heads but one will be women. She said efforts would be made to choose next year's movies with an eye toward feminist content, or at least ones with strong women characters. And for next year's masquerade, costumes appropriate for a feminist—rather than 'generic'—science fiction convention will be encouraged.

It takes about 30 people to plan WISCON, and many more

volunteers work during the actual convention weekend. "A lot of the changes may not be visible to people who come to the convention, but will be felt by the women who are working in the group," says Gomoll.

"We have reaffirmed the fact that we want WISCON to be a primarily feminist convention, not only in the programming and the panels, but in other aspects as well." ●

For more information, or to be added to the WISCON mailing list, write: SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701.

HOTLINE from page 7

PUBLICATIONS

ARADIA/OTHERVIEWS reports that it has resumed publication with the February-March issue after receiving an influx of new supporters from their closing-down plea in the September-October issue. Contact: Aradia, P.O. Box 7516, Grand Rapids, MI 49510.

THE NATIONAL NEWSLETTER of the FEMINIST WRITERS GUILD is seeking articles (not creative writing) on topics specifically of interest to feminist writers. Contact: FWG newsletter, P.O. Box 14055, Chicago, IL 60614.

WOMEN

PAT REDDEMANN, co-owner of Midwest Music, Inc., and JILL DAVEY of Redwood Records left

their jobs to join the Great Peace March. The sponsor, Pro-Peace, pulled out due to lack of funds. 200-300 of the original 1,500 marchers are continuing the nine-month cross country walk.



Two women in love: Lynn Redgrave and Mariette Hartley in *My Two Loves*.

Yes! That bass player is VICKI RANDLE, Olivia recording artist and five-year associate of George Benson, on Aretha Franklin's video "Freeway of Love."

MEG CHRISTIAN is now the musical director of the Guru Mayi's spiritual organization, and they will be releasing three cassettes: Meg's "Fire of My Love," the instrumental "Avadali," and the Guru Mayi with Chamber Orchestra. All tapes are available through the Syda Foundation Bookstore, P.O. Box 600, South Fallsburg, NY 12779. The Guru Mayi and Meg will be in the U.S., and Meg will accompany her and perform in cities where there are followers of the Guru.

ANNIVERSARIES

A WOMAN'S PLACE, Portland, Oregon's feminist bookstore, celebrated its 13th anniversary with an autograph party featuring LEE LYNCH.

THE LESBIAN RESOURCE CENTER of Seattle celebrated its 15th year of service to the community in April 1986. ●

HOLLY from page 33

sales of their joint album, Life-line, are high and steady.

In the spring of 1984, as a gesture of protest against the Reagan Administration's Central and South American policies, Holly organized a national friendship tour, "Singing for Peace in the Americas," with the seven men of Inti-Illimani, the Chilean ensemble that is now in exile.

"There was some criticism from both our communities," Holly said in the January 1985 issue of Ms. (in which she was featured as one of the women of the year). Some women's music fans were unhappy that Holly was working with men, and Inti got a hard time from parts of their community for working with a "gringa" and an open lesbian. "And listen," she said, "we did have a lot of struggling to do with our stereotypes about each other. But I know I learned a lot about what it means to be an exile, and I think they learned a lot about lesbianism and feminism." Holly also learned to sing in Spanish, and the joint bilingual album, Sing To Me The Dream/Cantame El

1980s from page 15

enough that I use the word "Lesbian."

Suddenly I realize that I'm not being dispassionate. Am I? One of my friends from the old days told me that, like it or not, I am one of the foremothers of this new stuff. I don't want to be a foremother! For crying out loud, I'm only 30 years old! I want to be a contemporary! Where is the womyn's community? Have we all disappeared into the world of Mastercard and new cars, like me? I'll happily give it all up to rediscover feminism, but where is it? What is it? What if I give up the safety of my horrible but steady job only to find I'm alone? Am I still able to? Is it necessary? What happened?

What is happening right now? Where did all those angry young womyn go? I more than appreciate any and all feedback, be it negative or positive. In the meantime, I guess I'll keep playing my Lavender Jane tape, throw a little Willie Tyson in now and then, bask in my memories, and feel

Sueno, was recorded during the live performances.

"With Inti, what was exciting was that we don't all agree on everything—and yet there we were making music together, and our very diverse audiences were sitting there together in those auditoriums. And I think we have to learn to do that at every level if we're going to coexist on this planet," Holly said in Ms.

In addition to collaborations with Meg Christian, Ronnie Gilbert, and Inti-Illimani, Holly has toured extensively in Europe, Australia, the Caribbean, the Pacific, Latin America, and recently was a representative from the U.S. at the third international New Song Festival in Ecuador.

Holly has worked extensively with Susan Freundlich, the most well-known sign-language artist in women's music. Susan uses a combination of American Sign Language (ASL), mime, and dance to interpret songs for the hearing impaired.

Sometimes the politics Holly is committed to are overt and explicit (as in lyrics), or more seen in practical applications (such as working to eliminate the oppres-

ion before my time.

Is there anybody out there feeling this way?

Postscript, March 1986

One night last month as I lay in bed, contemplating my future and my past, struggling with my politics and my art vs. my security and comfort, something astounding happened to me. I was visited by the Goddess, or my guide, or somebody, and I was told that I am to be a musician.

Not being an overly-spiritual person, I was shocked—but also uplifted, elated, high even. Now, this could be mental illness—as my therapist says, "You're not feeling too good, are you?" But it could also be the real thing. I choose the latter.

I've been writing songs like crazy since then (and not one of them contains the word "collective") and have, indeed, decided to give up my horrible but steady job and make my way back into performing. (I've worked for the last three years in a women's prison for the State of Wisconsin.

sion of disabled people by making her shows accessible to them by using an interpreter). But politics are always present and operating.

Several years ago, Holly told an interviewer that politically-oriented artists had to consciously realize that they were in it for the long haul. Perhaps she'd never make it to The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson and entertain millions of viewers in one night (although she has appeared in Denmark on national TV), but over a lifetime she could reach just as many, without sacrificing political lyrics, feminism, or such non-mainstream practices as interpretation for the deaf.

Holly has broken through as a "genuine cultural ambassador," as Lindsay Van Gelder put it in Ms. And her not-always-welcome message is that we can no longer afford not to build coalitions.

Holly recently signed with the Los Angeles-based Variety Artists, an overground Booker. She's planning to do some shows with her sisters Timothy and Laurel, and doing more concerts with Ronnie Gilbert, Pete Seeger, and Arlo Guthrie (the artists featured on the HARP album).●

Let's say it's been a character-building experience.)

Instead of bemoaning changes in the "industry," I'm going to become a part of them. Instead of writing letters, I'm going to sing songs. I'm going to find out the hard way where all those angry young womyn went.

So look for Kitty Barber, Another Damned White Girl With A Guitar, coming your way soon!●

JUDY from page 35

song for the women of Greenham Commons, "Bridget Evans," which has become a favorite of the nuclear freeze movement.

Judy says, "I sing because I want to say something as well as entertain—but if I don't do both, I fail. I have to entertain as well as put a message across."●

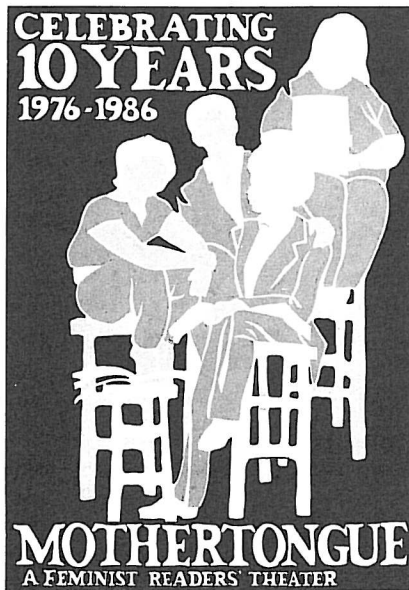
TOUR-PROMO from page 46

eventually it does pay off somehow, some way. If you don't put it out there to begin with, nothing will ever happen. And what it is we want to have happen is for more of our voices to be heard, in more places, more often.●

MOTHERTONGUE from 19

simply and relatively uniformly, if not in the stark all-black garb of traditional readers' theater. The performers carry their scripts in black looseleaf binders, although most of the material is memorized. Props are minimal but do exist, and usually serve as stage enhancements rather than performance tools. Unpainted wooden stools, one for each performer, focus physical movement.

Yet any variance from tradition is still in the service of the story. Each Mothertongue script focuses on a specific topic: "Survival", "Body Talk", "Mothers and Daughters", "Work", "Loving Women", and the ever-popular "sex script", "Did You Come or Fake



SCENES from page 55

In 1975, she and Margie created their own record company, Pleiades Records, through which they produced four albums. Boo most recently has completed a new album with her partner Lisa Vogel on the new August Night label. This album, *Michigan Live '85*, is a live recording from the 10th Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

And what does she do in her spare time? Boo is an attorney in San Francisco working in the areas of women in business, entertainment and arts, and family law. She has worked with almost every performer in our network as an attorney or consultant. Boo has also done legal work on many

It?" Within the parameters of its theme, a script is comprised of monologues, dialogues, choruses, songs, skits, "true confessions," even schtick. The mood can be comic, tragic, poignant, sentimental, angry. The women on stage stand still and speak quietly; they pace the stage and shout; they sing and dance; they perch on stools and react to one another. In Miller's words, the performers "are the conduit to let the audience make the costumes and sets in their own heads. The important things are the words—[in formalized readers' theater] you're not supposed to notice the speakers."

Yet how can we not notice these women, when they are our friends, lovers, sisters, mothers, daughters—ourselves? When they are telling our stories?

"I saw [a performance], and my life was changed!" exclaims Mothertongue member Kris Kovick. "The idea of women turning the ordinary fabric of their lives into these amazing tapestries... well, I wanted to join a script immediately."

And join they do—the women who slowly come to realize that Mothertongue is not a "they" but a "we." The "demystifying," the telling of stories and secrets never fails to take each new "Tongue" by surprise. Having kept our tales to ourselves for so long, having had our lives compartmentalized, and having had pieces of ourselves handed out in answer to disparate demands—this integration and declaration of our feel-

albums and has worked with record companies, music publishers, technicians, and authors.

Boo was born in Lafayette, Indiana in October of 1943, and she has a 16-year-old son "who is wonderful."

Of all her accomplishments in the women's music network, none can compare to her contributions to building the network itself. Through her nurturing and care, she has given many women the validation and strength to be a working part of our network. By passing on to others opportunities and guidance, she has created a depth and continuity in the network that shall go forth in years to come. For this we thank her.●

ings is powerful, and empowering.

New member Toni Langfield's reaction is typical: "[After a performance] I mentioned I had a situation they hadn't covered... they said, 'Make a piece out of it.' So I did—I actually did—what a revelation. I could write from my own life..."

"I felt really happy just to hear everything that they said," says Mary Angela Collins of her first Mothertongue performance. "Through [the women in the script] I learned that what you do and what you say can affect people deeply."

Longtime member Ida VSW Red discovered that "nothing [I had done before] connected all the aspects of my life: politics, culture, lovers, writing, and acting. Mothertongue kept me sane."

And Kovick concludes, "[This] is what I have been looking for for 10 years, and it's been here all along."

And, as Mothertongue performs at campuses, community centers, churches, festivals, and fundraisers, as "word of mouth" travels from the stage to the streets, regenerating and perpetuating the Mothertongue tradition, she will be here with us—she will be us—for 10 years more, and 10 beyond that.●

HUNTER from page 31

She will be taking that instrument on the road again throughout the rest of 1986, promoting her third album, *Harmony*, released on Redwood Records this year, features vocal additions from Holly Near, Ferron, Linda Tillery, and Teresa Trull. Hunter is very proud of the album, which she sees as her best and most musically sophisticated effort to date. The release of the album was celebrated by a huge concert at the Great American Music Hall in the Bay Area on April 13. Hunter was joined by Ferron, Holly Near, Linda Tillery, Terry Garthwaite, Barbara Borden, Suzanne Vincenza, and Janet Small, among others.

During early 1986, Hunter consulted extensively with Joanie Shoemaker and Jo-Lynne Worley regarding promotional strategies and artist development. She did a 30-city tour in the spring, and plans to visit another 30 in the fall.●

FERRON from page 32

1,000 copies, and both albums are now out-of-print collectors' items.

In July of 1978 Ferron met Gayle Scott, an American freelance photographer working in film production in Canada. Gayle encouraged her to enter wholeheartedly into the field of professional music, and became Ferron's manager, promoter, and business partner. "She inspired me and gave me self-confidence," says Ferron, "and in terms of the work, a lot of the philosophy and style came from Gayle."

In 1980, Ferron and Gayle produced Ferron's first studio album, Testimony, with \$27,000 borrowed from friends, the credit union, and supporters. Testimony sold 5,000 copies in the first four months. By 1982, it had sold 17,000 copies through mail order and the Women's Independent Label Distribution network, and Lucy Records licensed the album to Philo Records in Vermont for U.S. distribution. Testimony made several Top Ten Critics' Lists, and it paved the way for extensive, critically acclaimed national tours, establishing Ferron as an enormously popular cult figure both in the women's music circuit and in the acoustic folk scene.

In March of 1984, Lucy Records released Shadows on a Dime, produced with jazz/pop singer Terry Garthwaite. Gayle told The Vermont Cynic how they were able to raise money for Shadows. Gayle and Ferron were in a re-

MARY from page 31

has excited the jazz community with its promise to release authentic jazz, as opposed to the stylized blend that most commercial labels call jazz.

Winds of Change was recorded live in two concerts in San Francisco in October of 1981. Besides Mary's septet, the personnel included the Los Angeles-based big band Maiden Voyage (all women except for a trombone substitute), and a 19-piece string section, all women. The project was partly funded by a 1982 National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Performer's Grant, and the rest of the money for production was raised by Music Arts, Inc., an Oakland-based agency.

ording studio in San Francisco, and only Gayle knew that they did not have enough money to leave with the tape. Two interested fans were there to watch Ferron make the last part of the tape. When they heard Gayle explaining this to the owner of the studio, one person who had just received \$5,000 for a school loan offered Ferron \$2,500, and another person who had just gotten a \$1,000 car loan decided that she could take the bus for another year. As Gayle said, it was the "miracle factor" which allowed them to produce Shadows on a Dime, which is owned by Lucy Records and distributed by Redwood.

In and out of women's music, Shadows was highly praised. It was The Boston Globe's choice for one of the best records of 1984, and no other album was picked more times by the critics than Ferron's. Only two other albums were chosen as many times: those of Bruce Springsteen and Prince. Rolling Stone gave Ferron's album a four-star rating.

The subject matter of Ferron's songs is personal, poetic, and tough. Her unidealized view of relationships—often women's relationships—have appealed to audiences and critics alike. As The New York Times says, "The rough spontaneity of her singing...makes her something of a renegade."

"I am something of a renegade," said Ferron. "In Canada, the women's movement is linked up with the Socialist movement.

Mary doesn't consider her instrumental music to be feminist, though she's in full accordance with feminism.

"It may be feminist in that it's my experience and I'm a woman," Mary said in a Milwaukee Journal article. "But ultimately I'm a humanist. The music is subjective for the listener."

That perspective has led her to an interest in all people hearing her music, something which she did not feel would happen on the Olivia label which is aimed at the feminist market.

She has appeared with Toshiko Akiyoshi, Earth Wind and Fire, Stephanie Mills, and several other mainstream performers. Also, she has done production and arrange-

NANCY from page 30

songs: "The Bread Song" and "Fish Lips." It was engineered by Woody Simmons, and women's music favorites Joy Julks (bass) and Bonnie Johnson (drums) also appear on the tape. It comes with a four-color poster with hand motions, lyrics, and drawings. It is for use with young people, especially in classrooms.●

I'm singing to regular people who are trying to make sense of their lives. A lot of those people are poor people, and a lot of the poor people are women. I see myself mostly as a poet-singer-songwriter who is trying to work with words in a diligent way. I feel there must be a common-denominator audience of both men and women."

In October of 1985, Ferron received a Canada Council arts grant, enabling her to take year off. Given to established artists by Canada, the grant provides a living stipend and money for further musical study. Ferron has been using the time to write, take voice lessons, study music, and to recover from her extensive touring. Part of the plan for this year was to make no plans, since Ferron and Gayle had been living six to eight months ahead of themselves for such an extended period of time. Living in Vancouver, Ferron has no concrete plans at this time for another album, and the soonest she will go back on the road would be in the spring of 1987.●

ment on more than a dozen records, including those of Teresa Trull, Gayle Marie, Linda Tillery, Cris Williamson, Stephanie Mills, and Silvia Kohan.

Spiritsong, her latest, was released in 1985 on Redwood Records. It is comprised of seven original compositions. It reflects most strongly Mary's classical and jazz training, although her range of styles includes blues, gospel, country, and pop.

She describes her audience as anyone who enjoys instrumental music.

"Some are feminists, some are jazz fans, some are pop music fans," she says. "But they all have to like jazz, they have to like something a little more adventurous."●

RONNIE from page 35

The Little Red Songbook of the International Workers of the World. She taught me my first political songs."

Like Holly, Ronnie grew up in a socially-conscious household. She marched in May Day parades, and "naturally thought of music and politics together," she said in The New York Times last year. "Those of us who are considered political singers are part of a very long history that goes back hundreds of years. One reason I think that political music has been persecuted is because it is so effective. Even supposedly non-political songs have messages. The popular music I grew up with from the 1930s said to young women that if you didn't have a boyfriend you might as well quit. I wasn't immune to it when I was growing up. That's why I feel that every song I sing counts."

In 1974 a young, relatively unknown "protest singer" named Holly Near dedicated her second record, A Live Album, "to Ronnie Gilbert of the Weavers: a woman who knew how to sing and what to sing about."

When Ronnie's daughter told her of the album dedication, she was surprised.

"On the one hand I felt somewhat flattered," Ronnie recalls, "but on the other hand I thought, 'Oh, these kids! They just don't have any sense of propriety. A memorial record, and I haven't even died yet!'"

Shortly afterward, Ronnie received a copy of the album from Holly.

"It arrived in the mail," says

Ronnie. "I stopped my vacuum cleaner and went down into the basement where the record player was. I put on the record. One song after another, just going right smack into the nerve center. The songs—which were not folk songs—were so integrated with the politics and the sentiment and the melodies. I thought, 'My God, it's like finding a new voice that is surely partly my voice, but it isn't my voice. It's like a whole other generation."

"So I spent the whole day down in the basement, alternately listening and crying, listening and crying."

In 1980, the original members of the Weavers reunited for an historic final concert at Carnegie Hall. A documentary film, Wasn't That a Time!, portrays the preparations for the concert as well as the story of the Weavers. It features some highly-praised footage of Ronnie and Holly singing together, and was the start of the pair's touring together, first as a duo (recording Lifeline [Redwood, 1983]) and then with Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie (recording HARP [Redwood, 1985]).

Ronnie's first solo effort in 20 years, The Spirit Is Free, was also released on Redwood in 1985.

Ronnie and Holly have a new album in the works, Singing With You, due for release in 1986. For the rest of the year, Ronnie will be touring. One stop will be an extensive three-week tour in Australia of major cities with Judy Small.

Ronnie has been working on a fundraising and membership drive tour for the Jewish Fund for Justice, a grant-giving organi-

zation for progressive projects. She will be on the road through early 1987, and the tour includes many benefit shows.●

LINDA from page 32

including being "recommended" by Billboard and being a feature pick in Cash Box. It got medium to high rotation airplay on radio stations nationwide, and made it into the Top 10 in Los Angeles.

As demonstrated early in her career, Linda's high-energy shows reveal a commanding stage presence. Her sense of humor has charmed women's music audiences over the years with her back-up dance group, the Tuizerettes (pronounced "tweezer-ettes"), enlisted from the audience and taught dance steps a la the Temptations; her soul medley ("I Got You"/"Sweet Inspiration"/"Freeway of Love") dedicated to "soul brothers number one and two: Donnie Osmond and Barry Manilow"; and her outrageous flirting with (and on-stage seduction of) sign language interpreter Susan Freundlich during the song "Fever."

During 1986, Linda has been working with a seven-piece band, playing clubs and concerts in the Bay Area and the Los Angeles area. They've done some touring, getting rave reviews in places as diverse as Juneau, Alaska and Birmingham, Alabama. They are in pre-production planning for the next album, one which will probably be released on a major label.

In the fall of 1986, Linda will be touring with Julie Homi, and the entire band is planning to tour during 1987.●

Dykes to Watch Out For



SOUNDSHEETS

By Joy Rosenblatt and Toni L. Armstrong

"DO YOU REMEMBER?"

Performed by: Kay Gardner (vocals), April Rain (guitar).

Written by: Kay Gardner

From: Fishersdaughter: Troubador Songs

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P.O. Box 33
Stonington, ME 04681

Kay Gardner's fifth album, Fishersdaughter (otherwise known as "the fish record"), will be in record stores this summer.



Yada Vernee

CASSELBERRY-DUPREÉ

"DID JESUS HAVE A BABY SISTER?"

Performed by: Casselberry-DuPreé (vocals), Steph Birnbaum (guitar), Annette A. Aguilar (tambourine), Dave Matthews (keyboards), Benny Rietveld (bass), Paul VanWageningen (drums)

Written by: Dory Previn

From: City Down

Icebergg Records
207 E. Buffalo #501
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Produced by Linda Tillery, this album's richness and power comes through with every beat. Reggae, folk, and African chants: each style uniquely represents the essence of Casselberry-DuPreé. Included are: "Positive Vibration," "Take It To The Limit," and "Did Jesus Have a Baby Sister?" as only Casselberry-DuPreé can sing it!



Robin Fre

KAY GARDNER

"SOMEONE"

Performed by: Hunter Davis, Linda Tillery (vocals), Joyce Imbesi (synthesizer), Barbara Borden (drums), David Garthwaite (bass)

Written by: Hunter Davis (lyrics), Hunter Davis, Melanie Monsur, Joyce Imbesi (music)

From: Harmony

Redwood Records
476 W. MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94609

A gutsy reminiscence of loneliness and lost love, "Someone" stands out as a high-impact blues tune reinforced by Hunter's powerful husky voice intertwined with the gospel-inspired vocals of Linda Tillery.



Irene Schelbner

HUNTER DAVIS

"JUNGLE WOMAN"

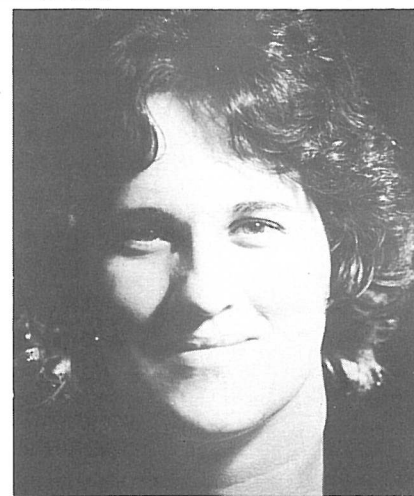
Performed by: Chickie and the Chicks: Chickie Ford (guitar, vocals), Lori Noelle (piano), Paula Grear (drums), Marlene Rosenberg (bass), Cathy Ford and Peggy Michaels (vocals)

Written by: Chickie

From: Jungle Woman

Chicks, Inc.
535 Prince Edward Rd.
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Chickie and the Chicks use humor to make serious musical messages. The Chicago-based band blends electric/acoustic with modern/primitive sounds to bridge the gap between our ancient and contemporary selves. Their group name evolved from the days when male rockers referred to them as "chick singers," and they're out to prove once and for all that chicks do it better.



CHICKIE FORD

SOUNDSHEETS

Material is recorded on both sides in stereo. Do not bend the soundsheet. Place it on turntable at 33 1/3 rpm. A coin placed on the label where indicated prevents slipping. If your turntable has a ridged mat, placing the soundsheet on top of an LP may be advisable.

Questions and comments about the soundsheets? Recording specifications and costs will be sent upon request. Send SASE to **HOT WIRE**, 1417 Thome, Chicago, IL 60660.

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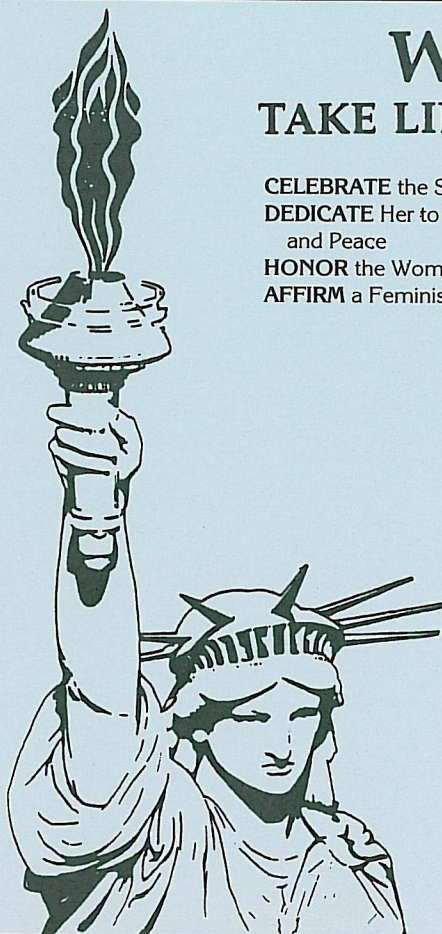
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