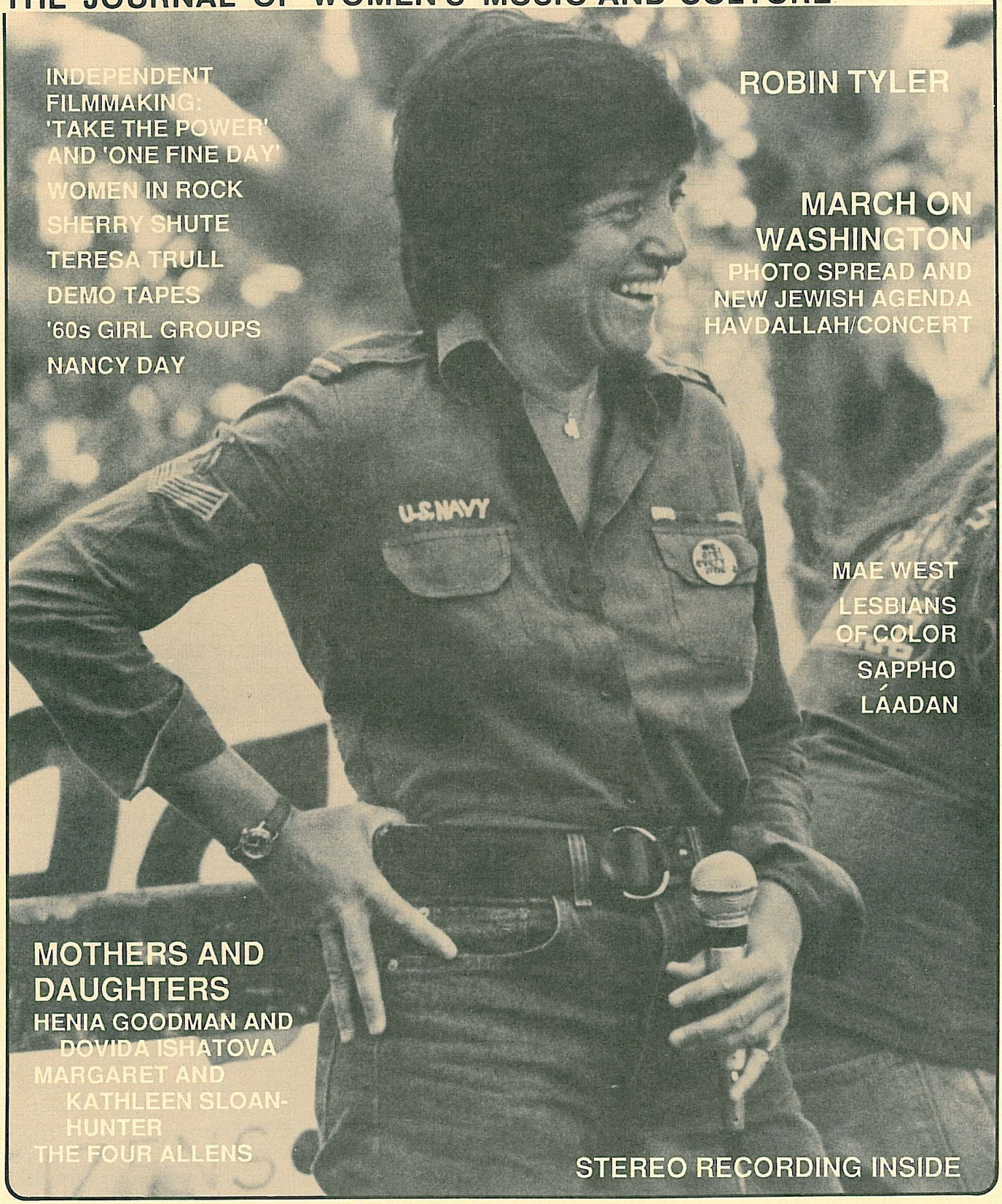
HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE



INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING: 'TAKE THE POWER' AND 'ONE FINE DAY'

WOMEN IN ROCK

SHERRY SHUTE

TERESA TRULL

DEMO TAPES

'60s GIRL GROUPS

NANCY DAY

ROBIN TYLER

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

PHOTO SPREAD AND NEW JEWISH AGENDA HAVDALLAH/CONCERT

MAE WEST

LESBIANS OF COLOR

SAPPHO

LÁADAN

MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

HENIA GOODMAN AND DOVIDA ISHATOVA

MARGARET AND KATHLEEN SLOAN-HUNTER

THE FOUR ALLENS

STEREO RECORDING INSIDE

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 2

$5

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

THE 'HOT WIRE' EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

HOT WIRE specializes in woman-identified music and culture, primarily the performing arts, literature, and film. We strongly believe in the power of the arts to affect social change, and enjoy documenting the combination of "politics/philosophy" and "creativity/talent." We are committed to covering female artists and women's groups who prioritize lesbian and/or feminist content and ideals in their creative products and events.

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Each year (at the Music Industry Conference at the National Women's Music Festival) awards to recognize outstanding achievements/contributions are given to women who work in the women's music business. The 1987 *HOT WIRE Readers' Choice Awards* went to Ladyslipper and Alix Dobkin [see July 1987 issue for details and Readers' Choice Survey results].

These awards are determined solely on the basis of write-in nominations and votes; the *readers* do the nominating and selecting, not the magazine staff. At this time we present this year's nominations submitted by readers [see page 25].

WE'VE MOVED--HAVE YOU?

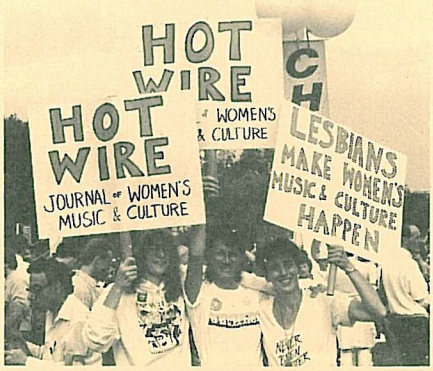
Please note our new address: 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640, and phone number: (312) 769-9009. If *you've* moved in the last four months--or will be moving within the next four--please tell us immediately. Magazines mailed to wrong addresses are *thrown away* by the post office, not returned to us. We can't afford to replace lost magazines if you didn't tell us you moved. *It is very frustrating to receive mail saying, "I paid for a subscription, but I haven't gotten my last two issues. Are you still publishing? Send it immediately. Oh, by the way, I moved..."*

AND WE SWORE IT WOULDN'T HAPPEN

For the first time in four years, *HOT WIRE* is a few weeks late. We moved into a new space last fall, and construction that was scheduled to take "eight to 10 days" ultimately took *10 weeks*. We can--and do--work under many adverse conditions, but "in a construction site" is not one of them. Sorry for the delay, and we expect to resume our usual punctuality after this issue.

GET WELL SOON...

...to *HOT WIRE* writers Suzette Haden Elgin (Arkansas) and Pat Parker (California), both of whom are recovering from serious surgery they had last winter. Cards and letters can be sent to them c/o *HOT WIRE*.



Jorjet Harper

The 'HOT WIRE' contingent was enthusiastically received at the March on Washington. Pictured: Toni Armstrong, editor; Yvonne Zipter, mother of the name 'HOT WIRE'; and musician/activist Alix Dobkin.

HAPPY MOTHERS DAY

See our feature on Moms & Daughters, beginning on page 34.

REPRINTS FINALLY AVAILABLE

Now is your chance to read those impossible-to-find early articles! Since we have several back issues sold out, we are beginning a "Reprints Service." Send a self-addressed stamped envelope to receive a list of the table of contents of all back issues (starting November 1984/Volume 1, #1). We will send any reprints you desire for the cost of $1 per two articles. (If you order several articles at the same time, the price will be less--because the postage will cost less.)

SOUNDSHEETS

If you have a damaged soundsheet from a previous issue and want a new one, we *may* have a few extras. If you are interested in having your music or comedy on a future soundsheet, send SASE for details.

'ACCESS'

Beginning with this issue, Judi Friedman will be editing a column called "Access," presenting viewpoints and information about issues of accessibility within the women's music and culture network. It will appear in every other issue, alternating with the "Live! From Canada" column (edited by Connie Kuhns).

ON THE COVER

Robin Tyler, long-time activist and feminist comic, producer of the West Coast and Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festivals. She produced the October 11 March on Washington rally; read her interview on page 2.

FINDING THE CUTTING EDGE

It's not too late to respond to Betsy Rose's article in the last "Mulling It Over" [November 1987, page 52]. Responses will be incorporated into the second part of the article, which will appear in our next issue. What new "cutting edge" cultural events/forms have whetted your curiosity and excitement recently? How do you "diagnose" these times? What are the psychic/social areas that art should be addressing? Describe an ideal cultural event/activity that would include both what inspires and delights you personally as artist/participant, and what you see as being useful/transformative in the world. Betsy Rose, P.O. Box 9538, Berkeley, CA 94709.

ON VACATION

"Behind the Scenes" by Lucy Diamond will return in the July issue with a look at some of the women photographers who preserve the images of our contemporary women's music and culture scene. "Live! From Canada" by Connie Kuhns, the column about the women's independent music movement in Canada, will also return in July.

$$$ BUCKS $$$

Many thanks to those of you who have donated money toward subscriptions for international archives, libraries, and individual women. We are in perpetual need of such angelic generosity. We get letters on a regular basis from women around the world who cannot afford subscriptions. We respond to all such requests, but it costs us *a lot*, primarily due to high postal expenses. We encourage readers to send donations earmarked "gift subscriptions." Your support of women's groups around the world is most appreciated. If you can't afford to pay for an entire subscription, remember: even a few dollars makes a difference. And *special thanks* to the Producers of Womens Arts-Southwest and Stonehaven for their extremely generous donation of $410 [see "Soapbox" letter to the editor for more details].

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

We are always happy to receive gift subscriptions. Don't you know at least one person who would be delighted to receive *HOT WIRE* for the next year, courtesy of you? Birthdays, anniversaries? Mothers Day? Send us her name and address with your check, and we will send her a card announcing your gift. This is a great way to provide financial support for the magazine, help increase our circulation, and be personally generous all in one swoop!

Toni L. Armstrong
publisher/managing editor

HOT WIRE
The Journal of Women's Music and Culture
March 1988

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: (U.S. $ equivalents only): $14/US, $17 Canada. Countries outside of North America require extra postage charge. **BACK ISSUES:** when available, $5 plus $1 postage/handling.

HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music & Culture (ISSN 0747-8887). Published three times yearly in March, July, & November by **Empty Closet Enterprises**, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9009.
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THE P.T. BARNUM OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

ROBIN TYLER

Interviewed by Toni L. Armstrong

Robin Tyler, born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, moved to New York at age 18. By then she was one of the youngest professional playwrights and directors in Canada. She was half of the groundbreaking feminist comedy team Harrison & Tyler during the 1970s. They were signed by ABC for three years, starred in several pilots, and appeared on national TV. They also released two LPs. Robin has performed stand-up comedy solo since 1978, and currently produces two annual women's music and comedy festivals. In 1987, she was presented the Golden Globe Award for Outstanding Female Performer. Robin was the producer of the rally stage at the October 11 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The rally, which ran four and a half hours, included many major lesbian and gay entertainers. The hundreds of performers made history as the largest group of performers ever assembled for any political rally--performing to the largest audience.

HOT WIRE: How was it for you being the producer of the rally stage at the March on Washington?

ROBIN TYLER: It was like a women's festival on that stage. Also, one of the things I was fighting for was to be able to stick to a lesbian and gay agenda. I know we have a lot of other issues that we deal with, but basically this was a march for lesbian and gay rights. I wanted to get in there and make sure that we could be heard without diffusing or having to make other issues dominant. It was a heavily *gay* stage. I wanted to make sure that this was not an event dominated and controlled by the Left; this is funny coming from me because I am progressive--I am involved in most of the progressive issues. But for once I wanted the dominant theme to be gay and lesbian rights. We embrace--and we rightfully should--everybody else's issues, but at this point we have to be able to stand up and say, "Excuse me, we're getting shit on and the time has come for you now to embrace us."

HW: How did you get the big name celebrities to participate?

ROBIN: People love stars and names. I approached 50 or 100, beginning in April. Mostly the response was, "I'm out of town...I can't make it." Ed Asner sent some money back; he couldn't make it. Patty Duke wanted to make it, but she was busy--but she's one who has done a lot for us. I would say a lot of response--not from those people, Asner, Jane Fonda, Patty Duke, the ones who have consistently supported gay and lesbian rights--a lot of people we approached backed away from the issue. I don't think it's a popular issue now. So that we were really happy when Whoopi Goldberg said yes. I'm grateful that she and Jesse Jackson and Robert Blake and Cesar Chavez showed up. Unfortunately, though, the straight press focuses on straight people; if a black civil rights rally only focused on white people, people would be angry. The majority of the press not only lied about the numbers, but they focused on the straight speakers.

HW: The actual number of march participants was between 500,000-750,000, yet the "official" figure presented by the media continues to be 200,000. Why do they underestimate?

ROBIN: They always do; they cannot show the straight public that we are that angry. I think there's a rumbling going on in the gay community--we're now talking about immediate life and death. Whether women want to focus on AIDS or not, the fact is that people are going to die; there's no being nice any more. I think that something needs to break this government open. The Vietnam war resistance was the straw that broke the camel's back before. The straw that's probably going to break the camel's back here is the issue around AIDS. That's going to start an outpouring.

HW: But the media basically presented the march as though it didn't happen--*Time* and *Newsweek* ignored it; Reagan wasn't there. There wasn't an impact.

ROBIN: That's not true--they can keep acting like it didn't happen, they can go hide. I considered it highly successful. You know, nothing ever happens from one day out on the streets, except you get to feel good and see each other--and the fact is that *a half a million of us turned out and it was the largest in history.* But the anger will continue; we're marching in Sacramento on Memorial Day weekend, for example. People will go back and organize. I will continue to use the [West Coast and Southern] festivals to help people organize. I don't think the point was to lead up to one mass thing and then if Daddy doesn't show up to the party, the party's over. We've got to stop looking for any kind of government approval or media reaction that we're even alive. We understand that nobody's going to *say* that there's this enormous resistance going on--*but there is.* I travel all over and it's festering, it's beginning to boil over.

HW: What do you see?

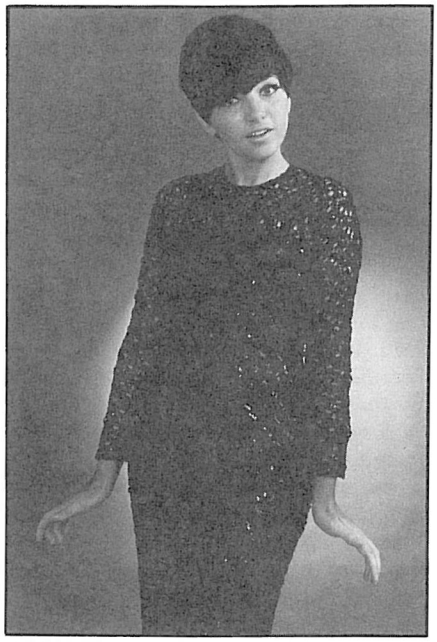
ROBIN: People are really angry. When I look at conservative, Establishment gays and lesbians saying, "We've got to go get arrested," and they're meeting, strategizing, and beginning to talk as radically as we've been talking all along, I know there is going to be a resistance. We--especially lesbians--have been in the front lines of every other movement. I think we're ready.

HW: What do you think will happen in the next few years?

ROBIN: I hope people wlll take to the streets. The truth is I think if the government allows people to die, and it doesn't let go of the funding, I think we're going to see blood on the streets. We're now talking about very real life and death issues; if they're willing to let a million gay men die, I think you're going to see

rioting. Resistance in America is a tradition. That's why we have commonality when there is resistance to South Africa, or about Nicaragua. The anti-war movement--we stopped the war. Do you remember that, what the media coverage of that was in the beginning? *NOTHING.* You know Flo Kennedy's story about the woman who goes into the dentist's office? She sits in the chair and he picks up the drill--he's going to drill her teeth. She grabs him by the balls and says, "Now we're not going to hurt each other, are we Doctor?" I think what's going to happen with this government--we're grabbing them by the balls in the same way. They're willing to let a million people die because they're afraid to talk about sexuality...you cannot do this to most of the people all of the time.

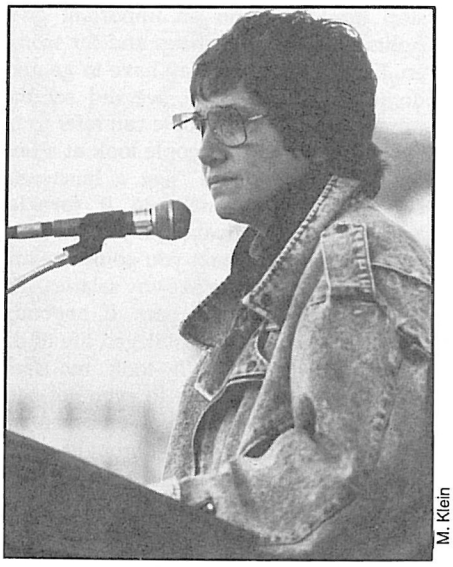
HW: How did you go about producing the rally mainstage?



ROBIN: First, I worked with Boden Sandstrom, who works both festivals as my sound coordinator, and she was able to technically pull it together. The backstage was run and staffed by women from the festivals and N.O.W., supplemented with various women producers like Virginia Giordano [New York] and Brynna Fish [Cleveland]. I took the best of women's music and about 100 festival coordinators, and I had people like Ginny Foat dealing with celebrity liaison. I had Torie Osborn--who was one of the coordinators of the California 'No on 64'--dealing with media. Lilene Fifield, who's been a producer in L.A., did security. That stage was run and produced totally by lesbians--it ran like a festival. Also, the Southern Women's Music Festival raised $13,000 in 1987 that went to that stage.

HW: What were some of the difficulties?

ROBIN: In the end the park police arrested me, you know. The rally was late, and we had to cut it. They couldn't pull the electricity because it was on a generator and we had the key. So I had to go talk to the police and try to convince them to keep it going because we wanted to put on every act that had come there. Finally at about 6:15 they surrounded me and arrested me. I handed over my walkie talkie and thought I was going to jail. They had started to hurt me, but somebody with a videocamera--someone gay--came over and they stopped. By 6:30 they were bringing the horses in to disrupt, and get rid of everyone, and I finally said, "Okay, I'll go on the stage and I'll stop it." But I had delayed it by a half an hour. I stopped Kay Weaver in the middle. The gay band waited and waited, and finally went on stage, and the last thing I said--because the electricity was off--was, "Keep playing. Play because they can't stop you if you're on the field." So the gay band started to play on the field as the cops came in and said they'd arrest them, and instead of dispersing everyone with the horses, the gay band marched them off the field. It was fabulous; that was just the way we wanted to end it. Then when I went off I thought they were going to take me to jail, but they were gone.



M. Klein

"For love and for life, we're *not* going back." Robin Tyler as a March on Washington rally speaker.

HW: What were some of your personal highlights?

ROBIN: When I stood on stage and saw a half a million people walking toward us--when the reality hit. We didn't do a West Coast festival this year, we got burned out, so we didn't get to do our thing--it was like all this preparation and no show. So when we all got together in Washington, and we were able to work together again for those two days, we finally got to do the show--it was like closure for us. I was so thrilled to be working and to be able to finish what we had tried to do in the fall that had just gotten ripped away from us. And then when I saw from the stage how immense, how gigantic it was going to be--even before anyone gave us numbers--giving my speech and having to stop because they were applauding at every point...it was wonderful to be able to speak in front of a half a million people. When I walked off the stage someone offered me sushi and coffee, and I started to cry. It was over, but it was over and *nice*. Instead of going to jail and having cops roughhouse me, there was a little tray of sushi. Another highlight was getting married at The Wedding. They just called me the night before and they asked me to bring a few people down. I said, "You don't have a production crew? No security, nothing...?" So I rushed over there because I knew it would be this huge event. I came with dykes from the festival and we immediately set up a production team and security. Then when I saw only men up there getting married on the stage, I grabbed my lover Linda and said, "Get up here, you stand over here..." and then all of a sudden, "Do you take this woman..." To get married and have it on *CNN News* for two days was a highlight. There are many things I remember. But mostly I remember wanting to give them the greatest show on earth and wanting to make it predominantly gay and lesbian--and being able to do it.

HW: You mentioned the West Coast Women's Music and Comedy Festival was cancelled due to fires. What financial impact has this had?

ROBIN: We have given an enormous amount of refunds. We didn't expect the number of people that would want them. We pre-spent for food and for the land, [money] which we haven't gotten back, and people have asked for so much back in refunds that we're almost out of money [at press time]. But what's happening is that people are telling their friends to get

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni L. Armstrong, Type A publisher and managing editor of 'HOT WIRE,' is working on just saying NO to overwork.

refunds, and rather than going down, it's escalating. We're scared shitless, because we could go into deficits for the entire amount of money we spent. Yet we get letters saying, "Gee, it's only a business." I'm very disappointed. On the other hand, craftswomen--who *lost* money (because they were going to sell up there)--have been wonderful to us. A lot of craftswomen have made donations back, even though not being at the festival was a loss, and I think they've been tremendously understanding. At this point I would say about half the community has been very understanding, and the other half sees the festival as "a business." But they probably don't see it as the horrendous uphill struggle that continuing to do these festivals can be.

HW: You've talked throughout the years about the perpetual difficulties faced by the various women's festivals in getting and keeping land.

ROBIN: Yes--even before this fire we had problems. The county tried to not give us a permit to hold the festival, saying that because it was women only we discriminated against men. I went up there several times with attorneys, to prove that we gather for affirmative action and for our political rights. One of the good things about this festival is we were able to prove it's not just music, that it has a *political* basis--therefore under the First Amendment we had the right to gather. We won it, but only a week before we would have needed the permit. So there was this tremendously hard fight, they really were trying to stop it... because it's a lesbian festival. Women don't understand. It's taken for granted these festivals will happen, but the East Coast got thrown out of their land, Michigan had to buy land because the guy was giving them trouble after six years, here we've changed land three times, and now they're trying to stop us on the women-only issue.

HW: How did you win that one?

ROBIN: Because you cannot discriminate against the ruling class. Affirmative action cannot be considered the same as discrimination. I use what I call "The Steak Theory": if a woman is standing there--a black woman let's say--and she hasn't eaten in two weeks, and a white man is standing there and he just ate, and there's a steak in front of me, I *don't* cut it in half and give each of them 50 percent and call that "equality." But that's what *they* want to do. As we begin to integrate various things, like the men's business clubs that have discriminated against women, they're turning around to oppressed groups and saying, "Therefore you must also." But it is *not the same*, because we have never had the time to gather for affirmative action or for political reasons. This is an extremely important minority issue, and not just for lesbians. We have never been allowed anywhere, and to gather to give ourselves strength and energy is not the same as when people gather to purposely discriminate against us to keep us out of businesses and jobs.

HW: Did the county finally rule in favor of "women-only" festivals?

ROBIN: Yes, we got the license to hold the event, *and* they upheld our right not to have men come in--if a man had tried to get in, they would have had to legally stop him. We won an important civil rights battle for minorities and for women. Even though we may have to go and do it again and again, we did set the precedent that now people can refer to in California. So when people look at a festival and believe it's "just a business," believe me you don't do it for the business. With festivals, one year you can make money, the next you could go under. We didn't even make any salaries, not a cent, until the *fifth year*. If anybody thinks it's an easy or privileged life to do this, they're wrong. It took me four months of a legal battle to even get permission to hold the festival--and then we were able to only because I brought up all these tons of lawyers. And then to go up there and be surrounded by the biggest fire in the history of the United States...

HW: What was it like being on the festival land with the fire so close?

ROBIN: The flames were coming in and the smoke was coming in, but we didn't stop working until Monday. The electricity went out, the water stopped pumping--we had no place to cook. I mean, it was like no one was coming to get us. And when you're on a mountain you're not supposed to come down--you're supposed to wait until the helicopters or the cops come to get you, because if the roads are on fire you can get stuck and die. One tree falling across the road and you're stuck. Our phones went out on Saturday, so we had no phones, and Sunday I'm waiting for the rangers--*nothing*--and the smoke is coming closer, but I know we're not supposed to move. I sent our own lesbian rangers and sheriff out looking. People don't comprehend--we weren't rained out; it was the worst fire in the history of the United States and we were in the middle of it, 150 lesbians and six children, surrounded, with all the roads on fire.

HW: When did you realize you would have to cancel the festival?

ROBIN: By Monday. Even if the fires went out, it was too dangerous. If there had been 3,000 women there, there was no way we could have evacuated. And even the next weekend if they came up and if the fires started again...I was too scared. I realized that when you're choosing between life and death, you don't think about the money, the business or anything, it's so clear to you that *life* is important-- you don't think of anything but how are we going to get out of this. On Monday, some craftswomen--who were at the bottom of the hill--sent this firefighter through to ask if they could come up to the camp, because the town they were waiting in was on fire. And so we sent someone to lead them up to the camp on Sunday night. We figured that if everything was going to burn, they may as well be with us. That's what we were dealing with-- the incredible heroism of people. By Monday there were still no helicopters, and the smoke was so thick that I knew that we couldn't be evacuated like that--and we couldn't get down the road, so I made the decision not to move because my instincts said we shouldn't. By Tuesday morning I sent out two teams of people to get through the roads to try to find the rangers and ask "Excuse me, where are you? We're stuck up here." I sent the teams two different ways hoping that one of them could get through to get us out of there. And you know what the rangers told them? "Oh, the reason we didn't think you were there is because we couldn't reach you on the telephone." But they *knew* that the phone lines were down.

HW: How did you get out?

ROBIN: We had practice evacuations. The lesbian sheriff and forest rangers we sent out came back up and said, "You have to evacuate, and they'll pick you up tonight, so prepare." We didn't know if they'd be able to get through the fires or die in the fires--it was horrible. As it turns out, had we gone down on Monday we would have been killed, because on Monday all the roads were on fire. By Tuesday the smoke was coming in, the fires were a couple of miles from camp, but we couldn't breathe. By the time our rangers

came and said we should wait to evacuate until [the officials] got someone up there to take us down, I said, "No--go back down and tell them we're ready now." We had practiced evacuation--we were lined up on the field and we were ready to go. We were led down by rangers--one car in front and one in the back. We actually got ourselves down; at that point we didn't need them, but I wanted them to take some kind of responsibility. But basically we evacuated ourselves.

HW: Are you planning on having the 1988 festival in the same location?

ROBIN: Well, we paid them in full, and we're going to try to get the money back but we don't know. We're sure going to have it in Yosemite. The chances of having a natural disaster again like that are miniscule. So I think we need to hold it in the same place. Our camp didn't burn. It's interesting--during the fire, women went around doing all this crystal stuff to keep [the fire] away--stuff that I'm not really a part of, it's not my culture, it's not what I've been into--but sure enough, the fires came within a half a mile of the land, and not only did the land not burn, but all the trees around it...we look the same. It wasn't touched. There must be a Goddess, because it was like a protective hand, and the chances of that happening, of us being totally untouched, are almost impossible in the middle of this disaster.

M. Klein

Robin as producer: setting up the rally stage at the March on Washington.

HW: You now produce two large annual festivals--one on the West Coast, one in the South. Why did you originally decide to start them?

ROBIN: Because I went to Michigan, and I loved it, and it did change my life like it changed everyone else's life. But at that time I thought, "How can people from the West Coast go to Michigan? The expense would be a lot." So I wanted to bring it back. Also, I was coming out of the feminist movement, and I wanted to be able to do a festival that was not lesbian separatist--which Michigan was very much at the time. I wanted to do a festival that was primarily lesbian feminist. I wanted to start bringing in speakers--Kate Millett and these women I had known politically. I wanted to incorporate them into what we were doing, and that's what made me do it. In the South, people had said to me, "You can't go to the heart of the deep South, it's too dangerous, and it's never been done, and you can't do it." I was in New Orleans and women kept saying, "We have nothing"--it was just like a vacuum. I looked at every place in the country and asked, "Where is it *not* being done, and where can we use this tool to organize women?" So I went to the South, and ever since we started the Southern festival five years ago, we've been getting all this feedback about women opening bookstores, rape crisis centers...it has politically motivated a lot of women, even though there was a lot of initial resistance to our coming down there. Like when we first went to the South and we didn't find a lot of Southern workers, we came down with women from the West Coast festival. The first year there was some kind of not trusting us, that we were coming into their territory. But after the first year when these women got to know each other, they became one big family. We have successfully integrated. I can understand pride in your region, but as lesbians, I don't see us as from the South and West--I don't even recognize borders from Canada to the United States to Mexico. If you're lesbian, if you're a dyke, we have to tear down any artificial barriers that men or straight society have set up for us, and be willing to reach out and work together.

HW: You have produced a total of 14 festivals now. Do you have plans to produce others?

ROBIN: I have been invited to produce an International Women's Festival in Amsterdam next September. They do it once every three years. It's more theater and politics than music. We've been talking about my producing one of the nights as an American night, in which case I'd like to bring over an American comedy night. This year I did the march and next year Amsterdam.

HW: Given that you could do any number of things full time--perform, produce, be in business, be a politician, be a TV scriptwriter--how do you set your priorities?

ROBIN: I like production the best. I like the idea of being able to build an entire city at a festival, and for four days or two weeks actually being able to live how we want to live--I like that the best. So I think I want to be a producer. Somebody asked Barbra Streisand, "What would you like to be--an actress or a singer?" And she said, "Just a minute, I'm also a director. At my age I want to direct because I would like the control of doing what I want to do." And I also like producing because I'm not working in a vacuum. I work with a hundred workers, with 75 coordinators, and I love the idea of being able to do something in a team (as opposed to writing or standing on a stage). And that isn't coming out of my progressive politics, that's coming out of show business--you know, we'll get a barn and put on a show and we'll all stick together and love each other. One of my heroes was P.T. Barnum, who was the first one to get together with Bailey--Bailey had the animal acts and Barnum had the people. Barnum said, "Let's do a show," and Bailey said, "We

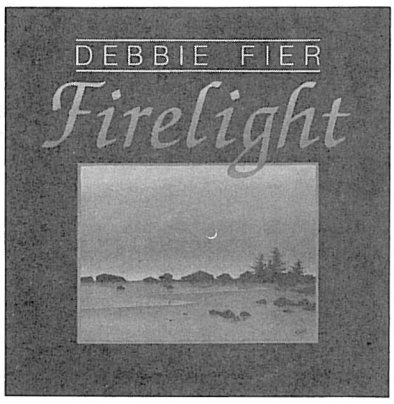
can't. We have too many performers; there's only one ring," and Barnum said, "Then we'll make three rings and let the people choose what to watch." Also, the movie producer Max Sennett was my hero. He worked with Mabel Norman, the movie actress in the early 1920s. When she died, his studio fell, and he said, "I will never rely on one star again." So he invented the Keystone Cops, who became interchangeable, so he wasn't reliant on a star system--and that greatly influenced me. Do you think people go to the festivals to see those one or two performers with a name? The production should become bigger than any central personality. My third hero is Michael Todd. He wanted to give a birthday party for Elizabeth Taylor, and he wanted to fill Madison Square Garden with a cake, and they told him it could never be done--and you know what he did? He filled Madison Square Garden with the biggest birthday cake in the world. So these three producers eliminated the star system, invented the three ring circus, and proved that it could be done. All of my influences, my heroes, have always been producers, so that's what I guess I am.

Everyone wants to take over and be the political head of this movement; but I want to be the P.T. Barnum of the movement. I want to be able to bring everything but the elephant. When you see people cheering the act, or crying, or applauding...to watch people crying and reaching up towards the stage, I can't describe what it feels like...I like producing better than anything. ●

Special thanks to Paula Walowitz, writer of the 'HOT WIRE' astrology column, for editing assistance.

William Morris Agency

Pat Harrison and Robin Tyler: first feminist stand-up comics.



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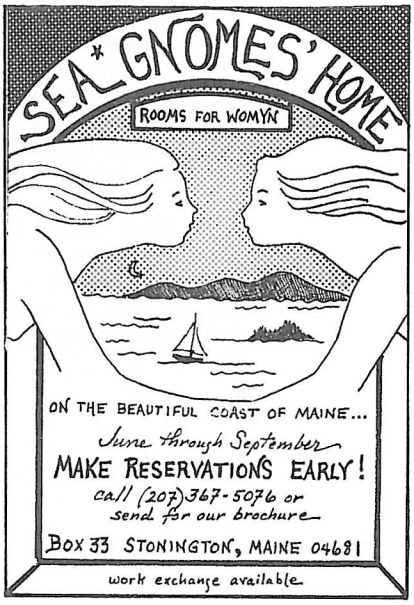
FESTIVAL CHORUS

MUSE: Cincinnati's Women's Choir, founded and directed by Catherine Roma, will perform June 5 at the National Women's Music Festival. A Festival Chorus will be organized during the weekend so that interested singers may join in Bernice Johnson-Reagon's *Azanian Freedom Song*. Send SASE--and designate what part you sing--to Estelle Riley, 5449 Hamilton Ave. #11, Cincinnati, OH 45224. If you presently sing with a women's chorus, tell us.



SOAPBOX

To the editor:

I've been thinking a lot about the issue of lesbian and feminist content in "women's music." It seems to be the hot issue of the day.

It seems to me that we've sort of come full circle, in that originally women's music was the only way lesbians could break out of a culture which felt alien to them, and create a music and culture which spoke directly to their (our) lives. We then went through a phase (the last 5-10 years?) of being angry that our women's music did not seem to have the musical quality or diversity that other "musics" had, and also lacked the ability to garner the financial rewards commensurate with the time and energy we invested in it. Just as women demanded equal stature and remuneration in the work force, our music seemed to demand equal access to large (and paying) audiences. Hence the attempt by so many to "go mainstream." (I don't include DEUCE there, because I view us somewhat differently, since our birth and original success was not in the women's community, but more in the mainstream.)

With the attempts to get our piece of the pie came the lamented watering down or omission of explicitly lesbian (or feminist) lyrics or statements of purpose on the part of many of the artists.

I think I completely understand the anger of women who have seen the women's music scene as a place for the expression and affirmation of lesbian culture--indeed one of the only places for its free expression. They resist its being co-opted by mainstream-sounding music and non-lesbian (or non-feminist) lyrics.

Indeed, if that is the purpose of the women's music scene--to provide a haven for the expression of primarily lesbian feminist politics, and do so in a musical format, and as a corollary, try to maintain as high a standard of musicality as possible within the primary constraints, then so be it. In that case, I think that the festivals would be more accurately called "women's culture festivals." It does seem that the purpose of the festivals is women's culture, including the expression of lesbian feminist politics through crafts, workshops, networking, and other art forms including music. If women feel that no work within any of these art forms should be included at the festivals unless it specifically *exists* as a vehicle for the promulgation of this culture and politic, fine. Hence, "women's culture festivals"--a valid and empowering institution for all lesbians.

I would argue, however, that anyone interested in bringing women, and lesbians, to full personhood within the mainstream society would be interested in supporting women (excluding those with anti-feminist politics, and probably emphasizing those with specifically feminist politics) in their artistic endeavors

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Marcy J. Hochberg

"The funny ones are the most sustaining in the '80s." (Pictured: Kate Clinton with Teresa Trull.)

Dear *HOT WIRE*,

Your article about women comics ["I Love Women Who Laugh," July 1987] was great. I have noticed that the comediennes seem to be the ones at the festivals, and generally in concerts, who remember that the whole women's music scene is mostly made up of woman-loving women (whatever that means these days). Most of the *musicians* have little or nothing in their sets any more that even acknowledges that lesbians are in the audience--let alone is inspiring. Seems like the musicians are so "generic" that I don't even bother seeing new ones any more. I noticed it in the last couple of years. Lately the only "new" performers I make the effort to see are the comics. Your article helped me to clarify why that is--I still expect to get some validation for my lifestyle from the comics. And they are *entertaining*! Even the inexperienced ones, with jokes that don't always work, seem to try to make the audience have a really good time and laugh at ourselves. Sometimes I've heard my friends complain after seeing a new comic who didn't have good timing yet, or didn't have enough good jokes in the set. But more and more I'm willing to be patient and hope that these women will stick with it and eventually all be as funny as Robin Tyler and Kate Clinton. The funny ones are the most sustaining in the '80s.

Janice Gianelli, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

Dear *HOT WIRE*,

I live in a suburb of [a big city] and have spent all of my life in the closet. Only recently have I begun to discover and explore the "women's community," largely through reading *HOT WIRE* and books/publications I have heard about through *HOT WIRE*. I am into music and art-type things, so I have always avoided bars and athletics, and am heavily involved with my family--so there's been few opportunites to learn that I am not "alone." I just had to write to let you know that your publication is helping and encouraging me to question the assumptions I grew up with and have lived by--that it is "sad" or "sick" to be a gay person; that in order to survive, we have to hide as much as we can. Every time I get an issue of your magazine, I read about *real* women who are doing *real* things in the *real* world--not just one or two brave martyrs in gay-oriented cities (like San Francisco), but a seemingly endless number *everywhere*. It makes me realize that some people actually live openly, feeling good about who they are, and they integrate this view with making music and art. I am working up my courage to go to my first festival. Thanks for showing me what's out there.

Name and locale withheld by request

Dear *HOT WIRE*,

Please accept the enclosed $410 donation as a gift from POWA-SW [Producers of Womens Arts-Southwest] and Stonehaven [see page 39]. A group of 25 women producers from New Orleans, Houston, Austin, Dallas-Ft. Worth, San Antonio, El Paso, Oklahoma City, and Tulsa met at Stonehaven Ranch the weekend of December 12 for a retreat, and through their generosity we are able to make this contribution. Shelly Oram from Dallas, Texas has volunteered to send you a short press release detailing what was accomplished at the retreat (hot-tubbing and telling Michigan stories was just one activity). My idea in initially organizing the retreat was to give us all a chance to get together and talk--and we did that like a well-oiled machine. You could certainly tell this was a group of women who were used to getting things done!! I was proud to be part of such a group and very happy to be able to present this gift to someone who, like ourselves, believes in empowering women through their art.

Mary Massara, Austin, Texas
Live Wire Productions

Dear *HOT WIRE*,

I've just received my November issue of *HOT WIRE* and as usual couldn't put it down until I'd read it from cover to cover! Your articles and interviews are always top quality! And your soundsheets are a wonderful way to "preview" new music--especially for those of us who don't live in "liberal" cities where women's music is more readily available. I've bought several albums as a result of "getting a taste" of the music of several artists I've listened to on your soundsheets. Thanks for a wonderful journal!

Pauline, Mystic, Connecticut

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HOTLINE

By Joy Rosenblatt

GATHERINGS

For information about the **THIRD INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST BOOK FAIR** to be held June 14-21, contact Rachel East in Montreal, Quebec, Canada at (514) 844-3277.

Writers and publishers who want information about the 1988 **WRITERS CONFERENCE** to be held at the National Women's Music Festival June 3-5 should contact Midge Stocker, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60623.

There will be two segments to the 1988 **INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON WOMEN IN MUSIC** in June, one in Bremen and the other in Heidelberg. For further information on the Congress and also its Lesbian Caucus, see the "Noteworthy Women" column on page 12.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: **Wiminfest '88,** May 27-29. **National Women's Music Festival,** June 3-5. **Michigan Womyn's Music Festival,** August 10-14. **Campfest '88,** May 27-29. **Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festival,** May 27-29. **National Women's Studies Association Tenth Annual Conference**/"Leadership & Power: Alliances for Social Change," June 22-26.

HONORS

Don't forget to send in your votes for the 1988 *HOT WIRE* **READERS' CHOICE AWARDS & READER SURVEY.** See page 25 for details.

CAGNEY AND LACEY, starring **SHARON GLESS** and **TYNE DALY,** received a special achievement award for setting an industry standard at the annual Women at Work Broadcast Awards last November, according to *Southern Feminist.* The "Alice" awards honor the year's best portrayals of working women on radio and TV. ***L.A. LAW*** won an Alice for an episode in which an anchorwoman fights discrimination after a mastectomy. **SUSAN RATAN,** who plays the feisty legal secretary on *L.A. Law,* presented the awards along with **BETTY THOMAS** of *Hill Street Blues* and **LINDA LAVIN** of *Alice.*

HOTLINE presents capsule reports of past happenings, announces upcoming events, and passes on various tidbits of information.

N.O.W.'s 20th anniversary videotape includes Lily Tomlin doing her "Miss Sweeney" routine.

Former Rep. **SHIRLEY CHISHOLM** received the first Woman of Courage Award presented by the National Women's Studies Association, reports *Southern Feminist.* The award was made at a banquet preceding the national conference held in Atlanta last July.

ROBIN TYLER, along with community service award recipients, will be honored at the Lesbian Rights Award Banquet on March 12. The event, sponsored by Southern California Women for Understanding, features dinner and dancing to **MAIDEN VOYAGE.** SCWU, 9054 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069.

THE BAY AREA WOMEN'S PHILHARMONIC has been the winner of four consecutive ASCAP awards for adventuresome programming, reports *The Bay Area Women's News.* Founded in 1980 by **MIRIAM ABRAMS, NAN WASHBURN,** and **ELIZABETH MIN,** it is the only professional orchestra in the country dedicated to the promotion of women composers, conductors, and performers. They have been asked to perform in Australia during the official bicentennial celebration, and were asked by the United Nations to perform at the 1985 Conference on Women in Kenya.

BEVERLY SILLS, the opera singer who now runs the New York City Opera, was inducted into the Working Women Hall of Fame, according to *The Wall Street Journal.* Sills became a hands-on manager, raising millions of dollars. She got the company out of a $5 million debt and raised ticket sales from 72 percent of capacity to 91 percent.

The 1987 Pauline Alderman Prize for new scholarship on women in music goes to **DR. JANE BOWERS** and **DR. JUDITH TICK** for their book *Women Making Music: The Western Art Tradition, 1150-1950,* according to *The International Congress on Women in Music Newsletter.*

Long-time feminist singer **RITA MacNEIL** won the Canadian Juno Award (equivalent of the U.S. Grammy) for Most Promising Female Vocalist on November 2, 1987. Also nominated was **HEATHER BISHOP,** who said in a pre-Juno interview in *Chicago Outlines,* "I think Rita's got a good shot at it, and I seriously hope she wins."

Canadian filmmaker **PATRICIA ROSEMA** won the 1987 *Cannes Film Festival Prix de la Jeunesse* Award, and was also honored by being invited to the Director's Fortnight, said *Epicene.* She wrote, directed, and co-produced (with **ALEXANDRA RAFFE,** her partner in Vos Productions), her first feature film, ***I'VE HEARD THE MERMAIDS SINGING,*** for $262,000. It is the story of how a woman falls in love with another woman and relates to other women and herself.

WINGS, the radio news program of the Women's International News Gathering Service, has won a Golden Reel Award from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, according to *The Bay Area Women's News.* The award, for coverage of special events, was given for a series of stories on women's international conferences.

FILM-VIDEO

DIANE KEATON has directed a video entitled *Heaven Is A Place On Earth* from **BELINDA CARLISLE**'s new album *Heaven On Earth,* reports *Bitch.*

POP VIDEO is a new lesbian-owned production company committed to producing quality videos on a variety of themes, according to *Feminist Bookstore News.* Titles include ***LONG AWAITED PLEASURE,*** a 90-minute sexy lesbian love story, and ***HEROINES,*** 60 minutes about the talented women athletes of the 1920s-1960s. Mary Farmer, Lammas Bookstore, 321 Seventh St. SE, Washington, DC 20003. (202) 546-7292.

Remember, or see what you missed: two videos of the October 11 **MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS** are available. ***PART OF THE USA!*** through Girard Video Productions, P.O. Box 2000, National Press Building, Washington, DC 20045, and ***LIFESTYLE UPDATE: THE HISTORIC MARCH ON WASHINGTON*** through Malibu Sales, P.O. Box 4371, Los Angeles, CA 90078. Both feature March week activities such as the rally, The Names Project quilt, The Wedding, and the Supreme Court Civil Disobedience.

An 18 minute video of **DEBBIE FIER** is available through Ladyslipper. It features the love song "Fantasy," including dancer **ROBIN FERGUSON**, and 13 minutes of concert footage and interviews. P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705.

A history of the women's movement in narrative and song--including segments on women in sports and politics, the history of the Equal Rights Amendment (from 1923 to present), political advances/defeats of feminism, and the history of the National Organization for Women--are on the ***NOW: CELEBRATING 20 YEARS*** video. It includes **LILY TOMLIN** performing her "Miss Sweeney" routine, as well as dozens of mainstream celebrities. Peg Yorkin Productions, 8105 W. Third St. #1, Los Angeles, CA 90048, or Ladyslipper, P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705.

Sweeping Axe Prodyketions has produced a video entitled ***SO PRECIOUS A SPACE: WOMYN SPEAK ON WOMYN ONLY SPACE.*** For further information: S.A.P., P.O. Box 242, Greensboro, VT 05841.

CHARIS VIDEO has a free catalog of feminist and lesbian videotapes, including *Desert Hearts* and *Lianna*. Write: Charis Video, P.O. Box 797, Brooklyn, NY 11231.

According to *Bitch*, **BARBRA STREISAND** is preparing a biographical movie on the life of **MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE**, one of the greatest *Life* photographers.

Naiad Press is distributing ***WAITING FOR THE MOON***, a film inspired by and loosely based on the lives of **GERTRUDE STEIN** (played by **LINDA HUNT**) and **ALICE B. TOKLAS** (played by **LINDA BASSETT**). *Feminist Bookstore News* also states that Naiad has sold the option to the title story from **JANE RULE**'s collection *Outlander* to a San Francisco film producer. Naiad Press, P.O. Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302.

A film is being made about the life of Jewish poet **HANNAH SENESH** by schlock action king Menachem Golan of Cannon Films, reports *The Jerusalem Post*. Hannah, now a cult folk heroine, parachuted behind German lines in World War II and was captured, tortured, and killed because she refused to talk. Many people, especially from Israel, are upset with the film's distortions--such as the addition of a non-existent boyfriend--and are attempting to pressure Golan into making the movie more accurate.

MOVIE TRIVIA CONTEST

Attention film buffs: Director George Cukor knew an actress who, in 1923, produced and starred in a film version of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. The film was designed and directed by one of the actress's lovers, **NATASHA RAMBOVA** (the wife of Rudolph Valentino). Among the actress's other lovers, according to Cukor, were **DOLLY WILDE** (Oscar Wilde's niece) and **DOROTHY ARZNER** (Hollywood's first important woman film director). In 1977 this actress was portrayed on the screen by **LESLIE CARON** in Ken Russell's movie *Valentino*. She was also **NANCY REAGAN**'s godmother. Who is she? Send in a postcard or letter with the correct answer and win a subscription to *HOT WIRE*. In the case of multiple correct answers, the earliest postmark wins. Hotline Trivia Contest, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

WOMEN

After 10 years at Ladyslipper, **LIZ SNOW** is leaving to launch a career of financial planning/management, accounting, and business counseling. She says she is looking forward to working with women in the music industry. Liz's new address: 699 Oriole Ave., West Hempstead, NY 11552.

MIRIAM BEN-SHALOM's 12-year battle against the U.S. Army has finally been won, reports *The Washington Blade*, with the U.S. Court of Appeals ordering the Army to reinstate her and prohibiting the Army from discriminating against her because she is a lesbian. They further order that the Secretary of the Army must ensure that no member of the Army retaliates in any way, and that any attempt to circumvent this will be punished by appropriate sanctions for contempt.

The **BARONESS VON TRAPP**--leader of the Von Trapp Family Singers, whose real life story was the basis of the Julie Andrews film ***THE SOUND OF MUSIC***-died last summer, according to *Bitch*.

NEWS

Lee Chiaramonte asserts in "Lesbian Safety and AIDS: The Very Last Fairy Tale" (*Visibilities*, January 1988) that after six months of extensive investigation she discovered that claims of **LESBIAN SAFETY FROM AIDS** are based upon no clinical data whatsoever. Chiaramonte, along with *Visibilities* publisher/editor Susan T. Chasin, health educator Denise Ribble, and epidemiological researcher Michael Marmor have created the first scientific lesbian risk study of AIDS. For information, contact Susan T. Chasin, P.O. Box 1258, Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009-1258. (212) 473-4635.

The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the country's leading institute for Conservative Jewish study, announced it granted its **FIRST CANTOR'S DEGREES TO TWO WOMEN** last May, according to *Gay Community News*.

SHERE HITE's new book *WOMEN AND LOVE* surveyed 4500 women and found that 88 percent of married women were lonely in their relationships, and that 83 percent of all the women surveyed said their closest emotional relationship was with a woman.

PUBLISHING

SINISTER WISDOM: A Journal for the Lesbian Imagination in the Arts and Politics, founded in 1976 and currently edited and published by Elana Dykewomon, is seeking contributors "to write, draw, photograph, critique, and imagine lesbian worlds into being." They also are having a subscription drive. *Sinister Wisdom*, P.O. Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703.

THE CRAFTSWIMMIN'S MUTUAL AID SOCIETY NEWSLETTER is now being published by **JOCELYN COHEN** and **VICKI LEIGHTY** of Helaine Victoria Press, 411 E. Fourth St., Bloomington, IN 47401. (812) 342-3359 (after 7pm).

The Crossing Press is seeking manuscripts for full length **MYSTERY NOVELS BY WOMEN** which feature a woman sleuth, says *Scavenger Newsletter*. Send detailed outline and/or three-four sample chapters with SASE to Irene Zahava, 307 W. State St., Ithaca, NY 14850.

CHICAGO OUTLINES, the lesbian/gay monthly newsmagazine, features substantial regular coverage of women's music and culture events throughout the Midwest and nationally. It includes a women's section, many performance photos, and the "Lesbian Music Hotmix" column. Editor: Tracy Baim, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657.

THE BODYBUILDING WOMAN, a newsletter published by **LISA ROGAK**, states it does not shy away from controversy and covers topics that don't get discussed in other magazines. Goals include drawing awareness to the lifestyles of drug-free natural women bodybuilders and pointing the sport in a healthier direction. Symmetry Publishing, 701 Seventh Ave. #9W21, New York, NY 10036. (718) 398-1323.

JUNE MILLINGTON, founding member of the all-women's band Fanny (the first to score major chart action), is writing a book about it, states *Bitch*. She visited San Francisco to reminisce with **ADDIE**, founder of Wild Honey. Addie is currently on leave from her position as president of Bay Area Women in Music.

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Joy Rosenblatt is one of the concert producers at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago. In her spare time, she works for the State of Illinois as a welfare counselor.

THE AUDIO ANGLE

DEMO TAPES

By Karen Kane with Cris Newport

WHAT IS A DEMO TAPE AND WHY WOULD I WANT TO MAKE ONE?

A "demo tape"--short for demonstration tape--is a collection of songs that represent your work as a songwriter, instrumentalist or vocalist.

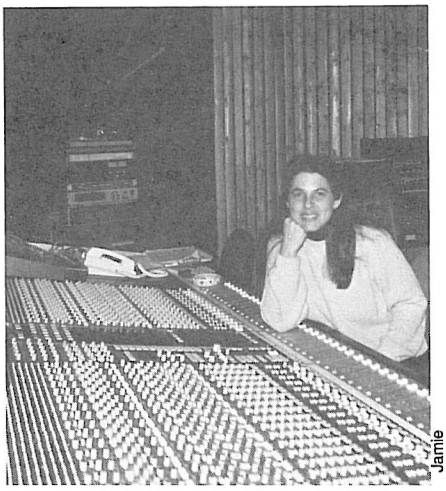
There are four basic reasons for a musician to make a demo tape: making an audition tape for clubs, coffeehouses, or "listening rooms"; obtaining a contract with a record label; getting local and/or regional radio airplay; and breaking into the field of making "jingles" (commercials).

If you're interested in performing in clubs and/or coffeehouses, the tape should reflect how you sound live. This would mean not "overproducing" the tape--by having other musicians record with you--unless that's how you sound live. The demo should give an accurate picture of what the listeners will hear at the performance. In a situation like bars, where the attention of the listeners might not be totally focused on you, it's important to include some Top 40 music, something the audience will recognize. Coffeehouses or "listening rooms," on the other hand, are more open to original music because the audience is geared to focusing on the performer rather than socializing.

A performer who has a lot of original material and wants--but can't afford--to make an album can make a demo tape to send to record labels.

How much you "produce" (the amount of other instruments) the demo tape is mostly a matter of budget. The record company can possibly hear a good song even if it's just you and your instrument, though light production may make a better impression. But remember this is a demo; you don't have to spend a lot of money on studio time or musicians.

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



Jamie

There are many advantages to landing a recording contract. The record company may handle manufacturing, distribution, and promotion; in some cases, there might be advance money involved for your recording process. The larger labels such as Warner Bros. or A&M will have substantially more money to devote to your album than smaller labels such as Olivia, Icebergg, Labrys, and Redwood. The trade-off is that the musician is able to retain a lot more artistic control when she works with an independent record company, and may never land a "major label deal."

Making a demo tape for radio airplay is a great way to build up a local and regional following. You can make your tape exclusively for airplay, but a good quality tape made to "shop around" to record labels can also be used. Although all radio stations are interested in new music, the major mainstream radio stations tend to play only well-known Top 40 music within their set programming guidelines. Their DJs can't add your music to the playlist even if they love your demo; getting airplay on Top 40 stations is tremendously expensive and competitive. The listening audience for college and public radio stations is significantly smaller, but it is much easier to get airplay on these shows. Some of the factors here are the fact that stations affiliated with a university are often partially or totally subsidized, and if they're not, they fundraise. The ability to maintain the station without selling commercial time enables them to have a much more open approach to the music programming. Public radio stations use fundraising and grant money to sustain themselves. There are a number of women's radio programs on stations like these which are constantly searching for new music, even if the artist is totally unknown; for example, *HOT WIRE* soundsheets routinely receive airplay on such stations. Distributors of women's music may be willing to share radio contacts.

A vocalist or instrumentalist who is an excellent sightreader might be interested in pursuing work in the commercial-making (jingle) market. Sightreading (the trained ability to read and perform music off a written sheet without any rehearsal) is essential to work in this branch of the industry; you will be expected to come into the studio and perform perfectly the first or second time you see the actual written music. Talking to advertising agencies and recording studios (especially studios that specialize in jingles) and reading publications geared to the advertising world (such as *New England Ad Weekly*) are ways to try and get work in the jingle business. A good way to find more publications geared to this industry is in the reception areas of most advertising agencies.

WHAT ARE THE POLICIES OF WOMEN'S MUSIC LABELS REGARDING THE ACCEPTANCE OF DEMO TAPES?

Within women's music there are only a handful of labels which record work by more than one artist; most of the labels are created by individual artists to record and distribute their own work. Icebergg Records in Milwaukee affirms that they not only accept demo tapes, but say--in

terms of the number of songs on the demo--"the more the merrier." If the artist chooses to send a tape of 12 songs, they will listen to part of each song, if not the whole tape. Press kits are encouraged, but are not essential. These should include reviews of performances, printed interviews, and information about how much performing the artist has done.

Icebergg also stressed very strongly that a woman should have put a lot of thought into such things as career goals, touring plans, and what she expects from the label. It's very important for the label to get a picture of how the artist sees herself and to understand the inner workings of the music industry. The more serious thought put in by the artist prior to contact with Icebergg, the better equipped everyone will be to sit down and talk business.

Olivia Records has a single sheet of information that's available for anyone interested in sending a demo tape, though they are presently swamped and not accepting any new tapes. The demo tape must be on cassette, and there is no minimum or maximum number of songs. Original work must be copyrighted prior to the tape's submission. Lyric sheets and press kits are welcomed, with a cover letter outlining what instruments the artist plays and other information about the artist. When they are accepting new tapes, Olivia has a six-month response time.

A new label, Labrys Records, is actively searching for women who perform lesbian-identified music and have an original sound. They especially encourage women of color to submit tapes and bio packets. [See "Labrys: The Duo and the Label," November 1987.]

Redwood Records, like Olivia, is not soliciting any new demo tapes at this time. They do accept tapes from unknown artists, but unless the whole package is exceptionally strong and the artist has performing experience and a following, it's difficult to get a foot in the door. [See specific Redwood guidelines and policies in "Redwood Records: More Than Just 'Holly's Label'," July 1986.] Redwood strongly emphasizes their need to work with artists who are willing to tour. Artists recording on the Redwood label put up their own money for the recording and mixing costs. As with the others, there is no limit on the number of songs the demo tape should include. Redwood stresses that basic background about the artist is really necessary.

Development of effective press kit material is essential for artists who hope to seriously pursue recording. For more information on press kits, see "Tour Booking and Promotion" by Susie Gaynes, Penny Rosenwasser, Jill Davey, and Trudy Wood in the July 1986 issue, and "Bananas, Production Notes, and Press Kits" by Kay Gardner in the November 1985 issue.

Finally, never send your only copy of a tape.

HOW MANY SONGS SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

For audition purposes, the tape should include three to five songs, with the first cut being the one that the musician considers the strongest. Remember, an accurate representation of live performance is essential. Tapes for local airplay can be two to four songs. Be sure to include information such as instrumentation and names of performers with the tape--and any other pertinent information--so the announcer has the option of talking about the artist(s) when the cut is played.

If it's for the jingle market, the tape has a very different focus. Whether you play an instrument or are a vocalist, you want to make a tape showing your strongest styles. Any music will do; it doesn't have to be original material. In this case, five 30-second excerpts of different styles is most appropriate. The people listening to these tapes are concerned with performance, not material. These quick excerpts will give them enough of an idea of what you sound like.

CAN I RECORD MY DEMO TAPE AT HOME?

Not unless you have some decent recording equipment and are knowledgeable about creating a good sound. In other words, *don't* make demo tapes sitting in your living room with your boom box. Reel-to-reel taping systems in two-track and four-track formats are available for home use; you might be able to make your own "masters" from which you can later duplicate cassettes. The quality *may or may not* be acceptable for demo tapes; you must be very careful. Although Olivia, Redwood, Labrys, and Icebergg will accept home recordings, it is generally discouraged.

FINDING AN APPROPRIATE RECORDING STUDIO

There are three types of studios available: semi-professional, professional, and state of the art. A semi-pro studio might be anything from a 4-track setup in somebody's basement to an 8-track studio. The difference between semi-pro and other studios is that there are probably compromises made in the choice of equipment. For example, they may have purchased a decent tape recorder, but are weak in all other areas of studio equipment. Semi-pro studio time will cost the musician anywhere from $15-$35 an hour depending on the amount and quality of the equipment and where you are geographically.

Professional studios usually have better equipment all around, such as a 2-inch tape machine and a higher quality mixing console. You'll also find more choices in "processing equipment" such as reverb or digital delay that might not be available in a semi-pro studio. These studios are not considered state of the art because there will still be some compromises as far as equipment is concerned. A professional studio will cost anywhere from $40-$70 per hour, depending on the number of tracks (16 or 24) and the abundance of equipment.

State of the art studios aren't necessary for demo tape production but can be used if desired. These studios have everything a musician could possibly want for the recording process, but will cost from $75 to $200 an hour.

Either a semi-pro or a professional studio is sufficient for producing a demo tape. The important thing to remember when selecting a studio is that you want to produce a clean, well-engineered tape. Choose a studio that will give you this in the price range you can afford. Make sure you hear an example of the studio's work before you choose. The rate that you pay should include the studio time plus an engineer. Tape costs and tax on materials will be separate. Some studios charge a rental fee (by the session) for some of the very expensive "toys" they have purchased. Make sure to ask if there are any other charges in addition to studio time and materials.

IS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO HIRE A PRODUCER?

While it's not necessary, it can be a good idea to have a producer. A producer's role is to help with musical deci-

continued on page 62

ABOUT THE WRITERS: Karen Kane started as a studio administrator in 1970 and has been engineering since 1975. She was the first successful independent recording engineer in the Boston area, female or male. She has engineered and/or produced more than 60 albums. Cris Newport is a writer and a DJ for two Boston radio stations. She is also a lighting designer and a part-time apprentice engineer.

NOTEWORTHY WOMEN

THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON WOMEN IN MUSIC

By Kristan Aspen

One of the very special pleasures for Janna MacAuslan and me when we tour around the country performing as the Musica Femina Flute-Guitar Duo is meeting the women who come to our concerts. As we make more new friends we really feel at home almost everywhere in the entire country. We love traveling and getting "the big picture" of women's culture. It is especially fun for us when we cross paths with others who have helped women's culture grow and bloom over the years.

Recently, while we were in Los Angeles, I had the opportunity to visit with a woman whose "big picture" of women's music includes the entire world. Jeannie Pool has been a prime mover in classical music for 10 years. She was an early contributor to *Paid My Dues*, the pioneering women's music magazine which preceded *HOT WIRE*. She was founding mother--and is currently executive director--of the International Congress on Women in Music (ICWM), an organization which began as just an idea in 1979, but now serves as a vital network for women in music around the world.

The first event organized by Jeannie Pool which can now be seen as one of the roots of the ICWM was a one-day symposium on "String Quartets by Women Composers" held in New York City in 1980. The following year a longer conference was held, and in 1982 a sequel took place in Los Angeles. Since then the Congress has met at least every two years.

Janna and I became aware of the ICWM in 1983 when we were first trying to put together a classical music program for flute and guitar by women composers. Both of us had performed pop/folk women's music for many years, and we were searching for a way to integrate our love for classical music with our commitment to feminism and our lesbian identities. We learned that the next gathering would be in Mexico City (1984), and when we discovered that the cost was not prohibitive due to the favorable exhange rate for U.S. citizens, we decided to attend. We had hopes of finding more music for our instruments and meeting other women like us.

Despite some intercultural organizational problems, and heavy-handed harrassment by the Mexican government, the Mexico City Congress was exciting, informative, and inspirational to more than 100 participants from around the world. While Jeannie dealt with accusations of taking money out of the country and being a radical lesbian organization (because all of the organizers were women), the rest of us networked like crazy. Musica Femina did not perform, but we scattered our brochures like confetti and began to see how we fit into an international movement of women in music.

Having come this far, Janna and I decided to take the next logical step for us--to invite lesbians within the Congress to form a Lesbian Caucus. This was no easy task in a country where our radar was not working very well and our grasp of lesbian slang was nil. I do speak Spanish fluently enough to converse, but my vocabulary was not that extensive. At a loss for how to proceed, we consulted Jeannie Pool. To her credit Jeannie was both helpful and supportive of our efforts to reach lesbians among the Congress members. Under the circumstances she easily could have chosen to discourage us because of the hassles she was getting from the authorities. Jeannie's attitude in this situation exemplifies her vision for diversity within the ICWM. We have continued to experience and appreciate such openness to women of diverse consciousness as we have become more deeply involved in the organization.

When the time came for our scheduled Lesbian Caucus meeting, six women besides ourselves showed up, and two more sent regrets that they could not attend. We were elated! Here was a professional group of women actively committed to the same work that we were doing, and also willing to identify themselves as lesbians. Visions of an international network of lesbians in classical music intersecting with lesbians in popular women's music began dancing in my head. Suddenly the world seemed smaller, with the lesbian community stretched all the way around it.

In fact, all the women who attended the caucus meeting were from the United States. We had spread the word by speaking directly to women we thought might be open enough to pass it on if they were not interested themselves. It was too difficult and risky for us to approach women from other cultures. We didn't want to embarrass them or ourselves, or to hurt the Congress in any way. So, in

LESBIAN CAUCUS CALL FOR PAPERS AND SPEAKERS

The International Congress on Women in Music Lesbian Caucus has proposed a presentation for the next International Congress gathering in Heidelberg, West Germany, in June 1988. We would like participation by lesbians in classical and popular music from many countries. Anyone interested in speaking on a panel or leading a discussion group is invited to contact the Lesbian Caucus. Anonymous papers will also be considered for reading by a Caucus member.

Some suggested topics are: Pros and Cons of a Musical Career in the Closet; Archives and Biographies: What to Reveal and When?; Homophobia in the Workplace; Is "Women's Culture" a Limitation or an Opportunity?; Lesbian History: Our Classical Music Foremothers; The Importance of Networking Among Lesbians in Classical Music; and Creativity and Authenticity.

Deadline: speakers and papers will be accepted for consideration until at least April 1, 1988.

Proposals should be addressed to Kristan Aspen, P.O. Box 15121, Portland, OR 97215, USA. (503) 233-1206. All correspondence will be strictly confidential unless indicated for sharing among Lesbian Caucus members.

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

the meeting we decided to make our presence known to the membership-at-large by reporting on the formation of our group in the next Congress newsletter. I wrote an article describing the reasons we wanted to get together, and inviting interested members to contact me. I am sorry to say that the response has not been overwhelming, but I know women are at least aware of us.

In 1986 when the International Congress gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, the Lesbian Caucus met again--five of us who had been in Mexico City and four or five more. This time we decided to propose a public panel presentation on lesbians in classical music for the 1988 Congress, and we discussed raising money for a composition prize for a piece of music "on a lesbian theme."

The 1988 International Congress on Women in Music will take place in West Germany in June. Events will be held in two cities: Bremen, June 15-20, and Heidelberg, June 21-26. The Bremen section will be mostly a music festival format, with performances open to the public. In addition to orchestral, chamber and choral music there will be a focus on women in jazz, and women composers from Eastern Europe will be showcased. The Heidelberg segment will be held at a conference center outside the city. Programming includes presentations and discussions among ICWM members during the day, and performances open to the public at night. Between the two segments of the Congress a touring ensemble of 15 will travel to small towns and other cities giving concerts of women's music. The ensemble plans to perform in other European countries as well, either before or after the Congress gatherings.

So, how are things shaping up for the Lesbian Caucus in June? At press time in December there has been only one response to our Call for Papers, and we have not yet heard whether our proposal for a public panel discussion has been accepted by the German organizers of the 1988 Congress. We are really hoping that lesbians within the organizing groups will emerge to facilitate the panel. I am confident that it will happen when enough of us are visible and vocal. Meanwhile, the Lesbian Caucus will continue to plan and work together wherever the Congress meets.

Selection and organization of the programs for the 1988 Congress is entirely in the hands of the German women who are hosting the events. Each time the Congress meets in a different country, the focus and character is shaped by the local organizers. The presentations always reflect the consciousness of the sponsoring groups, but the attendance and participation is international. And always the gathering of women from around the world to play, listen to, and discuss music composed by themselves and other women has an effect on the local community. It serves to validate women's work and stimulate everyone's creativity.

The next Congress to be held in the U.S. will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the organization and take place in either New York or Boston in 1990. It will focus on "Women and the Piano," and will include the finals of a solo piano performance composition which will require all music performed to be composed by women. In the interests of mainstreaming compositions by women, the competition will be open to both male and female performers. A recording contract will be offered as the first prize. Anyone wishing to help set up and administer the competition should join the ICWM and contact Jeannie Pool.

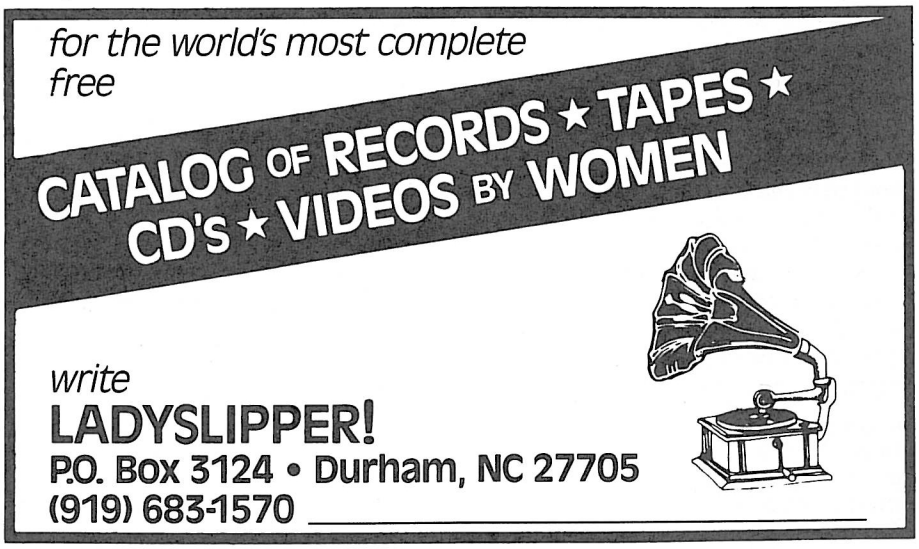
The next regional event sponsored by the ICWM will be hosted by the Eastern Division on March 26, 1988, at Brooklyn College in New York. A one-day symposium entitled "Women in Music: Moving On," this event will offer concerts, panels, lectures, and lecture-demonstrations addressing many topics, including management and issues related to career development; creating performance opportunities (including electronic music); getting music recorded and published; and women in academia. All interested persons are invited to attend.

The purpose of the International Congress on Women in Music according to Jeannie Pool is "to document and preserve historical and contemporary activities of women in music, so that future generations won't have to dig so deeply to find their foremothers' role within the field." Jeannie told me that she is excited by the way the ICWM continues to grow. One measure of the impact and importance of the organization is the large number of letters she receives from women in high school seeking information about careers as composers and performers. Just 10 years ago there was no such resource for girls or women interested or involved in music.

As for the future, Jeannie feels that the Congress has a responsibility to put forth the most exciting, best work in order to encourage high standards of excellence among all women in music. She says her job is often to help researchers or performers narrow their focus and pinpoint their interests. All serious, in-depth scholarship is important as we globally re-create women's history in music.

This is an exciting time to be involved in women's music, and the International Congress on Women in Music is a unique organization which bridges many musical traditions and cultural/geographical boundaries. Membership is open for $20/calendar year. For information and a sample newsletter, write: International Congress on Women in Music, P.O. Box 12164, La Crescenta, CA 91214. For more information on the 1988 German Congress, contact Seigrid Ernst, Hodenberger Strasse 10, D-2800 Bremen, West Germany or Roswitha Sperber, Bannholzweg 29, D-6903 Neckargemund-Dilsberg, West Germany. ●

ABOUT THE WRITERS: Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen make up the flute and guitar duo Musica Femina. They tour nationally and have recorded two cassettes. The group is currently working on their first LP of music by women composers.



THE TENTH MUSE

δανοις απαλας εταιρας εν στεθεσιν
May you sleep on the breast of your tender woman companion
--Sappho, circa 600 B.C.

SAPPHO AND HER LESBIAN LOVERS

By Jorjet Harper

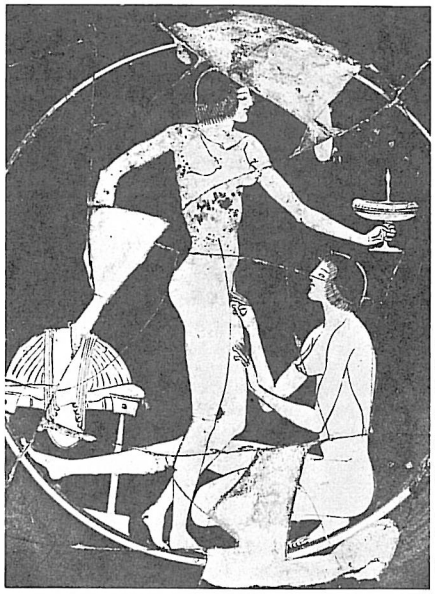
This is the seventh in a series of articles on Sappho of Lesbos: her life, her work, her loves, her historical influence, the controversies surrounding her, and how her work was lost and some of it rediscovered.

We possess only about five percent of the poems Sappho wrote, and almost all are incomplete. But if anything can be generalized from reading these beautiful fragments, it is that Sappho's concern, attention, and passion were focused on members of her own sex.

A papyrus from the 2nd century A.D. tells us that Sappho was 'accused' of being *gynaikerastria*--that is, a "lover of women." How many of the women who were members of Sappho's circle actually were her lovers, and what sorts of relationships they had, is, of course, impossible to say on such meager evidence as history provides. Not much is known about the social structure of Lesbos at that time, either, except that women had more freedom than in other parts of Greece.

Who were the women Sappho named in her love songs? In a few cases we know where they came from. We can assume they were, for the most part, from well to do families, and may have been sent to Lesbos for the purpose of studying the arts of music, singing, and dancing with a renowned teacher. Though we have no more information than that provided by Sappho's words themselves and a few other historical references, we know at least that the women Sappho sang for and about were *real* women--not goddesses or mythological heroines or other images fashioned from the imagination, but real women who lived and breathed. The names mentioned in Sappho's songs are some of the few real women's names that have come down to us from so ancient a time. That alone would make Sappho's fragments of inestimable value for the history of women. Yet in addition, the fragments allow us to connect ourselves with the sentiments of love and desire felt by a real, not an imaginary, lesbian woman who speaks to us in her own voice from an ancient world.

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.



The Reign of the Phallus/E. Keuls

Intimate scene of two Greek hetaerai, circa 430 B.C.

LOVE POEMS

Though male writers, especially modern ones, have often tried to argue otherwise, there can be no doubt about Sappho's physical and emotional attraction to women--her poems are the proof.

In one of the longer surviving fragments, Sappho describes how she feels when she sees a woman she loves sitting and talking intimately with a man:

An equal to the gods he seems to me
the man who, with his face toward yours,
sits close and listens to the whispers of
your sweet voice and enticing laugh.
To watch has made my heart a pounding
hammer in my breast.
For as I look at you, if only for an instant,
my voice no longer comes to me.
My silent tongue is broken,
and a quick and subtle flame
runs up beneath my skin.
I lose my sense of sight, hear only
drumming in my ears.
I drip cold sweat,
and a trembling chases all through me.
I turn greener than the pale grass
and it seems to me that I am close to death.
Still, I must endure all this... *

In the world of ancient Greece no euphemisms were necessary; the work was recognized for what it is--a love poem. The only reason this poem has come down to us at all is that it was quoted at length by a 2nd century A.D. writer named Longinus, in his essay "On Sublimity," in which he uses it as an example. "Sappho," he comments, "always chooses the emotions associated with love's madness from the attendant circumstances and the real situation...Are you not amazed how at one and the same moment she seeks out soul, body, hearing, tongue, sight, complexion as though they had all left her and were external, and how in contradiction she both freezes and burns, is irrational and sane, is afraid and nearly dead, so that we observe in her not one single emotion but a concourse of emotions? All this of course happens to people in love; but it is her selection of the most important details and her combination of them into a single whole that have produced the excellence of the poem."

Longinus's admiration for Sappho's work, written 700 years after she died, is well founded. If some of the lines of her poem sound like cliches to our modern ears, it's because Sappho *invented* these images and they've been around so long, used again and again by other poets. It's important to appreciate the antiquity of her vivid description of desire by one woman for another woman. Sappho composed these lines on the island of Lesbos at about the same time that Buddha was alive in India and Confucius in China. *Twenty five centuries ago.* All the more astonishing when we think of how the

feelings--and even the situation--Sappho describes are so contemporary, so physical, so full of a resonance that we can immediately relate to today.

ATTHIS

The historian Suidas names three women who were known in the ancient world to have had romantic attachments to Sappho. We know nothing at all about two of them--Telesippa and Megara--since they are not mentioned in the surviving fragments. But it's important to remember that since only five percent of Sappho's poems have come down through history to us, it's quite possible that a woman, or women, for whom Sappho wrote many poems has been simply erased from posterity.

On the other hand, the third name Suidas gives us as one of Sappho's lovers is mentioned in more surviving poems than any other: the Lesbian singer Atthis.

Atthis is certainly, at least for the modern world, the most famous of Sappho's lovers. In fact, in the early 1970's Robin Tyler produced a landmark 45 rpm recording of a song written and performed by Maxine Feldman that is now credited as the first recording of the modern women's music movement. It is a protest song about lesbian invisibility entitled "Angry Atthis."

Like Sappho, Atthis was a native of Lesbos. According to Suidas, Atthis and Sappho were "bound together by an affection which was slanderously declared to be shameful."

Since Atthis was so well known to the ancient Greeks and Romans, it is believed that Sappho may have written many more poems to her than the few that have survived. These poems would certainly be among the ones burned by the Church during the Middle Ages. [See HOT WIRE, March 1987.]

Because many of the fragments were recovered in bad condition, there is often debate among scholars as to how a word or a line of Sappho's poetry should be translated, and even whether several fragments might not be part of the same poem. One fragment in dispute is the following, in which Sappho seems to be reminding Atthis of something Atthis once said to her, by speaking in Atthis's voice for most of the poem. Mary Barnard, following the reconstruction by the esteemed paleographer J.M. Edmunds, translates it as:

It was you, Atthis, who said

"Sappho, if you will not get
up and let us look at you
I shall never love you again!
Get up, unleash your suppleness,
lift off your Chian nightdress
and, like a lily leaning into
a spring, bathe in the water.
Cleis is bringing your best
purple frock and the yellow
tunic down from the clothes chest;
you will have a cloak thrown over
you and flowers crowning your hair...
Praxinoa, my child, will you please
roast nuts for our breakfast? One
of the gods is being good to us:
today we are going at last
into Mytilene, our favorite
city, with Sappho, loveliest
of its women; she will walk
among us like a mother with
all her daughters around her
when she comes home from exile..."

But you forget everything

In another song, Sappho comforts Atthis for her loss of a woman she loved who has now gone to Sardis:

[...for you know that she honored you]
as if you were a goddess
and, most of all, delighted in your song.

In the lines that follow, this absent woman is compared to the moon, and Sappho calls up beautiful nature imagery to soothe Atthis. She ends by telling Atthis that despite the beauty in which the woman walks in that faraway land, she is surely missing her, too:

...but wandering here and there, she recalls
gentle Atthis with desire
and her tender heart is heavy with grief... *

Andromeda was another teacher on Lesbos who had her own circle of students. According to Athenaeus, an Egyptian writing around 200 A.D., Andromeda wrote poetry to Atthis, too, and "made overtures" to her.

Judging from Sappho's words, it appears that though Sappho loved Atthis passionately, Atthis eventually chose Andromeda:

Love, the loosener of limbs, stirs me,
that creature irresistible, bittersweet,
But you, Atthis, have come to hate the
thought of me;
and run after Andromeda instead. ††

ANACTORIA

One of Sappho's most famous verses begins:

There are those who say
an array of horsemen,
and others of marching men,
and others of ships, is
the most beautiful thing on the dark earth.
But I say it is whatever one loves.

Sappho goes on on to support this statement with the example of Helen of Troy, who gave up home and family for the sake of love. Sappho compares this situation to how she herself feels about a woman named Anactoria. The implication is that her love for Anactoria is comparable to--and equally as important:

For I would rather watch her,
moving in her lovely way,
and see her face, flashing radiant,
than all the force of Lydian chariots,
and their infantry in full display of arms. *

Anactoria was from Miletus in Asia Minor, according to the *Lexicon* of Suidas. She may have joined Sappho's circle of talented women companions while Sappho herself was still in her twenties. After an unknown amount of time, Anactoria left Lesbos to live in Lydia. It is the physical presence of Anactoria that Sappho longs for in this poem--more than anything else in the world, she wants to see her in the flesh. The word Sappho uses to describe the way Anactoria moves is *eraton*, meaning "lovely," and is, according to Greek scholar Sir Maurice Bowra, "much more than a mere term of praise. It meant that it is because of her way of walking that Sappho loves her." Bowra and others have also noted that Sappho contrasts the splendors of war and male displays of power--such popular themes among male Greek poets--with the primacy of a love between women. Translator Josephine Balmer comments, "For Sappho, beauty rests in the sight of Anactoria's face rather than Lydian chariots and so it is Anactoria she loves and values, desire between women she asserts over the male concept of military glory."

DIKA, GYRINNO, GONGYLA

It is clear from Sappho's words that she cared passionately about a number of women, and that she had a strong interest in their physicality. One fragment reads:

Mnasidica, whose body is more beautiful in form than the tenderhearted Gyrinno **

Mnasidica may be the full name of a woman mentioned in another fragment, Dika, whom Sappho advises to bind together shoots of dill "with your slender hands," and "wreathe garlands around your lovely hair."† Gyrinno--or Gyrinna--may have been the same person as the poetess Erinna, who came from Telos, an island not far from Rhodes.

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Jorjet Harper writes fiction and non-fiction, and is the arts and entertainment editor of 'Chicago Outlines,' a gay and lesbian newspaper.

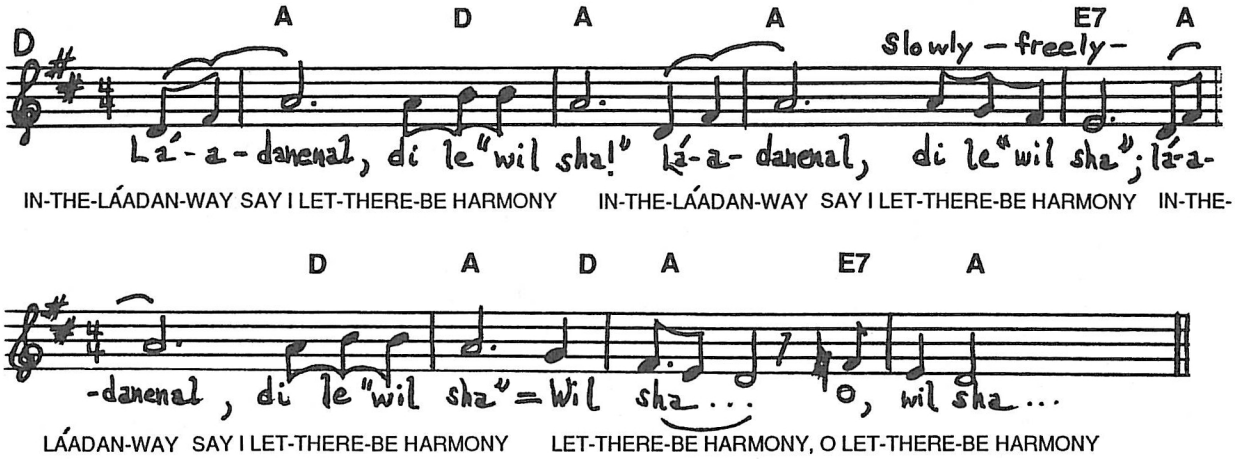
LÁADAN

SINGING IN LÁADAN

By Suzette Haden Elgin

LÁADANENAL

Sung to "Kumbaya"



Láadanenal, le halá
Halá, le halá!

Láadanenal, le shoná
Shoná, le shoná!

AND SO ON...For additional verses, here are my own choices:

LE HENA: I am a sister

LE DUTHAHÁ: I am a healer

LE LILAHÁ: I am a lover (this word not used by males who are lovers, only females)

LE DONIDANÁ: I am a channel for lovingkindness

LE HALÁ: I am a worker

LE SHONÁ: I am a peacemaker

LE OMÁ: I am a teacher

LINGUIST'S EXPLANATION

This is a zipper song, which means that a pattern is set by one verse and then as many new verses may be "zipped" into the pattern as the singers want. "Láadanenal" means "in the Láadan way, in the Láadan manner." This begins the three repeated lines in each verse, and the balance follows. In the chorus, we have "di le 'wil sha'" -- which means literally "SAY I LET-THERE-BE HARMONY," freely "I say, 'Let there be harmony'." In the verses, what we have is a set of statements in the form "I am a/an....." (freely), "I...." (literally). For example, "le halá" means literally, "I WORKER," freely "I am a worker." Thus, "Láadanenal, le halá" means "In the Láadan manner, I am a worker." Now--if I've explained this well enough--you'll have no problem following the verses below, and in making new ones at will. No particular order...

Editor's note: The article "About Music and Religious Language" [July 1987] provides good background information for women thinking about Láadan and singing.

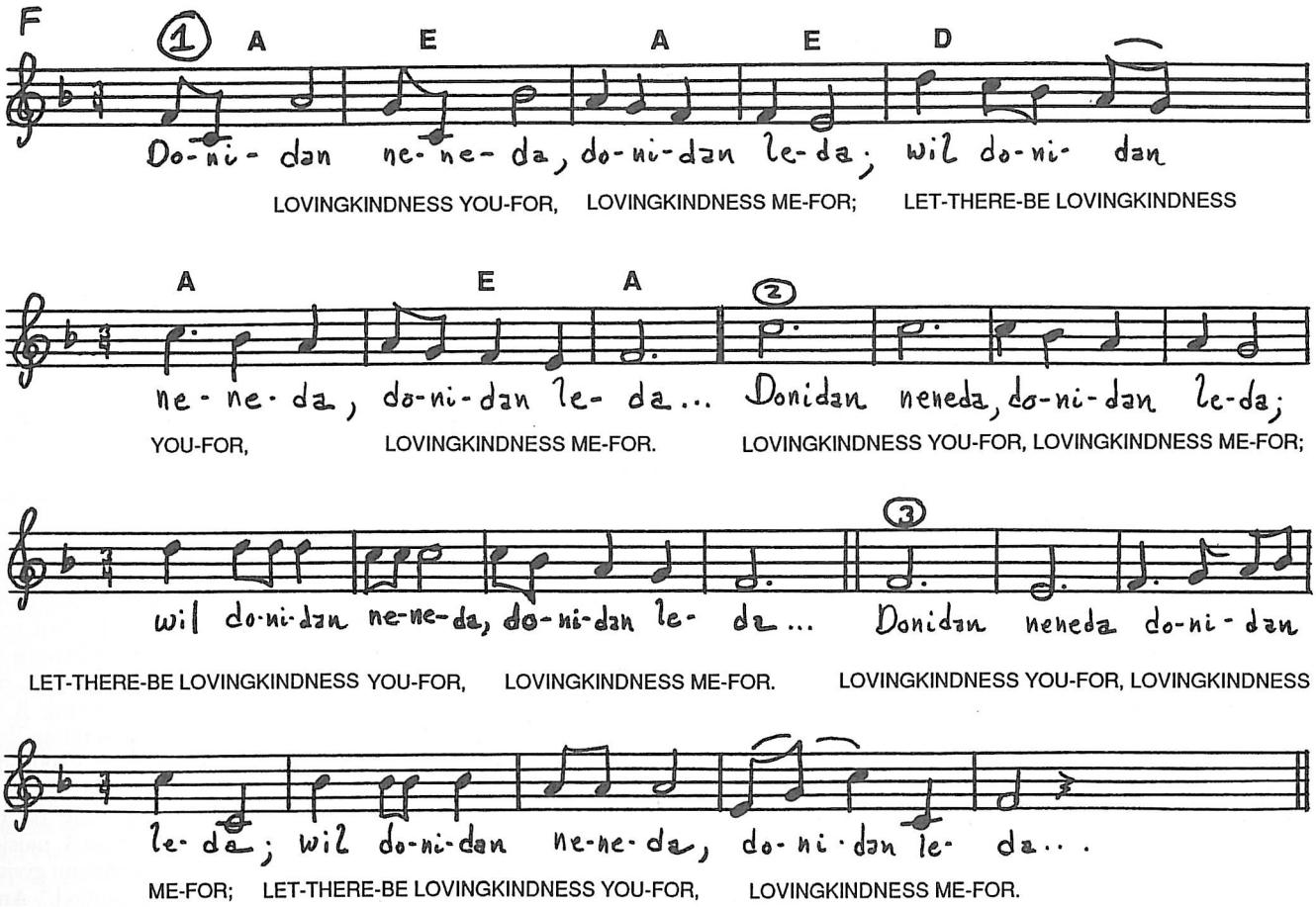
LÁADAN: "The language of those who perceive," a language constructed to express the perceptions of women. This column presents translation-lessons for those interested in learning to use the language. Suzette Haden Elgin welcomes correspondence from women interested in the further development of Láadan.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

ABOUT THE WRITER: Suzette Haden Elgin is a Doctor of Linguistics. She has taught at the University of California, specializing in Native American languages. She has written numerous linguistic texts in addition to 11 major science fiction and fantasy novels, including 'Native Tongue.'

DONIDAN

Sung to "Dona Nobis Pacem"

A canon.



LÁADAN LESSONS

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

A FIRST DICTIONARY AND GRAMMAR OF LÁADAN by Suzette Haden Elgin. This reference book is available 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/grammar reference book. $3 includes postage and handling. From Suzette Haden Elgin, Rt 4 Box 192-E, Huntsville, AR 72740.

'HOT WIRE' ARTICLES: "Láadan: A Language For Women" [November 1985], "Láadan Update" [March 1987], "About Music and Religious Language" [July 1987], and Láadan lessons [March, July, and November, 1986].

KEY TO WORDS

DONIDAN: lovingkindness
NENEDA: for you (nen + e + da)
LEDA: for me (le + da)
WIL: let there be
LÁADANENAL: in the Laadan manner/way
DI LE: I say
SHA: harmony
LE HALÁ: I worker (I'm a worker)
SHONÁ: peacemaker
DUTHAHÁ: healer
OMÁ: teacher
HENA: sister (sibling)
LILAHÁ: female-sexual-act-er

1988 Index-Directory of Women's Media

Extensive listing of resources, primarily mainstream feminist: radio, TV, video, cable, film, presses/publishers, speakers bureaus, library collections, etc.
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LIFE AS A
WOMAN ROCKER

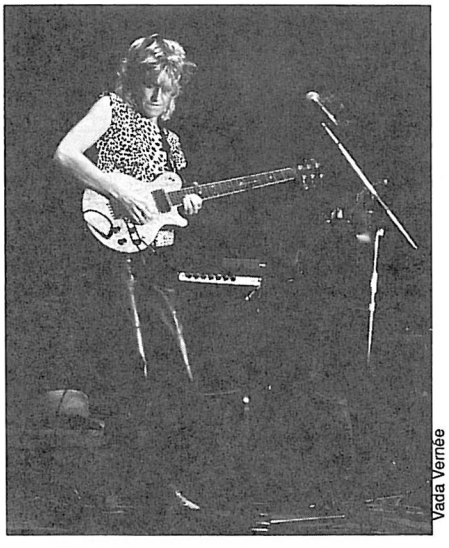
By Sherry Shute

I've been playing in rock bands since 1970. I've done the bar circuit in Canada, playing lots of dives (but I've played nice places, too). I started playing rock right away; it was a natural thing for me. My first bands were all-women bands. We weren't the greatest players, but I always wanted to be a rock and roller. I never went through wanting to be a Joni Mitchell type or anything like that. I admire Joni Mitchell a great deal, don't get me wrong; I just wanted to be a lead guitar player. I wanted to be George Harrison or Keith Richards.

It's the energy of rock that has always appealed to me. As a musician, my favorite way to express myself is through playing the guitar, soloing especially. I just naturally love it. There's rock writing by women that can speak to all of us, and I think it's a very powerful medium. It moves a lot of people--it moves *me*.

When asked, "Who are your musical inspirations and influences?" I say, "You mean *besides* June Millington?" June Millington was a big guitar hero for me. I heard about [the rock group] Fanny after I'd been playing for about a year, and they were a great inspiration to me. I thought maybe I was the only woman in world trying to play guitar. I also just love R&B; it is probably an equal influence to rock. I loved all the stuff out of Detroit; Aretha Franklin, a lot of Motown artists. Also Jimi Hendrix. For a while I was wild for Patti Smith; she came out at a great time. She brought rock back to its basic roots, and I loved her lyrics. Right now Chrissie Hynde is my current rock hero--her band the Pretenders really rock. I think she writes about important stuff, and she's so *exciting* live.

On the women's scene, Jeanie Fineberg and Ellen Seeling from DEUCE are very inspiring musicians; Carrie Barton is a fave; the Jasmine gals--their vocals have so much soul, they're so good vocally; Cris Williamson is a really fine songwriter and singer, I love to see her every chance I get. Jamming with Toshi Reagon's band at Michigan was a highlight for me. And



"I would say, 'Look, this stuff is written by me and my women friends; this is not male music'."

Heather has been a real inspiring force in my career, as well as Kathy and Gwen who produced my record--they're two of the finest songwriters in Canada.

ROCK & WOMEN'S MUSIC

I'm not sure of all the reasons for there being so little aggresssive rock & roll in women's music. I think that women's music was born of the need for women to have something--a music that spoke exclusively to them about concerns, political and personal. And probably rock & roll was--and still is--pretty much a mainstream kind of music dominated by the boys, dominated by big business. So I think that it was quite a natural progression that the music that founded women's music would be something quite different from rock & roll.

Aside from the politics, it's economically difficult. It's expensive to tour with a band, and small producers usually can't guarantee a big enough fee to make it feasible. Even performers who are doing singles and duo acts can't get paid enough. And bands can have complicated production needs. There are alternate ways of doing things, though. Producers should be looking to slightly different venues--dances, for example. Sometimes people want to have dances at conferences. Clubs and bars can work. Some performers don't want to be in bars for health reasons, and some feel it's contrary to what they're trying to do with their music--but bands *can* be done in some clubs.

In the early days of women's music, there was some criticism coming from some--not all--feminists centering around rock being "male identified." That was a tough one for me personally, being a lead guitar player. Most, though not all, male rock musicians were threatened; it was like this real ego-trip kind of thing. Here I was, a woman, ripping off good solos, and they didn't like it. And then I felt from the feminist camp early on they didn't want to *know* about rock music at all--it was just dismissed without giving a listen as being "male-identified." And I would say, "Look, this stuff is written by me and my women friends; this is not male music." But early on people just didn't want to know it. I felt like I didn't belong anywhere.

I think that's changing now. I suppose in the early stages of any sort of political movement there's a move to extremism. That's necessary to form and start a movement, to build strength; after awhile, people can open up and relax a little bit.

In Canada, a women's circuit doesn't exist the way it does here--and that's just because there aren't as many people in Canada. The state of California has a larger population than Canada does. It's so far between centers that there's just not the population to support it. But there's a broader base of support. In Heather's audience, for example, there are a lot of women, a lot of lesbians, and men, coming from a politically left consciousness.

For two years there was the Canadian Women's Music & Cultural Festival in Winnipeg. It was the first women's festival of its type. The audience wasn't

limited to women-only, although the audience was mostly women, and it wasn't lesbian-only. The festival relied a lot on government funding--it's such an expensive thing to do, and as I said before, in Canada there's not the women's population to support it. Last year we didn't have one. A lot of the folk festivals in Canada have sort of separate programming--perhaps a tent for women performers or women's issues, but within the broader context of the entire festival. We don't have festivals to compare to Michigan, or Southern, or West Coast.

THE ROCK LIFE

Women have commented on my "tough rocker image"--leather & studs, etc. I've been asked if this is how I dress all the time or if it's a deliberately cultivated stage persona. I guess it's how I like to dress for playing--it's how I like to dress when I get "dressed up." But I should make it known that with my hardware I do have some baby bears, too--and besides, I don't have to iron my leather pants to get ready at night (which, by the way, don't require that much care. I take the lining out and wash it, but the leather itself doesn't need much. I put mink oil on them once a year--it makes them water resistant, gives them moisture, and makes them crinkle better. Mink oil is the stuff people put on their boots. When I was a softball player I used to put mink oil on my leather glove).

I had a five-piece all-woman rock band called Otherwise back in the early 1970s. We did mostly covers, like ZZTop. A lot of the bar owners would want us because we were all women. They'd expect us to show up wearing gowns, and we'd show up in our jeans, hauling all these amps.

We were sort of outrageous rebels at the time--our poor manager was so scared of us. He got us this rehearsal space in a truck depot. He gave us the keys and said, "Okay now girls, please, *please* don't give the truck drivers a hard time." Picture this place called Big Mack Trucks and these big burly fellows. Another time, there was a riot in the bar where we were playing. It was a biker bar, and it made the national news in Canada. We were out of town, and our manager saw it in the news. He stayed home all night waiting for our one call from jail, because he was sure that we caused the riot (which we didn't). Talk about that "tough rocker image."

In the past year I've performed to many audiences across the States; I'm starting to be recognized as a performer in the network in this country. This "semi-stardom" never really occurred to me until I saw my picture on the back cover of *HOT WIRE*. I felt like a real rock star. That was great. Lots of people come up and say they like the way I play guitar and that they've always wanted to play like that--you know, the closet guitar players. I like that. It feels good to get recognized; everyone likes to get recognized. The recognition hasn't made a difference yet financially, though.

Playing the women's circuit has been the best thing that's happened to me in my career in many ways. I've enjoyed the travel with Heather; I've enjoyed meeting all these really wonderful women all across the States. I've enjoyed seeing the country. I've always dreamed about coming to California and now here I am--and I'm here *playing*. It's just been a very rich experience for me. It's gratifying playing with Heather, and on the rare occasions I get to play with my own band. I think--especially with the Heather audiences, which is mostly what I've done--we're talking to people about important issues and hopefully helping women to feel good about themselves, feel good about being out dykes and about being out there doing that political work and stuff.

Right now I make my living totally from music, since I've been lucky enough to be touring with Heather. I'm not rich--I don't own a house in Malibu (I don't even own a house in Toronto--I don't even own a house in Timmins, Ontario)--but I pay the rent. It hasn't always been that way. Playing in cover bands, doing Top 40 material or heavy rock material can make a living, too. It's hard to make a living doing exclusively original rock material, so there was a period of a few years when I was doing a day job, a part-time day gig, and playing at night. I think it's tough for all musicians, really, and I feel lucky to be making my living from doing it. I would love to do more studio work. Unfortunately it's mostly a boys' club in Toronto, but I played on Lillian Allen's album *Revolutionary Tea Party* and I played on Marianne Girard's album--and of course on my own--and I hope to do more of that in the future. I also write, but my main source of income is from playing rock.

There are a lot of myths about performers getting rich. *Light of Day* was a very realistic movie. (I'm a big fan of Joan Jett--Chrissie rules, but I sure like Joan.) Usually when rock is dealt with in movies, Joe Rock gets his guitar and makes it right to Carnegie Hall, but this movie was true to what it's like to play in bar bands: showing up for the gig, having to hassle sometimes with the owner about the money, getting paid at the end of the week, money being taken out for expenses like the truck, and finally everyone's left with maybe $50 or $100 for the week. It was neat because that's what it's *really* like.

In 1986 I recorded an EP--*Sherry Shute*--on my own Lois Carroll label. It has six cuts [hear the soundsheet cut "No Crime" in this issue]. I was lucky--a woman fan offered to give me backing to do an EP, so I took advantage of it. I asked Catherine MacKay and Gwen Swick, who had played with me in a rock group in Toronto called Hamburger Patti. They helped me pick the tunes and the musicians, who I think are some of Toronto's best rock players. Ladyslipper is distributing the EP in the U.S., and it's a grassroots effort in Canada. I could be doing a lot more in that area, but doing business is not one of my favorite things. Good managers like [Heather's manager] Joan Miller are so rare. It makes your career run more smoothly.

I feel that I want to be the best I can. That probably applies to Chris Everett or Martina playing tennis; whatever you choose to do, you should try to be as good as you possibly can be. And as a musician--as a guitar player, for me--that's what I work at. That's what I try to do. The better you are, it's tools: the better you can get your message across, the better role model you are. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Sherry Shute, now 38, has been playing in bands since 1970. She loves going to the Blue Jays games in Toronto, and had a career writing the sports column for the 'Toronto Clarion' using the byline "Fred Mooney." Special thanks to Sandy Ramsey and Toni Armstrong for help writing this article.

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MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR LESBIAN & GAY RIGHTS

NEW JEWISH AGENDA HAVDALLAH SERVICE & CONCERT

By Toni L. Armstrong

Tracy Baim

NJA celebrant/performers: Alix Dobkin, Ronnie Gilbert, Ruth Pelham and Elliott Pilshaw.

As part of the week-long schedule of events surrounding the historic October 11 March, New Jewish Agenda sponsored a Havdallah service and concert featuring Ronnie Gilbert, Alix Dobkin, Ruth Pelham, and Elliott Pilshaw. Elly Bulkin addressed the tightly-packed Saturday night crowd, most of whom were sitting cross-legged on every inch of the floor; at the last moment, the event in the National Education Association building was relocated from a large auditorium to a small room basically without chairs. At least 100 people were turned away from the service/concert, but the ones who participated were spirited and energetic.

In Bulkin's address, she talked about why some were here and why some were not--the parents who weren't able to come because they couldn't tell their children why they were leaving, the rabbis who couldn't tell their congregations why they wouldn't be there for Sabbath services; she went through a list of people and reasons. She introduced Ronnie Gilbert and Rabbi Yoel Kahn from San Francisco, who talked about the Havdallah service. Wine and candles were passed around, with almost enough for all of the participants in the room. The performers sang individual short sets, and the evening concluded with a sing-along finale of "Oh Mary, Don't You Weep Don't You Mourn."

The following comments are excerpted from interviews.

RONNIE GILBERT

I've been thinking a lot lately about things Jewish, and what my place is or is not in what I see around me. I first came onto New Jewish Agenda when I did a concert in Ann Arbor. I began to read things about the organization, and then one day I came across a publication around Jewish issues that printed part of Adrienne Rich's address to the conference that year. It knocked me out. I heard her saying things that I have thought for years and years, such as the need to open up and not be exclusive. That's just excerpting one little aspect, but it appealed to me because that was one of the problems I've had with any kind of tightly organized religion: there seems to be a kind of exclusivity about it that challenges other things that I believe in. And I had been very uncomfortable with that.

Rich's address was beautifully worded, as her things always are. She's a very great favorite of mine, and it got me interested in New Jewish Agenda. They were clearly open to what she was saying, and to what people like her were thinking. So now when Jewish Agenda stuff comes up I'm interested--I'm interested to be associated with it and to see what's happening. I have never been involved in a religious service before, but when Christie Balka [from NJA] called and told my manager Donna that I could either sing or participate in the service itself, or do both, I wanted to participate.

I have been thinking about this business of Jewishness--which has never really entered my life since I was a little girl, when Jewish meant to me "very political." It meant I associated Jewishness with fights for social justice, with union struggles, with fights for peace, with saving Jews that were being persecuted in Germany--though not with Israel. I'm not a Zionist, and I have not been involved with that part of Jewish politics. I admit my views on this were formed a long time

ago, and I'm now doing a lot of reading on the subject and opening up to different people's points of view. But my identification as a Jew has always been with social justice--and it's been with social justice for *everybody*, not just Jews.

Anyway, that's why I went there. I have never actually been part of a service, and I didn't even know that a lay person could be part of such a service. We were going to San Francisco, and Yoel's [gay] congregation was there, so it was very interesting, all those things coming together around the March. He told me on the telephone that he was doing a new blessing for the Havdallah service, which welcomes the week back from the Sabbath--it's the closing of the Sabbath and the opening of the week of work and the week of study and so forth. That's all I knew about it. He explained to me what it was about and said he was doing a new blessing written by Marcia Falk, a feminist poet and liturgist. She happened to be appearing and speaking at the Yom Kippur service in Berkeley that my partner and I wanted to go, so we got a chance to hear her talk. I approached all this stuff as very interesting and very timely for me.

Well, she knocked my boots off. She talked about things that I realize have been roiling in my mind for years, that I have never been able to articulate somehow, such as addressing the real problem of the patriarchal issue in Judeo-Christian religion, beginning with referring to God as a "he." Her point is that addressing God as "she" does not solve the problem. This is how I have always felt, and is one of the reasons I was not drawn in to some of the spiritual activities that I have been around. This is happening a lot among feminist Jewish women who are trying to retrieve the female part of the religion--very rightly so, I feel--and so I've been drawn to it but then kind of repelled. It seemed to me that it was a cosmetic job--like changing the name from this to that. But I thought to myself, "Well, I really do not know a lot about this; I haven't studied as these women have, so I don't know what that actually does."

When I heard Marcia speak--first of all she's *brilliant* and such a wonderful thinker--she just drew me in right from the start. She wrote an essay that appeared in 1985 in the Jewish publication *Moment*. She discusses the partial images of God presented in prayer, saying "partial" because if you address God as "he" you eliminate the female aspects of God, which are called Shekinah. The Jewish feminists have been calling God "Shekinah" and trying to change the gender of the prayers as they exist. What that does is equally to make God, or the idea of God, a partial and not complete sort of idea. That's an oversimplification, but that's the idea. She says, "Traditional Jewish prayer in its insistence on a particular set of partial images, in its dogmatic naming of an exclusively male God, a God who may be allowed to have feminine attributes or aspects, but whose primary reality is male...this prayer which has become our liturgy has turned the monotheistic promise into a lie. It has said man alone is created in god's image, woman is secondary in being and value. And from this hierarchical dualism, the theological basis of sexism flows--the pernicious hierarchical thinking that underlies racism, classism, agism, homophobia, and human domination of the rest of creation. Our liturgy has taken the vision, the hope of monotheism, and reduced it to a cult of idol worship."

You know, you hear a thing like that and all of a sudden the whole world opens up. All these things that my life has been concerned with are pulling together--not *just* women, not *just* unions, not *just* peace, not *just* anything, but *all* of these things come together. I feel that she has delineated what the situation is for all of us; when we look at this thing which has created our cultural life, no matter what we say--we have a feminist culture, we have a woman culture, we have a this culture or that--nevertheless, it is all shaped and colored by what we know of morals, of theology. She is addressing this at its root, and that means a great deal to me. I don't like cosmetic change, because it doesn't work.

It seemed to me that being in the Havdallah service would be a very good thing to do. And in fact it was; it was very moving to me to be in that room with so many people trying to pack themselves in [to the small room].

It was fun to be in a room full of people so buoyed up by the moment and by the purpose of being there, and by the camaraderie of being with each other. It was somewhat different from a concert; the audiences in my concerts are very mixed, which I love. Something I very much adore about doing concerts is that people from different communities come together; the women's community comes and some of the old folk community comes, and some of the new folk community comes, and you have this kind of wonderful mix of ages and stuff at the concerts--at least the ones I do. But [the NJA evening] was very special in itself, because there was a kind of coming together of people who felt that they were part of *a* community, and that's a very powerful and important thing to do.

It was wonderful for me. I just felt I was there in a kind of exploration. Everyone was exploring something; I saw people exploring me. You know, what am *I* doing there? Am I *this* or am I *that*? Am I *out*? Am I *not* out? Am I *gay*? Am I *not* gay? I saw all that in people's faces, and it was an exploration for me, too--because those are the very questions I ask myself; the audience is asking the same questions I ask myself every day. And those questions really are, am I gay? am I out? am I Jewish? and if I am, what kind? and what am I doing here?

I think those questions will go on all my life, at least I *hope* they will. I hate the idea of ever being so settled in an idea of who I am that I have a mold, and anything that doesn't fit in it has to be discarded. That's my horror, that that could happen and that that does happen. And that's why it was wonderful for me to be there. 10 years ago I would never have dreamed that I would be in such a place doing that.

RUTH PELHAM

New Jewish Agenda contacted me through the singer/songwriter Rita Falbel, who I know through the People's Music Network. Rita called to see if I would come and be part of the Havdallah service, which immediately sounded wonderful. She told me who was going to be participating in it, and that New Jewish Agenda was sponsoring this event for Jewish gays and lesbians, and also non-Jews, and allies of Jews, and allies of gays and lesbians--it wasn't going to be just a Jewish event. I really love the idea of Jews and non-Jews coming together in support--*together*. That felt really exciting to me. I decided to go.

There are a lot of similarities historically, and I spoke some about this at the event, for me being Jewish and being lesbian. Herstorically/historically there's been really intense oppression with intention to eliminate Jews or intention to eliminate people who are homosexuals. And in spite of all those attempts, Jews are very much here, and gays and lesbians are very much here--and there's wonderful spirit of surviving and going on and becoming strong. There are a lot of difficulties for any person being part of an oppressed group, but I find that being Jewish has certainly strengthened my determination to live my life proud to be who I am--which includes being a lesbian. This has empowered me to *really* look at

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A STEP AWAY

TERESA TRULL

By Kate Brandt and Toni L. Armstrong

In 1977, Teresa Trull released her first album, *The Ways A Woman Can Be* (Olivia Records), featuring women as singers and instrumentalists, engineers and producers, and offering such lyrics as "I'd like to make love with you, 'cause you are a woman and I am one too" (written by Margaret Sloan).

In 1987, Teresa toured as a background singer for San Francisco rock musician Bonnie Hayes when Bonnie served as the opening act for Huey Lewis and the News, performing for stadium-sized audiences of girls and women, boys and men.

The journey from Olivia to Huey may seem to cover light-years rather than a decade.

Throughout her career, women have questioned: is Teresa Trull trying to move into the mainstream at the expense of her lesbian/feminist audience? Is she becoming *less* woman-identified, *more* woman-identified in her music?

There are no simple answers to such questions when there is no universal agreement about definitions. "Woman-identified" means, to some, placing emphasis on women or feminist images and topics. To others it is more narrowly used as a euphemism for lesbian. "I think when you say 'woman identified' to some people," says Teresa, "it's a catch phrase for lesbianism. But to me, if all there was to women's music was lesbianism...well, to me that's never been what [women's music] has been *totally* about. *Let It Be Known* was real woman-identified if you want to go by [the broader interpretation]--it had 'You're My Home,' and it had three lesbian songs on it--and people *still* yelled at me all day about how it wasn't 'as woman identified'."

In spite of periods of controversy, the audience that Teresa describes as "loyal and loving" has supported her throughout a career which, by the standards of the women's music community, has always been somewhat "mainstream."

"In the alternative and women's communities, anything close to pop has been looked upon suspiciously," Teresa says. "Political music comes from grassroots folk music. The women's community was raised and born with people who listened to alternative and political music; some associate rhythm and blues with slickness, with corruptness. That was never in my book of ideas."

Teresa's "book" comes from her upbringing in rural North Carolina, "where Sam & Dave were more happening than the Beatles," and where she heard Aretha Franklin rather than Joan Baez, The Mighty Clouds of Joy instead of The Who. The soulful songs with which she'd grown up--"Natural Woman," "If Loving You Is Wrong, I Don't Want To Be Right,"--were not lesbian songs, but they were songs in which Teresa could hear herself.

When the time came for Teresa to record her first album, she wanted to do an R&B record but didn't know how to lead a band. She recorded *The Ways A Woman Can Be*, which she considers, in retrospect, to be more immature musically than her subsequent albums. The strong lyrics were written mostly when Teresa was between 16 and 20 years old. "That's when you're finally running into your identity," she says, "and if you're woman-identified, it's like running into a brick wall."

Her debut represented a reveling in Teresa's new identity. She says her personal growth beyond that period of discovery made her "more of a humanist."

Her next album was *Let It Be Known* (Olivia Records, 1980), and then a creative evolution began with *Unexpected*, Teresa's 1983 collaboration with Barbara Higbie. It culminated in the 1986 *A Step Away* on Redwood Records, which was selected by *HOT WIRE* readers as one of the top five favorite current albums in the 1987 Readers' Choice Awards.

Teresa's goals with *Step* were to make it "technically viable--to 'sound like a record', and to have it appeal to more than the women's community--I wanted it to appeal to anyone." The well-produced LP, recorded in the studio where Michael Jackson did *Thriller*, features high standards of technical and musical excellence. It also contains three overtly woman-identified songs, including "Right Back," the duo with Vicki Randle about women's friendship, and "Maria," written by Bonnie Hayes. "Even though it's clearly a woman to a woman," says Teresa, "actually 'Maria' is not a love song. It was written by Bonnie for her sister-in-law when they had a fight."

A Step Away also includes another Bonnie Hayes song, "Rosalie," which was selected as the favorite current song in the Readers' Choice Awards. This song, as well as the title cut, originally were written by Bonnie and Teresa respectively, to be recorded by Huey Lewis. Lewis, however, turned them down, and Teresa decided to use them for her own album. Though Teresa and Bonnie had been performing together as a duo, when it came time to record "Rosalie," Bonnie--having written this love song to a woman for a man to sing--found herself uncomfortable singing it with Teresa, and was angry with herself for being uncomfortable. Teresa says Bonnie's courage in admitting that feeling, and overcoming it, helped Teresa decide to make the song her own. "It's like a cat in heat," she describes the finished product, and the song fulfulls her desire for it to be universally resonant. "Hopefully," she says, "everyone can hear themselves in 'Rosalie'."

Homophobia often prevents straight men and women from accepting anything but heterosexual love songs as "universal," and same-sex love songs like "Rosalie" are unheard of on Top-40 radio. At a time when most women's music lyrics are notably devoid of woman-identified content, *A Step Away* is very "out." Wasn't Teresa afraid it would hurt the commercial potential?

"Sure, that could have happened, but it didn't," she says. "And the truth of it is, whenever I've chosen a song--whether it is clearly lesbian or not--it has never been for me, *ever*, a political choice. It has always been an emotional choice. That to me is my integrity."

Teresa has never compromised on

selecting material that is personally meaningful to her as an artist. "I don't know if it's that people don't want to believe it or if it's too simple an answer," she says, "but people have asked me these questions all along. Like when *Let It Be Known* came out, 'why are you *less* woman-identified? why are you *more* woman-identified?' And the main thing that goes on for me when it comes to my music--it's not true when I'm producing somebody, or when I'm writing songs, but it's really true when I'm singing--is, I'm into very direct extension of what's going on for me, totally. The only reason why I choose to sing a song--it doesn't even have to be a song that I wrote--is that I really feel like I can get behind that song and it *means* something to me. If I have something as an artist that would be unique, I would say it would be a certain amount of sincerity and ability to project it; singing is sort of sacred to me."

When it comes to *A Step Away*, Teresa says, "I certainly didn't have an intention of putting out anything controversial. But the truth of it is, I was incredibly moved by 'Rosalie' as a song--it was the perfect song to round out my album."

A Step Away, which Teresa feels is her most woman-identified album since the first one, sold more copies in its first month than *Unexpected* did in a year. Yet this growth was not sustained, for two reasons: lack of distribution within the mainstream music industry, and lack of promotional touring within the women's music community.

Although veteran record producer Stewart Levine called *Step* one of the best producing efforts he'd ever heard for its limited budget (which he guessed to be many thousands of dollars more after first hearing the record), Redwood Records simply didn't have the kind of money necessary to promote a new act. And, in the restricted playlist world of AOR [album oriented radio], Teresa Trull *is* a new act, and Redwood is a new label.

"It's a laugh to me--people think of me as really in the mainstream," she says. "I would love dearly to cross over, because the economics of my records is very poor. Even though I did that album cheaper than anyone in the world--still, the money you need to back that up is way more than I have. I don't even know if I'm going to be able to do another record. It's that serious. Someone like Redwood can't afford to put out $26,000 for the record and then another $20,000 to promote it...basically they end with a $75,000 budget including the artwork and promotion and everything. They can't have a budget like that and not sell *at least* 50,000 records. And at this point the average women's music record does not sell 50,000. Also, folk definitely sells better in the women's music scene. Now me, I don't *want* to do a folk record. I'm not a folk artist--so what's left for me? I can try, but the chances of me getting a major deal when I'm not willing to compromise who I am--and I'm not just talking about lesbianism either, I'm talking about simply doing the songs I want to do and that kind of stuff--it's hard for anybody to get a major label deal. And I can't imagine it would be easy for me. I don't know if someone like Redwood can afford to do another--you don't see them clamoring at my doorstep to do another record, and I certainly don't blame them. So, it's frustrating to me. As an artist I have certainly not crossed over. I've gotten a lot of critical acclaim crossed over, but there's not the distribution or promotion to back that up. So, it's pretty funny," she says.

Teresa's disappointment over the limited distribution of the album contributed to her lack of touring last year. "Redwood tried like a soldier to make it work, and they may still make something work," she says. "They tried very hard to get that record where it needed to be, but they were trying to take their entire catalog. Maybe my record individually could have done it, but I'll never know. I didn't tour because I was feeling burned out. I felt if I got on the road and did a duo tour, I would have been short-changing people--because I didn't want to

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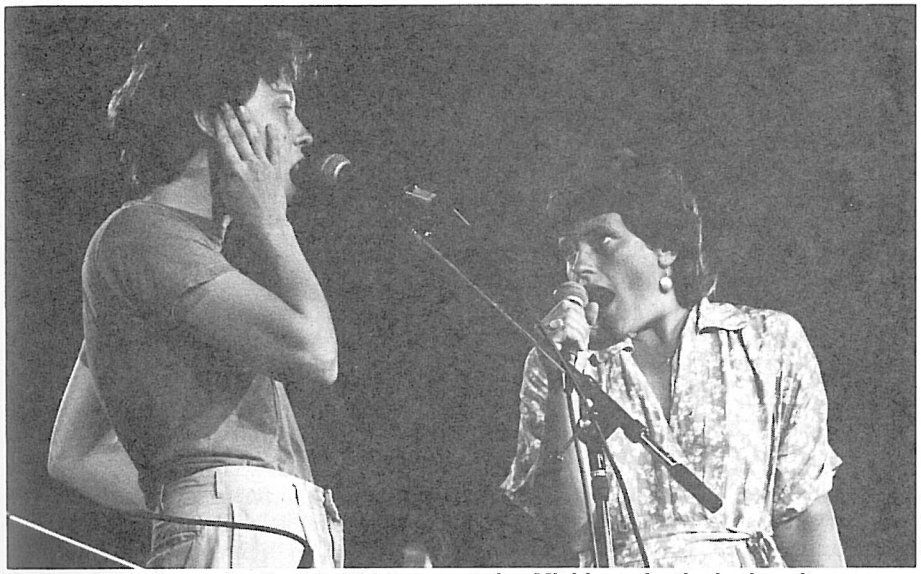

Toni L. Armstrong

Late 1970s Teresa Trull with Rhiannon at the Michigan festival when it was near Hesperia.

Irene Young

Late 1980s Teresa Trull: "This album was my baby; I put everything I had into it. I took a lot of risks doing it the way I did."

ABOUT THE WRITERS: Kate Brandt lives and overworks in San Francisco; Toni Armstrong does the same in Chicago.

do it. But I've been touring recently with an accompanist, which will help promote it, though it's hard to represent that album duo."

Meanwhile, within the women's music community, the facts of music-business life are that money comes not from album sales but from concert tours. And, after touring for nine out of every 12 months over the past 10 years, Teresa frankly admits that she was tired.

"Of every record I've sold, I've practically shaken the hand of everyone who's bought it, and sold it personally," she says. "It would be a different story if it were growthful, but I needed a break, to attack it from a different direction."

Thus, the Huey Lewis/Bonnie Hayes tour last year.

"I'm diversified because I take opportunities to learn," Teresa says. "My greatest joy is learning something new and applying it better. [Regarding a large rock show], I said, 'I want to see this, see what it's really like, see what I can learn.' I haven't ever cut off the idea of fame...I'd like to have as many people hear me as possible. I wanted to know what it's like to do a project with lots of money, a good sound system, performing in front of lots of people, what the life is like." She calls the experience "a very very learning one."

Right now, Teresa describes herself as "a woman without a country." She says, "I'm not going to maintain a front. For the first time, I'm doubting what I'm doing. I'm usually a very enthusiastic person, but...I'm despondent about *A Step Away*...and I can't take another year of being away from home."

But, she adds, "I don't want to paint a picture of 'pale and gloom' but rather of regrouping." This phase includes continuing to help Bonnie Hayes and her band support their new album. And she is producing such artists as Deidre McCalla and the Washington Sisters, work which she says she enjoys immensely [see Teresa's article on album production/songwriting in the March 1987 issue of *HOT WIRE*]. She is proud of her production work, as she is of *A Step Away*.

"It's the first album I could just put up there and say, 'Take this, it's the best I can do'," she says."I'm incredibly proud of everything about it. This album was my baby; I put everything I had into it. And I took a *lot* of risks doing it the way I did--it aged me. Not only in terms of the women's music community but also in terms of the Bay Area music community. I went down to Los Angeles and hired these musicians who are heroes of mine--to me they're as much a star as Lily Tomlin, these guys have played on everybody's records I've ever admired--Chaka Khan, Aretha Franklin, everybody I've ever loved. They make $400,000 a year just playing on albums. I decided I wanted to work with that caliber of musician, but obviously I knew we couldn't afford to pay what most record companies pay, which is like $200,000 just to produce the tape. So the only way I could afford it was to do it in two days. I did eight songs in two days--what people generally do in two weeks. It mattered that these guys were really great musicians. People in the area were a little pissed off about it. I use a lot of people here, I work here, I'm considered a big employer here, and I got a lot of criticism: 'you could make a record just as good in the Bay Area.' I came up here and used Bay Area musicians for the overdubs, but I just wanted to try this. It also was a big risk because I could have gone down there and it could have been really sterile; people up here care about me and really put out. These guys could have just sat there. It could have been a disaster; I could have come back after spending all that money with nothing any better or different from what I could have had up here, maybe worse," she says.

"People who say my record is 'slick' are just naive; the industry would consider my record commercially risky, and not because of the content...but because musically it's more eccentric and diverse."

Teresa doesn't feel that her recent efforts have alienated her from the work of other lesbian/feminist performers. "All of the women's music community is trying to break into the mainstream music industry or face a limited existence," she says.

But for now, Teresa Trull says she is "just trying to figure out what to do. The hardest part is that my favorite thing is to perform...I'm a musician more than a culture worker. I can really make people feel what I feel; I can really make people feel good. That's why you won't see me on the road when I'm feeling weird, because I won't get in front of an audience when I'm feeling bad. I have to be honest, I won't compromise: I would rather shovel horse manure than be dishonest in front of an audience." ●

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THIRD ANNUAL 'HOT WIRE'

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Starting in 1986, *HOT WIRE* has presented awards at the Music Industry/AWMAC Conference in Bloomington to women who have made outstanding contributions to women's music & culture during the previous year. In the November 1987 issue, readers were asked to submit nominations specifying their nominees contributions. The point is not competition but appreciation for those who have contributed to our network in an especially outstanding way; below are the nominations we received. Please vote for one individual and one organization.

The survey of favorites is included for fun and to give us at *HOT WIRE* a closer look at the tastes of our readers (so we know better who and what to cover in the next year's issues). Please make your survey selections based completely on the basis of your personal favorites; *this is in no way intended to be a list of "bests."* Results of last year's voting can be found in the July 1987 issue.

Readers' Choice votes and surveys for this year can be written on a separate paper, but must be returned to us no later than May 15, 1988. **SEND TO 'HOT WIRE' READERS' CHOICE, 5210 N. WAYNE, CHICAGO, IL 60640.**

INDIVIDUALS

ALISON BECHDEL for her "Dykes to Watch Out For" cartoon series and book, which help lesbians laugh about our community and ourselves.
KATE CLINTON for outstanding contributions to our humorous well-being; for being "Dr. Funnybone" to the entire Lesbian Nation.
SUZETTE HADEN ELGIN for constructing and promoting Láadan, "the language of those who perceive," a language constructed to express the perceptions of women.
KATHERINE V. FORREST for her lesbian novels, especially *Curious Wine*, *Daughters of a Coral Dawn,* and those including Detective Kate Delafield.
MICHELLE PARKERSON for outstanding activism, writing, and films, including *Gotta Make the Journey: Sweet Honey in the Rock* and *Storme: A Life in the Jewel Box.*
LILY TOMLIN/JANE WAGNER for their wonderful play *The Search For Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe.*
ROBIN TYLER for years of dedication, culminating in two annual music festivals and a great rally at the March on Washington for Gay and Lesbian Rights.
LISA VOGEL/BARBARA PRICE for continuing to produce, against all odds, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.
MARTHA WHEELOCK/KAY WEAVER for the film *Take The Power*, the sequel to *One Fine Day*, which presents many positive and inspiring images of women.

ORGANIZATIONS

FIREBRAND PRESS for continuing to produce high quality feminist and lesbian literature with high artistic and political standards.
KITCHEN TABLE WOMEN OF COLOR PRESS for publishing literature that focuses on the lives and issues of women of color; for providing leadership for the feminist and lesbian/feminist community.
LADYSLIPPER for maintaining the most comprehensive catalog of recordings, videos, publications, and other resources by women.
NAIAD PRESS for being the oldest and largest lesbian publishing house in the world.
'2 IN 20' cast and crew for the first lesbian soap opera on cable TV.
THE WOMEN'S MUSIC ARCHIVES for the preservation and documentation of our women's music heritage by collecting recordings, publications, and other materials relating to women's music since the early 1970s.

FAVORITES

Vocalist_____
Group/band_____
Songwriter_____
Bass player_____
Percussionist_____
Drummer_____
Electric guitarist_____
Acoustic guitarist_____
Keyboards player_____
Instrumentalist_____
Wind instrument player_____
Comic/comedienne_____
Emcee_____
New performer_____
All-time favorite performer_____
Current song (last 2 years)_____
All time favorite song_____

Current album (last 2 years)_____
All-time favorite album_____
Live sound engineer_____
Recording engineer_____
Album cover_____
Fiction book_____
Non-fiction book_____
Periodical_____
Author_____
Cartoonist_____
Photographer_____
Movie/film_____
TV star_____
Film star_____
Film director_____
Other:_____
_____

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SAPPHO from page 15

Maximus of Tyre says that what Alcibiades, Charmides, and Phaedrus were to Socrates--in other words, lovers and followers--Atthis, Anactoria and Gyrinno were to Sappho. But while Alcibiades went on to an infamous career and a place in history, Erinna died when she was only 19. According to a verse in the *Greek Anthology*, though Erinna was very young, she showed great promise as a poet, "far stronger than most men can write." If death had not taken her, the document says, her fame would have been "unequalled." Sappho scholar Arthur Weigall speculates that Erinna's verses must have been largely inspired by her love for Sappho, "for they were later considered to be bad for public morals and, with Sappho's, were burnt by the Church." Of course, it's quite possible that Gyrinno and Erinna were two different women.

A very fragmentary poem exists that mentions Sappho's pupil Gongyla, who came from Colophon. Josephine Balmer translates this fragment as follows (the words in brackets are uncertain):

[...Come here tonight,] I beg you, Gongyla,
Take up your lyre [and sing to us;]
for once again an aura of desire
hovers around
your beauty, your dress thrills all those
who see you
and the heart in my breast quickens;
once I too poured scorn on Aphrodite,
goddess of love,

but now I pray [that you will soon be
here..]
I wish [we were never apart...]

In another poem it appears that Sappho confides in Gongyla that she, Sappho, is miserable and she wishes to die.

OTHER FRAGMENTS

Some fragments of Sappho's poetry that refer to women by name reflect feelings of jealousy and possibly betrayal:

Micca... I won't allow it...
you prefer the love of women
descended from Penthilus... †

Penthilus was the mythical founder of an important Mytilene family, the Penthilidae, one of several rival family factions on Lesbos.

When she says,

I cannot bear it: ...Archeanassa is Gorgo's
lover... †

we can only wish that more of the poem had survived, so we can understand the circumstances behind this lament.

A number of other fragments that speak deeply of love and longing could have been written about Atthis, but in many cases only a line or two has survived--not enough for us to know.

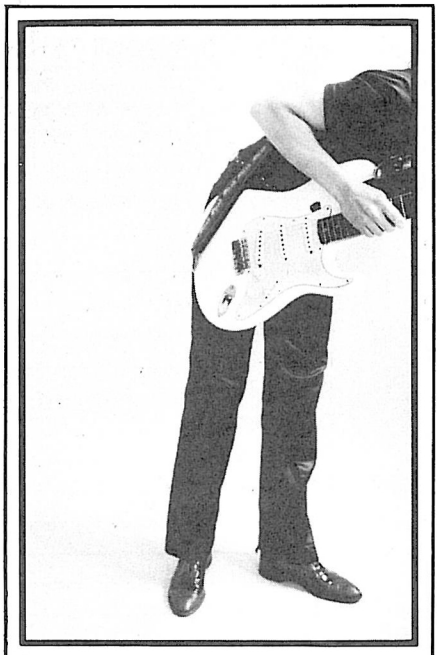
Some fragments give us the merest glimpse into the passionate heart of the poet: "I desire and yearn [for you]"† "Pain drips through me."† "You burn me."† And :

Love shook my heart like the wind
rushing through the sacred trees on the
mountain. **

Though so much of her work has been destroyed, these fragments of the songs of a poetic genius and a "lover of women" are precious treasures in our lesbian heritage. The message that Sappho wishes us echoes down the centuries: "May you sleep on the breast of your tender woman companion." ** ●

Many thanks to Greek scholar J.C. Jurgens for her advice, help with research, assistance in translation, and encouragement in this project.

*** Translated by Suzy Q. Grodin**
**** Translated by Jorjet Harper and J.C. Jurgens**
† Translated by Josephine Balmer
†† Translated by J.M. Edmunds



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LESBIANS OF COLOR

CELEBRATING OUR COMMON BONDS AND DIFFERENCES

By Cheryl Miller

Recently a young woman called to ask if she could interview me, for Northwestern University's student paper, on what it is like to be a Black lesbian. The interview was very difficult, as it took place shortly after my father died and I had a hard time focusing on the subject at hand. When she asked me the rather blanket question, "What's it like to be a Black lesbian?" I responded, "I don't know. I've never been any other kind of lesbian."

As you might well imagine, the interview was not a smashing success. I don't know if it was as frustrating for her as it was for me, but I felt that she had not done her homework, and was relying on me to give her the entire breadth and scope of Black lesbian lives in this country. That task is quite beyond me. At one point I said (or at least thought), "I'm not *a* Black lesbian; I'm *this* Black lesbian." Had I been more interested in the interview and in more complete possession of my faculties, I might have suggested a reading list to her. My experiences in life, how I got here to this place--today--are unique. I share uniqueness with other lesbians of color. I also share similarities, common experiences. Today I celebrate the common bonds and the differences.

Had I thought to suggest a reading list to the writer who phoned, the books listed with this article would have been included. It's not my intention to give a complete list of books and writers whom I believe to be significant for me and others, however--I have not mentioned any of Audre Lorde's writings, for example. Although the situation has improved greatly, there are still many writers who remain unpublished. There are writers with whom I'm not familiar. Also, this list is not complete because there's not the space here to discuss every published Black lesbian. And that fact thrills me.

One of the first books I ever read by a Black lesbian writer was *Loving Her* by Ann Allen Shockley (1974; Naiad Press edition, 1987). I had very mixed reactions to Shockley's novel. In some ways I identified with the experiences of her protagonist. In other ways I was put off by the pulp style of writing she employed. But looking back to my first reading of *Loving Her*, I think one reaction I may have had was relief. Shockley's novel allowed me to tap some of my anger and ambivalence about being Black, female, and queer in a racist, misogynistic, homophobic society, without having to reach much beyond those labels.

Michelle Cliff's writings, *Claiming An Identity They Taught Me To Despise* (Persephone Press, 1980) and *The Land of Look Behind* (Firebrand Press, 1985) rattled my walls and knocked at my secrets. This may be hard to believe, but I bought *Claiming* several months before I actually had the guts to read it. The title seemed so stark, so open, that I was afraid Cliff's words would jump at me, pounding my sore spots with mini-hammers. Actually, the way Cliff uses language in *Claiming* is very gentle. She writes in a style which is a blend of poetry and prose, with dream sequences thrown in. Her language seems almost pretty, almost delicate. There are hard truths in *Claiming*, but as Cliff herself says in the preface to her subsequent book, *The Land of Look Behind*, "I felt my use of language and imagery [in *Claiming*] had sometimes masked what I had wanted to convey. It seemed sometimes that the reader was able to ignore what I was saying while admiring the way in which I said it."

I think Cliff's observation is very apt, and describes the one problem I had with *Claiming*. At times, her very beautiful language does indeed blunt the harshness and realness of what she is conveying. There were times my eyes glossed over the text, mesmerized by the pretty pictures, without comprehending the horror of what she was saying, until I reread the section. And she does bring up horrible topics. She says:

"Passing demands you keep that knowledge to yourself...isolate yourself. If they find out about you it's all over. Forget about your great-grandmother with the darkest skin...be selective. Cultivate normalcy. Stress sameness. Blend in. For God's sake don't pile difference upon difference. It's not safe."

In *Claiming*, she begins to reveal the intra-Black class and caste systems, developed along color and economic lines, with which she was raised:

"This is our land, our river--I have been told. So when women wash their clothes...when the butcher's wife cleans tripe...when a group of boys I do not know are using my pool--I hate them for taking up my space. I hate them for taking up space; I hate them for not including me."

In *The Land of Look Behind* she faces the issues of class, caste, and privilege directly. Her questions are pointed and telling. She no longer hints at the ambiguities:

To try to locate the vanishing point: where the lines of perspective converge and disappear. Lines of color and class. Lines of history and social context. Lines of denial and rejection. When did we [the light-skinned middle-class Jamaicans] take over for them as oppressors?

Cliff is asking these questions about Jamaica. They are still extremely valid questions today for some of us to be asking ourselves here in the U.S.A. My own personal class background is very convoluted. I remember our maids and live-in housekeepers superimposed upon trips to the grocer with notes asking for credit until whenever. I do not like to think about classist divisions amongst Black people. I still find it scary and become defensive when I display classist assumptions to other Black women and am called on it. I have difficulties dealing with women who display their classism against me. However, these are hard topics that we must work on amongst ourselves, so that we all can heal and grow.

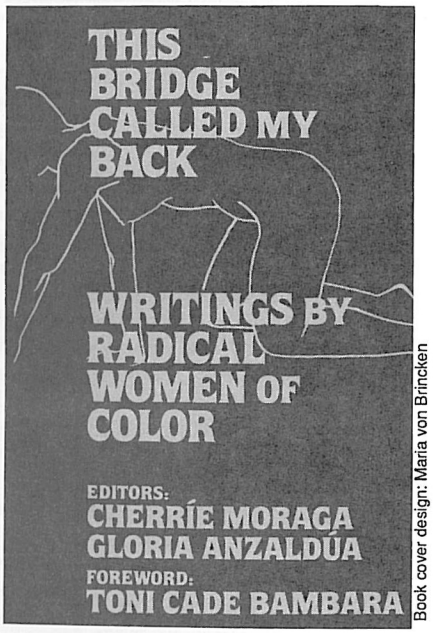
Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology (Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1983) was born out of Barbara Smith's

The original version of this article first appeared in the June 25, 1987 issue of 'Chicago Outlines.' Cheryl has expanded it, and it is reprinted with permission.

need to insure that *Conditions: Five, The Black Women's Issue* survived. *Conditions* is a periodical which provides a forum for women's writings with an emphasis on lesbian writing. The *Conditions* collective invited Barbara Smith and Gloria T. Hull to guest edit an issue for Black women. Hull was unable to do it, so Lorraine Bethel was asked.

In the fall of 1979 *Conditions: Five* was released, the first nationally distributed collection of writings by Black feminists. There are 36 contributors to *Conditions: Five*. In 1979, I don't think I even consciously realized that there were so many Black feminist writers! *Conditions: Five* contains poetry, essays, song lyrics, journal excerpts, fiction, and reviews. Contributions include a review by Cheryl Clarke of Ntozake Shange's *nappy edges;* fiction by Audre Lorde; an essay on the life and poetry of Angelina Weld Grimke by Gloria T. Hull; and poetry by Donna Allegra, Becky Birtha, and Michelle Parkerson--to name just a few.

I remember my excitement when I first heard this issue was to be released, and my extreme disappointment when I got to the bookstore and discovered they were already sold out. Finally, in the spring of 1980, I was able to buy a copy. I read and read this issue, sometimes laughing and nodding in recognition, and sometimes with my breath drawn and my stomach tight.



Book cover design: Maria von Brincken

Although *Home Girls* was initially intended to be a slightly revised version of *Conditions: Five*, it soon developed further. Editor Barbara Smith writes: "I wanted the new anthology to represent Black feminism at the present time and to retain its literary focus...We have done much. We have much to do. Undoubtedly the most pressing work before us is to build our own autonomous institutions. It is absolutely crucial that we make our visions real in permanent form so that we can be even more effective and reach more people...I want to write about the challenges we face in each other, to broach the subject of accountability...especially those excruciating places where I have abandoned, and been abandoned by, other women, where our anger about our differences seemed insurmountable."

The essays, the fiction, the poetry in *Home Girls* all join together in surmounting the insurmountable. *Home Girls* is about mending and healing. Uncovering and exposing to air those excruciating places. Forming the bonds they said we could not have together as Black women. Challenging us to go beyond the beyond and live our strengths.

I read *This Bridge Called My Back*, edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua (Persephone Press, 1981) with many of the same thoughts and emotions I had surrounding *Home Girls*. But there was much I gained from *This Bridge*-- specifically because the writings come from a wide variety of women of color. The anthology, starting with a foreword by Toni Cade Bambara, presents 51 contributions by 30 writers, including Pat Parker, Cheryl Clarke, Chrystos, Audre Lorde, Hattie Gossett, Nellie Wong, Naomi Littlebear, Rosario Morales, Merle Woo, Barbara Smith, and Beverly Smith.

Loving Her. Ann Allen Shockley, 1974; Naiad Press edition, 1987, $7.95.

Claiming An Identity They Taught Me To Despise. Michelle Cliff, Persephone Press, 1980; out of print.

The Land of Look Behind. Michelle Cliff, Firebrand Books, 1985; $6.95.

Conditions: Five, The Black Women's Issue. Edited by Barbara Smith and Lorraine Bethel, 1979; Periodical, original price $3.

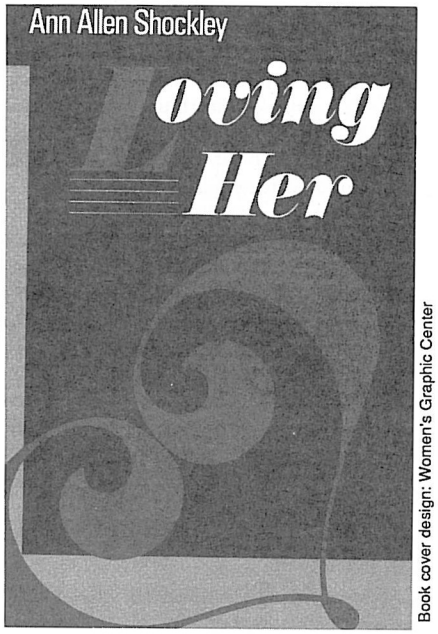
Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology. Edited by Barbara Smith, Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1983; $10.95.

This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color. Edited by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, Persephone Press, 1981; $9.95

This Bridge is a powerful moving collection of writings by Latina, Asian, Native American, and African-American women. Amazingly enough, this anthology was compiled and published within two years of its conception--and by then it was already long overdue. Initially the editors began the project as a reaction to the racism within the white feminist community. Soon into the project, however, *This Bridge* ceased to be reactionary, but rather became a positive declaration and affirmation of the experiences and feminism of women of color. The editors assert, "*This Bridge Called My Back* intends to reflect an uncompromised definition of feminism by women of color in the U.S."

This Bridge is divided into six different sections--each one exploring different aspects of the experiences of women of color. In the section entitled "Children Passing In The Street: The Roots Of Our Radicalism," writers explore the traumas of growing up defined as "other." In her poem, "on not bein," mary hope lee talks about growing up a light skinned girl wanting to be darker:

not yellow
not no high brown neither
but brown
warm brown
she dreamed
her body moist earth brown



Book cover design: Women's Graphic Center

While Nellie Wong writes in her poem "When I Was Growing Up": "I know now that once I longed to be white./ How? You ask./Let me tell you the ways."

I would love to go through *This Bridge* section by section, page by page, asking, "Did you read this? How did that sentence make you feel?" The contributors

continued on page 39

ABOUT THE WRITER: Cheryl Miller is a sometimes writer and sometimes storyteller, and has recently bought a book on procrastination.

THE COURAGE TO CREATE

INDEPENDENT FILMMAKING

By Martha Wheelock

The Muse made me do it! The Muse gave me the energy and passion to form my own independent film company, work hard, and then make a film about that Muse. My first Muse (other than that wonderful English teacher I had in high school, Miss Pittman) was the writer May Sarton. Ten years ago, while writing my Ph.D. dissertation on Sarton at New York University, I realized that the only way I could convey my admiration and appreciation for this great writer was to make a film--to celebrate her and her writings.

I did not know much about the film business, but I had taught high school students how to make 8mm films on their grandmothers, so I took the plunge. I formed Ishtar Films with director and cinematographer Marita Simpson, and started the process to produce and distribute films about women. I solicited investors and raised the $12,000 necessary to make a 30 minute documentary. The 1979 film,*World of Light: A Portrait of May Sarton*, took more than a year to make--and it gave me the courage to go on. It is still in active distribution and, like all of the films in the Ishtar catalog, is also available on home video.

Independent filmmaking is enormously risky and expensive, as well as time and energy consuming. It usually takes more than a year to make a film, and the project can take much longer. Meanwhile I have done things like teaching school to generate income to live on. There are intervals of two to three years between each film produced by Ishtar, but we are working on them continuously--mostly without salaries. It is difficult to precisely say when one project ends and another one starts.

With the joy of knowing that I was doing exactly what I believed in, on my own terms, and driven by my respect and passion for the Muse--I realized that anything is possible. After *A World of Light*, I tackled a Muse who had departed this plane--the Victorian writer Kate Chopin, who would probably be labelled a "feminist" if she were alive today. Chopin fascinated me; she was a courageous and audacious writer, best known for her short stories and the novel *The Awakening*. In 1982, Ishtar Films produced a 25 minute dramatization of Kate Chopin's famous short story "The Story of an Hour," with excerpts from Chopin's diary (filmed in Chopin's Louisiana home, and narrated by Elizabeth Ashley). It was a real challenge to make a period piece film on an $8,000 shoestring budget, but we certainly learned a lot about filmmaking from the experience. *The Story of an Hour* was honored as an outstanding film in the 1983 Hemisfilm International Film Festival.

Both May Sarton and Kate Chopin were relatively unknown at the time, not studied in schools, nor honored in the way I thought they deserved. These films were my way of extending publicity and recognition for them.

In January of 1983, while on a trip through Los Angeles, I met singer/songwriter/recording artist Kay Weaver and her songwriting partner Jeri Waxenberg. Kay sang and played her wonderful anthem "One Fine Day" for me, and I knew immediately that I had to make a film to it--to all the Muses that the song celebrates, to the women who had come before us and paved the way for women like myself to be independent creators. Kay with her beautiful voice and song was also a present-time Muse for me.

Kay and I produced and directed *One Fine Day* together in 1984. We raised the $25,000 budget from tax-deductible contributions and from auctions of the black and white stills. The 10-month project was full of bi-coastal collaboration; I was living in New York City, Kay in Los Angeles. We would edit and create on the phone and during vacations. That system was difficult but rewarding, as we each had to conceptualize the film on our own and then bring the ideas back to each other. Meanwhile, back in Los Angeles, Kay and Jeri--having formed Circe Records--were creating and recording the album *One Fine Day*.

The film *One Fine Day* premiered at N.O.W.'s National Convention in 1984 in Miami, a time rich with the energy of a hopeful Geraldine Ferraro. The film and subsequent video went out into the world--to help political candidates raise money, to solace battered women, to inspire Girl Scouts and women at women's music festivals, and to reach thousands via Public Television. Even Women For Jesus were using it, and several convents now own it. It has won several honors, including one at the Great Plains Film Festival in 1985; Kay and I received the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Award in 1986 for producing the film; and it was one of the 15 American Library Association's "Selected Films For Young Adults" in 1985.

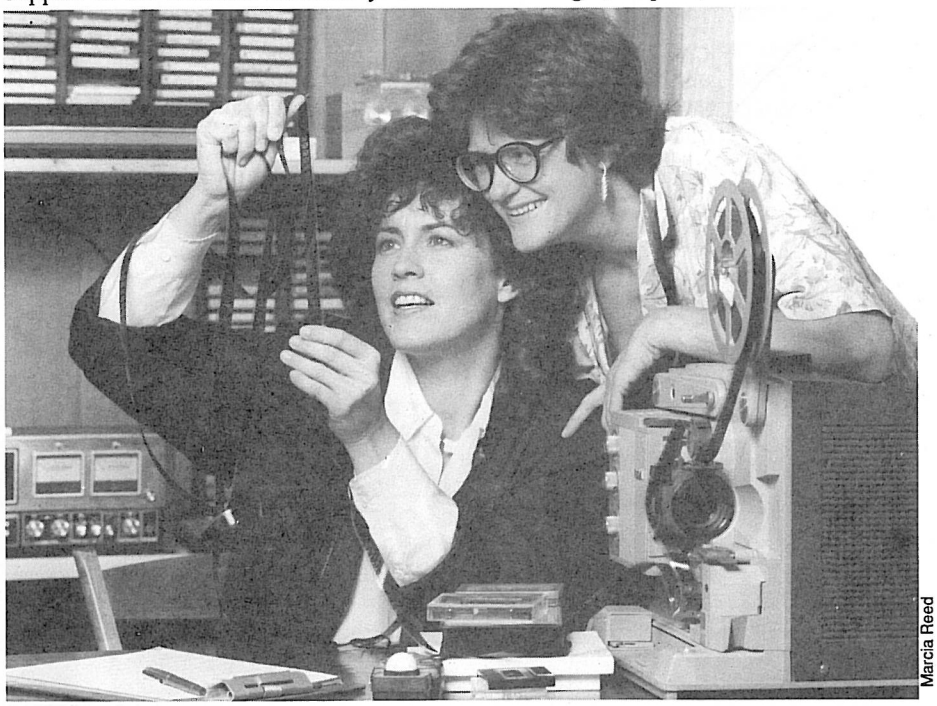
Although it looks like an "easy sell" now, the marketing on *One Fine Day* was a challenge. We had to convince people that they should look at a new form, one different from MTV and other documentaries, and a unique content--only women! We all embraced the task of changing ideas and of giving some folks new perspectives.

For our next project, Kay and I turned to women today, what we are all capable of doing, and how we women are changing the world. Kay and Jeri had written another uplifting and rousing anthem called "Take The Power," and again the gigantic task of raising money began.

Films like *One Fine Day* and *Take The Power*--which use stock footage and hundreds of scenes--are expensive to produce. We needed to obtain footage of events at which we did not personally film, such as the United Nations conference in Kenya. Each piece of stock footage costs an average of $500 plus a lease fee; the aerial shot of the Statue of Liberty, which we got from a stock footage library, was our most expensive--it cost $1200. *Take The Power* was almost twice as expensive to produce as *One Fine Day*; more than half of the first film was still photos obtained from historical and film libraries. For the second film, however, we had to fly all over the country to obtain the approximately 500 scenes we shot. Each scene, which lasts at most a few seconds on the screen

in the final version of the film, took as much as a day to film. Also, this time some of the crew members got paid--though Kay and I still did not draw salaries--and the final budget was close to $50,000.

We went to our supporters, those who knew our work, and asked them to pre-purchase the home video of *Take The Power* so we could use that money to make the film. Women from all over heard our appeal, and bought the video out of faith in us and in the vision of the work; I have been very heartened by the support of the women's community. We received many small donations in addition to the video presales, and with that revenue, a small grant, and other contributions we began filming--from Arches National Park in Moab, Utah to the East and the West.



Marcia Reed

Kay Weaver and Martha Wheelock: "We had to convince people that they should look at a new form, one different from MTV and other documentaries, and a unique content--only women!"

We captured hundreds of scenes of women and finally used 160 of them in this film--women, famous and unknown, all over the globe. The finale was filmed on a large Hollywood sound stage. More than 130 women from various organizations and professions, all ages and nationalities, joined Kay Weaver along with women such as Robin Tyler, Kate Clinton, Susan Clark, Helen Reddy, Cris Williamson, Patti Harrison, Tret Fure, and Barbara Bain. Julie Harris was the first celebrity to accept the invitation to participate in *Take The Power*; all had seen *One Fine Day* and wanted to be in the sequel.

Take The Power, which took two years to make, is finding her way into the world now; it premiered in Philadelphia at N.O.W.'s national convention in July 1987. The word and concept of power unnerves some in the audience, but we need to look at a redefinition of power, one which women are responsible for--nurturing, peace, preservation of the earth, and creation (not destruction).

Kay Weaver uses both films in her concerts. She has been touring with former N.O.W. president Ellie Smeal in The Feminization of Power Event, which encourages, inspires, and instructs feminists to run for political office. Kay's second album, *Take The Power*, will be completed and ready for the March 1988 National Women's History Month.

Ishtar Films and Circe Records have several projects underway. I am now associate producer on the independent feature film *The Front Runner*, which is based on the novel about a gay male track star who is involved with his coach. The two leads are yet to be set, but we have signed Martin Balsam, Robert Foxwater, and several Olympic athletes. Paul Newman had the option for years to play the coach, but couldn't get a script of which he approved, and he no longer wants to play the role. Hollywood is very homophobic, and the leads are hard to cast. Nonetheless, we hope to start filming in March of 1988. Also, at the October 1987 National March for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Washington D.C., Kay performed at the rally and we filmed many of the week's events--The Wedding, the Names Project quilt, the march and rally on Sunday, and Tuesday's civil disobedience at the Supreme Court. This footage will serve as the framework for our next film--*Celebrating Gay and Lesbian Pride and Love.* Finally, Kay and I are just finishing a music film for the American Hospital Association, *Nurses Make A Difference*, to be used for recruitment of young people into the nursing profession (which is suffering from a severe shortage.) Kay and Jeri have written an original song entitled "We Are There," and the film celebrates nursing. It is the second film we have made for someone else, and we have found it to be a wonderful experience to enter into the precious and inspiring world of nurses.

As always, we are seeking Matrons of the Arts to invest in our projects. We are happy to talk with prospective investors. Also, contributions can be tax-deductible; we go through The Women's Building in Los Angeles, so checks need to be made out to them. They are the oldest arts and cultural center for women in the U.S., and have produced works by artists like Judy Chicago. The Women's Building, as our fiscal conduit, takes five percent of the contributions for administrative costs, and we get the rest--so actually we produce films in association with The Women's Building.

Within the next few years we will be involved in feature film production (women films!) and we hope to see Kay Weaver move onto the charts.

Our vision at Ishtar Films and Circe Records is to create positive films and

continued on page 62

ABOUT THE WRITER: Independent filmmaker Martha Wheelock, president of Ishtar Films, is seeking crew to train as apprentices to work on future films, including one about women's music festivals; she wants to develop a strong national film/video network among women. Each film in the Ishtar catalog has been an American Film Festival winner.

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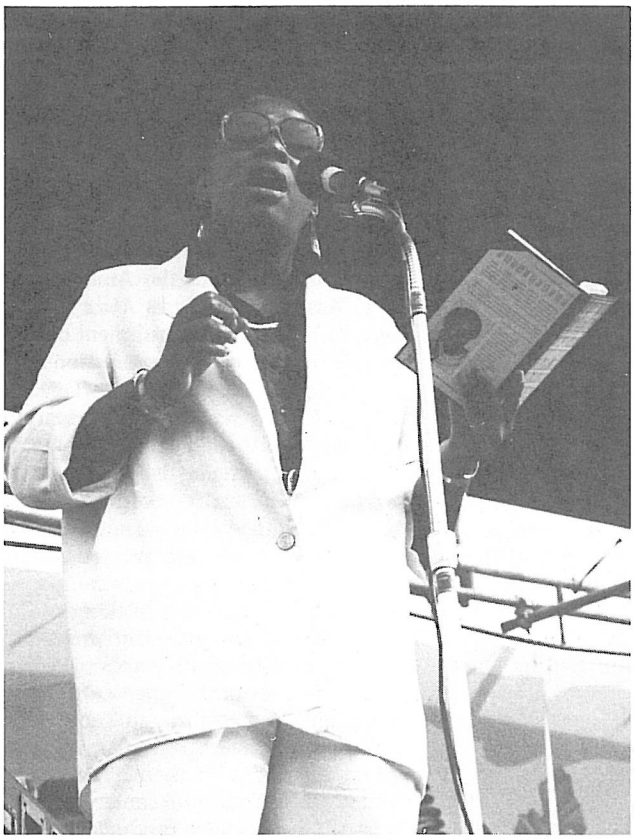


Tracy Baim

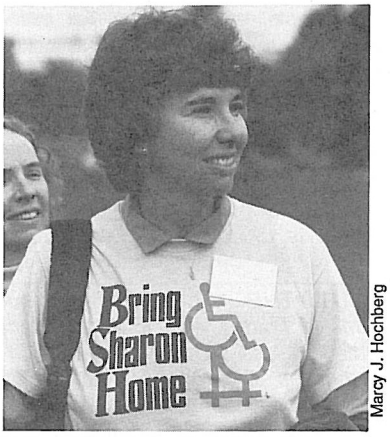
Poet Pat Parker was a featured performer at the People of Color rally, held on Sunday morning to kick off the march.

Toni L. Armstrong

Cris Williamson (pictured), Tret Fure, and Lucie Blue Tremblay signed albums on Saturday at Lammas Women's Bookstore, which was jammed with women. Tee Corinne was also there with her new book.

Angie Schmidt

The 'HOT WIRE' contingent received many cheers from members of the crowd watching from the sidelines. The marchers, lined up 12 across, took five hours to walk from the Ellipse to the Capitol mall.



Marcy J. Hochberg

Karen Thompson: still battling to obtain visitation/custody rights of her disabled lover Sharon Kowalski.

Marcy J. Hochberg

Holly Near's "We Are A Gentle, Angry People" has become an anthem for activists nationwide.

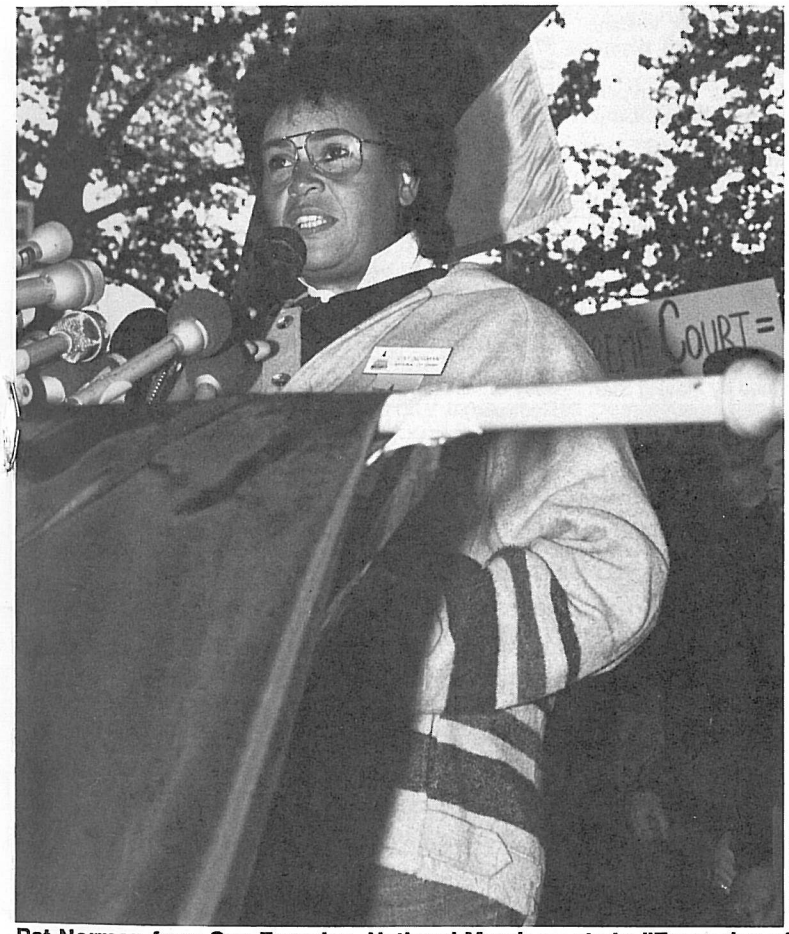
MJ Murphy

Ellie Smeal, Pat Parker, Karen Thompson, and Kate Clinton (second, third, tenth, and eleventh from left) were among the estimated 500,000-750,000 participants in the historic march on Washington for lesbian and gay civil rights.

Marcy J. Hochberg

March entertainers included Hunter Davis, the Washington Sisters, Cris Williamson, Tret Fure, Jaque DuPrée, Toshi Reagon, J. Casselberry, and Romanovsky and Phillips. The rally stage was produced by Robin Tyler.

OCTOBER 1987
MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS

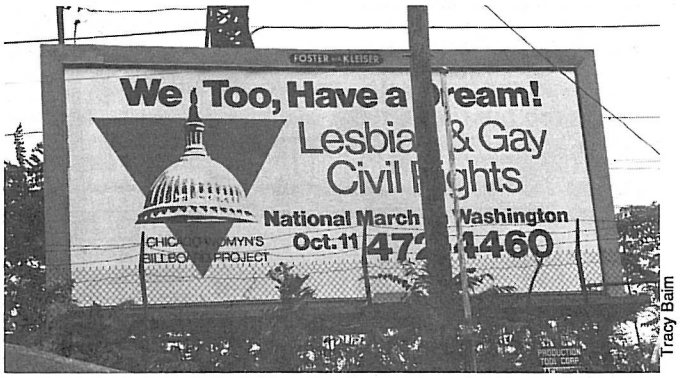


Tracy Baim

Pat Norman from San Francisco, National March co-chair: "Every day of our lives, in every part of this world, we commit the act of civil disobedience--by loving each other."

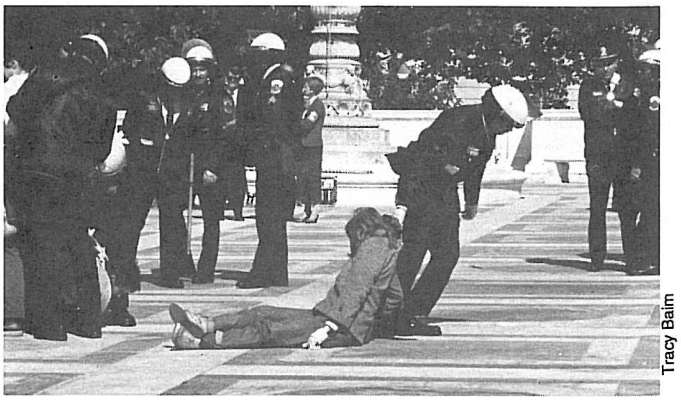
Marcy J. Hochberg

Lucie Blue Tremblay reads names from the quilt as part of the Names Project sunrise ceremony. Other readers included Whoopi Goldberg, and Cris Williamson.



Tracy Baim

Local communities caught the spirit: billboards (such as this one sponsored by Chicago Womyn's Billboard Project) greeted commuters for a month.



Tracy Baim

Thousands participated (with 600+ arrests) in the October 13 civil disobedience action at the Supreme Court to protest recent anti-gay/lesbian rulings and the Bork nomination.

MOMS AND DAUGHTERS

MOTHERS & DAUGHTERS

An all-too-common source of heartbreak and frustration in relationships between children and parents is alienation caused by differing values and points of view. Lifestyles and political beliefs are notorious causes of family friction--resulting in tensions, loss of closeness, and even the disowning of the daughter. Many women live in fear of their involvement with women's music and culture activities--such as attending festivals or patronizing women's bookstores--being discovered by family members. A well-known Kate Clinton routine involves the perils of even *using* the word lesbian. "Don't tell your father--it will kill him."

But for some mothers and daughters, the opposite is true. Involvement with feminist artistic pursuits is a glue rather than a buzzsaw in their relationships. This has certainly been the case with my mother and me. Women's music festivals and friendships with women involved in women's music is a deep pleasure we now share. It has become a bond as well as a common interest, and each year we synchronize our calendars--her in Los Angeles, me in Chicago. "But I can't possibly make it to the West Coast this year--it really interferes with the beginning of my teaching year," I say. "Yes, but the Amazon Clubhouse [in the RV area] won't be the same without you!" she implores. "Well, maybe...." I say. We love the support we receive for our relationship from the women we meet at festivals.

Lois Barleman

Both Toni Armstrongs, Senior and Junior, are a common sight at women's music festivals.

On the following pages are the stories of three more sets of mothers and daughters for whom involvement with women's music and culture has been relationship-enhancing.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

A MOTHER KNOWS, written/performed by Alix Dobkin on *XX Alix* (1980, Women's Wax Works).
A MOTHER'S LAMENT, written/performed by Lynn Lavner on *I'd Rather Be Cute* (1986, Bent).
COLORADO DUSTBOWL DAYS, written/performed by Cris Williamson on *Prairie Fire* (1984, Olivia).
FOR MAMA, written by Linda Lewis/performed by Meg Christian on *Turning It Over* (1981, Olivia).
THE GRANDMA SONG, written/performed by Ruth Pelham on *Look To The People* (1986, Flying Fish).
MAMMA ALWAYS LOVED ME ANYWAY, written/performed by Willie Tyson on *Willie Tyson* (1979, Lima Bean).
MAMA LET YOUR CHILDREN GO, written/performed by Therese Edell on *From Women's Faces* (1977, Sea Friends).
MAMA'S LITTLE BABY GIRL, written/performed by Deidre McCalla on *With A Little Luck* (1987, Olivia).
MOTHER MOUNTAIN, written/performed by Kay Gardner on *Fishersdaughter: Troubador Songs* (1987, Even Keel).
MOTHER'S DAY, (poem) written by Oriethyia/performed by Ronnie Gilbert on *Michigan Live '85* (1986, August Night).
NINA, written by Holly Near & Meg Christian/performed by Holly Near on *Imagine My Surprise* (1977, Redwood).
OH MOTHER DON'T YOU WORRY 'BOUT ME, traditional song performed by Moving Star Hall Singers on *Sisterfire!* (1985, Redwood).
ON CHILDREN, words by Kahlil Gibran, music by Ysaye Barnwell/performed by Sweet Honey in the Rock on *Good Times* (1981, Flying Fish).
OUR SILENCE, written/performed by Heather Bishop on *I Love Women...Who Laugh* (1982, Mother of Pearl).
SONG TO MY MAMA, written/performed by Meg Christian on *I Know You Know* (1974, Olivia).
STARTED OUT FINE, written/performed by Holly Near on *A Live Album* (1974, Redwood).
STRAIGHTENING UP (comedy) written/performed by Kate Clinton on *Making Waves* (1984, Whyscrack).
WOMEN OF OUR TIME, written/performed by Judy Small on *One Voice In The Crowd* (1985, Redwood).

An Annotated Reading List

Compiled by Patricia Roth Schwartz

BETWEEN OURSELVES: LETTERS BETWEEN MOTHER AND DAUGHTER. Edited by Karen Payne (Houghton Mifflin, 1983). An anthology of excerpts of the letters of famous mothers and daughters to and from each other; includes Sylvia Plath, Florence Nightingale, Calamity Jane, Elizabeth Blackwell, and Susan B. Anthony. Third World women/women of color are underrepresented.

DIFFERENT DAUGHTERS: LESBIANS AND THEIR MOTHERS. Edited by Louise Rafkin (Cleis Press, 1987). A touching and useful collection of essays by the mothers of lesbian daughters, some accepting of the choices of their offspring, others realistically ambivalent. Excellent diversity of race, ethnic group, sexual orientation, and social class amongst the authors.

FIERCE ATTACHMENTS. Vivian Gornick (Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 1987). An autobiographical account of the author's childhood in a working-class Brooklyn Jewish family and the profound influence her mother had on her life.

GETTING HOME ALIVE. Aurora Levin Morales (Firebrand Books, 1987). A dynamic collage of poetry and prose by social activists, a mother and daughter with Puerto Rican and Jewish roots.

IN A DIFFERENT VOICE. Carol Gilligan (Harvard University Press, 1984). An ovular work of feminist psychology in which the author reveals how women and men develop different systems of moral values and ethical decision-making, created in large part by how infants in our culture are cared for.

IN MY MOTHER'S HOUSE. Kim Chernin (Harper Colophon, 1983). Emotionally intense depiction, not only of Chernin's growing up with communist-activist mother Rose Chernin, but a fictionalized recreation of Rose's early life.

IN SEARCH OF OUR MOTHER'S GARDENS. Alice Walker. A volume of essays by the author of *The Color Purple*, in which the title essay, especially, deals with Black women's roots in the fertile soil of their "mother's gardens."

LINKED LIVES: ADULT DAUGHTERS AND THEIR MOTHERS. Lucy Rose Fischer (Harper and Row, 1986). A solid sociological study of a select group of white, middle and working class mothers and daughters in western Massachusetts which reveals many aspects of the mother/daughter bond; author's failing is that she globalizes her study to speak for all women when she has left out lesbians, women of color, daughters who don't become parents, and those of different economic and social classes.

MOMILIES: AS MY MOTHER USED TO SAY and **MORE MOMILIES.** Michelle Slung (Ballantine, 1985 and 1987). On the lighter side, humorous, traditional sayings that mothers have been uttering for centuries.

MY MOTHER, MYSELF. Nancy Friday (Bantam Books, 1975). Considered *the* book on the subject, it is actually sexist and presumes all women relate to men; it often depicts "mother as villain" without a feminist analysis of women's role.

OF WOMAN BORN: MOTHERHOOD AS EXPERIENCE AND INSTITUTION. Adrienne Rich (W.W. Norton, 1976). A searing history of motherhood and childbirth in patriarchy, and of how debilitating her early years of motherhood were to her burgeoning talents as a poet.

OUR MOTHERS' DAUGHTERS. Judith Arcana (Shameless Hussy Press, 1979, distributed by The Crossing Press). One of the very best books on mothers and daughters; strongly feminist; includes excerpts from questionnaires distributed to mothers and daughters.

RED BEANS AND RICE. Bode Noonan (The Crossing Press, 1986). Delightful and unique volume of essays by lesbian-feminist Noonan; each essay features a certain food, and always circles back to her relationship with her mother, who taught her about potato salad and life.

THE REPRODUCTION OF MOTHERING: PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER. Nancy Chodorow (University of California Press, 1978). Another ovular text on feminist psychology in which the mother-daughter relationship is seen in a radically new way that explains how the patriarchy manages to perpetuate itself generationally; written in a dense academic style.

TANGLED VINES: A COLLECTION OF MOTHER AND DAUGHTER POEMS. Lyn Lifshin (Beacon Press, 1978). Moving anthology of lyric poems about the mother-daughter relationship by such poets as Plath, Olds, Lorde, Rich, and Piercy.

THE WAYS OF MY GRANDMOTHERS. Beverly Hungry Wolf (Quill, 1982). Autobiographical tales of matriarchal wisdom and lore going back many generations amongst the Blood People of the Blackfoot Nation.

WHEN SHE WAS THE GOOD-TIME GIRL. Katharyn Machan Aal (The Signpost Press, 1987). A chapbook of original poetry about the author's relationship, in life, dying, and death, with her alcoholic mother.

WITH A DAUGHTER'S EYE. Mary Catherine Bateson (Washington Square Press, 1984). Fascinating autobiographical account of author's relationship to her mother, Margaret Mead.

THE WOMAN WARRIOR. Maxine Hong Kingston (Vintage, 1977). Lyrical work that combines autobiography with recreated folk tale and myth that brings us the reality of several generations of Chinese women, both in China and later in San Francisco's Chinatown.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Patricia Roth Schwartz is a psychotherapist in private practice working from a holistic/feminist perspective. She conducts workshops on the mother-daughter relationship. She also writes, and is living in Somerville, Massachusetts with her lover, two cats, and a word processor.

MOMS AND DAUGHTERS

FROM MOTHER TO DAUGHTER AND BACK AGAIN

HENIA GOODMAN AND DOVIDA ISHATOVA

By Catherine Roma

Dovida Ishatova (Hebrew for "good woman") and her mother Henia Flint Gottlieb Goodman have been performing *From Mother to Daughter and Back Again* together since 1980 for Jewish community organizations and women's music audiences. The centerpiece of this powerful presentation is a poem written by Dovida about the relationship with her mother--a survivor of the Holocaust.

Twenty-seven years old
and you carried the music
of Chopin under your arm
to Auschwitz
Twenty-seven years old,
Dr. Mengele pointed his finger,
and you watched your mother
walk the other way
and disappear forever
Tell me! How did you survive?

Dovida herself was 27 when she realized the impact of the Holocaust on her life, and allowed it to surface. She sought an artistic way to express her feelings about being the daughter of a survivor and about her growing pride and identification as a Jewish woman. She wanted to speak out against the re-emergence of blatant anti-Semitism. In *Nice Jewish Girls: A Lesbian Anthology,* Dovida described her feelings in somewhat ironic format via letter:

"Dear Mom and Dad:

So, what's a nice Jewish girl like me doing in book like this?...But to be a Jew, the daughter of a survivor, and a lesbian? How can that be? With a background like mine, how could I have ever wandered so far from the "chosen path"? How could I not be in a hurry to replace the family that was killed; give you, my parents, the joy of grandchildren, and myself the security of a nice Jewish boy as a mate for life? But I'm telling you, I am a nice Jewish girl. In fact, I'm a very important link in the liberation of women and the liberation of Jews...I am not a contradiction or an impossibility. What could make more sense than my casting off, in my lifetime, the remaining vestiges of woman and Jew as victim, and asserting my love of self by being woman-identified?"

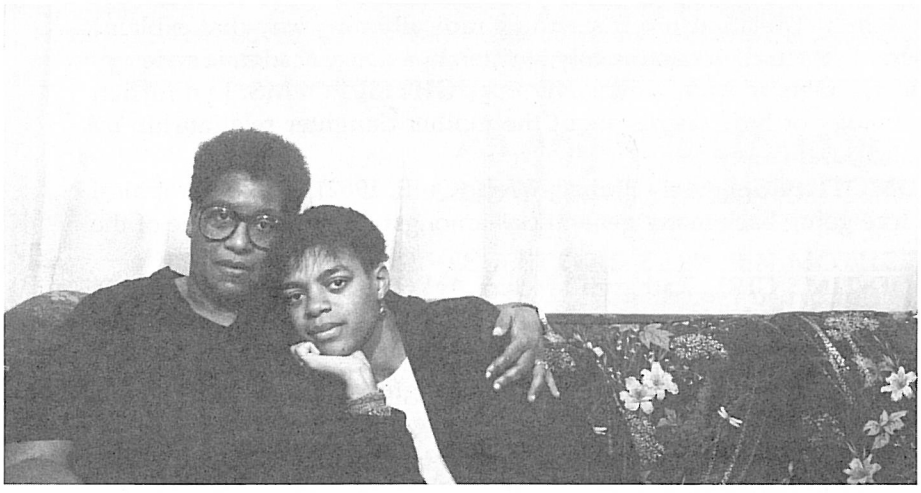
At 27, Dovida--feeling the support of her women friends who encouraged her to go back to playing--was practicing a Chopin Nocturne when the poem "just came out," she says, "as if divinely inspired." As she wrote, the vision of doing concerts with her mom emerged.

There were tremendous tensions causing divisions in the relationship between mother and daughter, and as Dovida recognized her own victimization as a daughter of a survivor, she was able to let her mother back in. "The wisdom and understanding I have gained from both feminism and lesbianism about my relationship with women has dramatically changed my relationship with my mother," she says.

Dovida moved to Boston--away from her family in Philadelphia--and was in on

MARGARET AND KATHLEEN SLOAN-HUNTER

Interviewed by Debbie Fier



Born in Tennessee, Margaret Sloan-Hunter (now 40) was raised in Chicago, where she became involved in the civil rights and Black rights movements at age 14. At 21, she became involved in feminism, and she came out as a lesbian two years later, when her daughter Kathleen was three. Margaret, who now resides in the Bay Area, is known as a lecturer and one of the co-founders of 'Ms.' magazine. Songs she has written include Teresa Trull's hit "I'd Like To Make Love With You" [from 'The Ways A Woman Can Be'] and has been featured as an emcee at the West Coast Women's Music and Comedy Festival.

Kathleen (now 20) has participated in the Bay Area women's community in a variety of ways. She graduated from high school two years ago. Since that time, she has traveled in the U.S. and abroad, and has hopes of becoming the first feminist fashion model. She is presently pursuing a deep interest in photography.

I met with Margaret and Kathleen on a sunny December day in their Oakland home. Following are the highlights from our hour-long interview.

DEBBIE: Kathy, do you notice differences in your life and in your relationships having grown up in a lesbian household in comparison to the experiences your peers may have had?

KATHY: Yes, definitely! Most of my friends have grown up in heterosexual families. I have a closer relationship with my mom than most of my friends do with either of their parents. Margaret and I are more like friends than parent-child. Since I have been around my mom and her friends for my whole life, it is very

the blooming of women's music in the New England area. She helped organize the Boston Women's Music Organization in 1975, where she accompanied Kay Gardner on piano and was the staff piano tuner. In 1976, Dovida again accompanied Kay and also Ginni Clemmens, and tuned for all performers on the night stage. She was the pianist for the New England Women's Symphony and tuned pianos at Michigan for seven years.

Vada Vernée

It was during a rare solo performance at the First West Coast Women's Music and Comedy Festival, in 1979, that Dovida knew her next time on stage would include her mother. Dovida performed a 20-minute set which included playing Chopin and some of her own crafted and improvised compositions, and where she recited the poem about the relationship with her mother for the first time. The response was overwhelming as thousands of women jumped to their feet clapping and weeping and wanting to hear more. This was the impetus with which Dovida returned to Boston. At the 1980 Women in Law Conference she and Henia made their debut on a double bill with June Millington.

It was in the fall of this same year that the historic performance occurred when, after it all was over, Henia thanked everyone, gave her good-byes, and added, "I think that I am now going to try women." Never before in her life had she been in such a supportive and accepting environment. "These women gathered there wanted to hear my story, they treated me so warmly," she says. "They treated me like a queen, they dressed me, they undressed me." It was here and in other situations to follow that Henia's understanding of Dovida's lesbianism unfolded without fear.

Dovida says her mother had been freaked out that she was a lesbian, and with lesbians in general. The fact that these women were so loving and warm cut through her discomfort. This was the turning point in their relationship.

"Dovida was living in Boston when she told me about being a lesbian," Henia says. "As a European I didn't know how to handle it; I didn't tell her father, I kept it to myself, I told no one. Then at Yosemite [site of the West Coast festival], I interviewed them [lesbians] and each one had a different story--there were no stereotypes."

The music has been a crucial bond for these two extradordinary women. Henia showed great musical talent at the age of five. Though her parents were poor and could hardly afford lessons, sometimes they went without a meal to make it possible for Henia to study. She entered the Warsaw Conservatory, where entry

continued on page 39

ABOUT THE WRITER: Catherine Roma is completing her doctorate in choral conducting. She has been directing women's choirs for more than 12 years, both in Philadelphia (Anna Crusis) and Cincinnati (MUSE). In the old days she wrote for 'Paid My Dues.'

comfortable for me, and I don't always even think about it as being special or different.

DEB: How would you describe yourself in regards to growing up with a Black lesbian single mom?

KATHY: I feel that I'm independent, strong-willed, and a feminist. It was made known to me that I have many options and choices in my life--that I need to just go out and be who I am.

MARGARET: I always tried to make sure that Kathleen knew she had choices and options for her life--relationship-wise and work-wise. We do have similar ideas around many issues, but also some definite differences, too. I've wanted to influence Kathy, and in raising her I was constantly pointing out feminist ideals. Simultaneously, I knew that I could not pressure her into my lifestyle or have her grasp all of my values. I feel protective of Kathy as my daughter and, most importantly, I don't want anyone taking advantage of her. I want her to know that she deserves the best and that she never needs to sacrifice herself for other people or let people walk all over her because she needs or wants their love--no matter who she chooses to be with.

DEB: Margaret, how has your relationship with Kathy helped or hindered your relationship to the women's/lesbian community?

MARGARET: Way back when, I had to fight for childcare at women's events, and now many events do offer childcare. In terms of lovers, it was hard to be pulled between lover and daughter and to have to constantly make choices between the two. Most of my lovers said they wanted to get to know Kathy, but it always ended up with me being the single mom paying for childcare, paying for food, clothes, etc. Now I'm involved with a woman who's also a mother of a daughter. It's an incredible blessing, and the shared experience brings us closer.

DEB: Where does being Black come into the picture of your relationship?

MARGARET: As a young girl I went to an all Black school, and I can remember seeing "whites only" signs. That made me political--it made me radical because I was fighting for my own rights. I think that although racism still exists in the world, it is out there less now than it was. Kathy's perceptions of racism are so different because she is not living in the middle of a battlefield.

KATHLEEN: I experienced racism later in life than Margaret did. Because racism in the world isn't as blatant as it was, it has sometimes taken me longer to acknowledge racist behavior. I won't immediately think that certain incidents involved racism, but after methodically looking over the situation, I often realize that they have. I know racism occurs out in the world, but until you experience it face to face, you tend to overlook it.

I think my generation is more conservative and less political than Margaret's. I don't have Margaret's drive to be political--partly because I don't feel support from my peers. I'm frustrated and angry with my peers--it feels like we're going backward, and like my generation isn't carrying things out. I've been amazed at how much educating I've had to do for myself after I graduated from high school. And I'm amazed at who can graduate from high school and how little practical knowledge one needs to do so.

NOTE: Photographer Raisa Fastman has recently completed a book of photography called 'A Portrait of American Mothers and Daughters' (New Sage Press, 1987). ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Debbie Fier is a performer with two albums and a music video to her credit. She presently lives in Oakland.

MOMS AND DAUGHTERS

THE FOUR ALLENS

By The Mother and Three Daughters

The Allen family has not one, not two, not even three, but *four* feminist women with long histories of involvement in the contemporary women's music and culture scene.

Indra Dean Allen is a guitarist who was a student at age six in New York, then studied classical guitar until age 16 with Sophocles Papas--principal Segovia teacher in the U.S.--in Washington, D.C.. She began writing music with and without words at Oakland University in Michigan and while at San Francisco State in the sciences. In 1973 Indra made her first album, *Loner*, a Cell 16 Record produced by her older sister Dana Densmore. [Cell 16 was the female liberation group that in the late 1960s started the radical women's journal *No More Fun and Games*.] Dana, a one-time clarinetist, also plays the bouzouki in the Denashue Dance Band.

Loner is still available--through the Historic Originals Program that makes early movement media in its original form available for collectors and libraries. The Historic Originals Program is a project of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, of which Martha Leslie Allen--Indra's younger sister--is the director. Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press publishes the annual *Index/Directory of Women's Media*, an extensive listing of primarily mainstream feminist resources. Martha--also editor of *The Celibate Woman Journal*--is finishing her Ph.D. dissertation at Howard University on "The Development of Communication Networks Among Women, 1963-1983."

And here's where Donna Allen, the mother of the three sisters, comes in (not counting those hours of childhood practice scenes). In March 1974, Indy--who is an artist as well as a musician--started *MUSICA: A Newsletter About Women in Music and the Music in Women*. She sent the stencils from the West Coast to her mother in D.C. with the headlines, designs, and drawings sketched on in place. Donna typed the text under the right headlines and beside the proper graphics, and then ran the newsletters off on the Women's Institute For Freedom of the Press mimeograph machine--which was just then starting to publish the first volume of Donna's newly-founded *Media Report To Women*. She then stapled up each issue of *MUSICA* and mailed them off to Indra's mailing list all around the U.S.

Indra and Donna

Dana and Martha

Copies of the *MUSICA* newsletter, like *Loner* and back issues of *Paid My Dues: Journal of Women and Music*, are in the Historic Originals Program. From *MUSICA*'s first issue--which listed women's records already out, anthologies, events, concerts and performances, contacts, distribution information, women's music co-ops, and music herstory--to the sixth issue in the spring of 1977 (with Jerene Jackson in color on the cover), each issue recorded early music events, the first music festivals and record companies, the beginning of *Paid My Dues*, performers such as The New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band and the jazz trio Alive!, and other activities of women.

It was the first national women's music newsletter, to our knowledge. *Paid My Dues* said of it: "*MUSICA* is crammed with all sorts of short news items about musical women. This publication is a *must* for new women musicians and older women musicians and women who love women's music."

How do daughters and Donna get along?

"Donna has excellent taste in music, in my opinion," says Indra, who in turn has a musical daughter, Becky. "She led me into music with her great hot jazz, Billie Holiday, Lena Horne and Bessie Smith, Andre Segovia, Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie, and numerous classical selections. She let me play the radio to hear Buddy Holly and Elvis. Her involvement was always positive, even when she made me practice when I would sometimes rather have been outside playing--and it has definitely made us closer. We were never in competition, but even if we were on the same instrument, I don't think it would have been a problem, because we are all so proud of each other's accomplishments."

"We all have very high regard for one another in this family," says Dana, who uses her given name (Densmore is the name of her feminist grandmother--Donna's mother). But she still considers herself an "Allen," something she says is an honor. "We like each other's competence, energy, vision, and accomplishments. You can count on an Allen to see what needs to be done and do it right."

Martha shares the sisterhood pride. "For over a decade now I've had the opportunity to work closely with Donna on communications issues in the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, which she founded," says Martha. "Though she is more like a sister now, I still see her as possessing the kind of knowledge and insights that only a mother or big sister can have."

And Donna? "Yes, I was once their mother, " she says, "but being a sister to such great women--what could be better than that?"

The Historic Originals Program, 'Media Report to Women,' 'The Celibate Woman Journal,' 'Index/Directory of Women's Media,' and all of the Allens can be reached through Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, 3306 Ross Place NW, Washington, DC 20008. ●

ABOUT THE WRITERS: "It took us awhile to write this, since we're all scattered from Washington, DC to Santa Fe to San Francisco--and writing a joint piece is more complicated. That also complicates the job of having a picture of all of us together."

HENIA/DOVIDA from p. 37

was difficult for everyone and anti-Semitism was strong. She studied there as a non-Jew--her maiden name being Flint. When playing in masterclass, her teacher said to everyone, "She must be a Jew because of the way she plays--she has such melancholy in it." She dismissed the comment by saying, "I had a tragic childhood." After graduation she confirmed the observations of her teacher, to which he replied, "You are a nice girl anyway." This was in 1937, two years before the outbreak of the war. The man invited her to be his teaching assistant.

"The tragic war came and cut off my career," Henia says. "The Nazis occupied Poland. They threw all of us into a ghetto, and I was sent off to Auschwitz with my sister-in-law and girlfriend." After several days there, a Nazi woman approached Henia about playing the piano for the commandante. "Play for the murderers of my family?" she replied in disbelief. Nonetheless, she was forced to play. "I sat down at the piano and was paralyzed," she says. When she couldn't perform, they stabbed her in the breast and twice in the back, and dragged her out. For some unknown reason, the Nazi woman felt sorry for Henia and saw to it that she, her sister-in-law, and girlfriend were transferred in a cattle car to a munitions factory in Czechoslovakia where they were later liberated by the Russian army.

The effects on the survivors of their war experiences did not end with the closing of the camps. The pain was passed on to the next generation. As Henia tells her story, she says, "I know Dovida suffered. She was five years old when I had a breakdown--it was after the war, I was depressed. For 10 years Dovida didn't play the piano. It was her wonderful women friends that brought her back to her music and to life and to me. In her formative years she was a victim--this has affected her. It was music that brought us together."

Dovida says the fact that her mother had no focus for her energy was one of the things that caused tension in their relations. "As my mom began to tell her story, and people listened, she became more a person in her own right," says Dovida. "Her own dreams came true, and it took the pressure off me. She got recognition for who she was. Women were the key factor again and again in consistently showing love and warmth."

From Mother to Daughter and Back Again consists of Henia and Dovida taking turns playing piano, Henia reading selections from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, Dovida reading the poem, and often they have a spot for a guest violinist to do Jewish music or a singer performing Yiddish songs from the Holocaust. The concerts have encouraged Henia to be a performer and lecturer in and around the Philadelphia area, where she is often asked to speak in public schools. She has also been to Finland and Russia where she has told her story and been warmly received.

It has been the experience of seeing one another as individuals rather than just as mother and daughter that has freed them with each other and that touches the people for whom they perform. ●

WOMEN OF COLOR from 29

to this anthology write passionately. Their voices are sometimes sad, sometimes angry, sometimes proud--but always, *always* committed to healing the wounds this society has caused us.

Many different women in *This Bridge* talk about being cut off from their culture and their language. I ache with them for the loss of our languages. Although in many ways my mother is a fiercely proud Black woman, she worked hard to insure that white English would be my first and only language. There are days when I feel as though I only have half a tongue. It gives me hope to hear other women of color expressing the same alienations, the same traumas, and talk about how they're finding their way home.

As wonderful to me as reading the experiences of Asian, Latina and Native American women is, *This Bridge* is not an easy book to read. As Rosario Morales writes:

"I'm saying the basis of our unity is that in the most important way we are all in the same boat...subjected to the violent pernicious ideas we have learned to hate...that we must all struggle against them and exchange ways and means... hints and how tos...that only some of us are victims of sexism...only some of us are victims of racism...of the directed arrows of oppression...but all of us are...sexist... racist...all of us."

I am constantly, graphically reminded that despite all the hard work, despite the hours of conversation, despite my internal search-and-destroy missions to eradicate my -isms, despite all, the poisonous tentacles of this genocidal and murderous society are still lodged deep in my psyche. From these and other writers, from the forward-moving women in my life, I find the abilities to fight my own personal revolution.

A revolution capable of healing our wounds. If we're the ones who can imagine it, if we're the ones who dream about it, if we're the ones who need it most, then no one else can do it.

We're the ones. --Aurora Levins Morales ●

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THE QUEEN OF SEX

MAE WEST

By Rosetta Reitz

Mae West was the biggest, baddest, sexiest beauty of all time--and claimed she was "never vulgar." She invented the Sexual Revolution long before it was named, and raised the consciousness of the nation by showing that women liked sex too. Over the course of her career, she challenged the social structure, demonstrated that sexual pleasure is not defined by age, and turned the stereotype of woman as passive upside down. She unapologetically went after what she wanted and got it. She enjoyed sex instead of being its victim.

"I kid sex," she said. "I take it out into the open and laugh at it. I'm a healthy influence."

Mae's search for her own self-discovery was as venturesome as the most adventurous male hero. And like all good heroes, she slayed dragons along the way. "Love 'em and leave 'em" was no longer a male prerogative. "I believe in the single standard--for men and women," she said.

By 1900 Mae was a professional amateur being taken by her family from theater to theater in Brooklyn, where she had been born on August 17, 1893. At the age of eight she was a member of Brooklyn's Gotham Theater stock company and played good-girl roles like Little Nell and Little Eva in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But it didn't take her long to learn that being bad was better box office, and she became known as the Baby Vamp. At 13 she joined a national vaudeville circuit.

Mae made Broadway in 1911, doing ragtime songs in a revue called *A la Broadway*. Her sexy style and husky voice stopped the show, and got her a job in *Vera Violetta* starring Al Jolson. She got sacked during the out-of-town tryouts because she was too pushy.

This archetype of female sexuality had role models; she studied the successful stars and learned from them. Early influences included the witty Nora Bayes, flamboyant Eva Tanguay, Irene Castle with her bobbed hair and Harlem band, and "Red Hot Mama" Sophie Tucker.

Mae learned from the screen stars, Broadway singers, and from the songs of the Blues Queens. She went to Harlem to see them and listened to them with more than passing interest; she tried to imitate them. [See *Sweet Petunias, Independent Women's Blues, Volume 4* (Rosetta Records) for a cut by Mae.]

Bessie Smith was singing: "No time to marry, no time to settle down; I'm a young woman, and ain't done runnin' 'round." Ida Cox and many of the others were singing: "I'm a big fat mama with the meat shakin' on my bones, and when I shake, a skinny girl loses her home." This was a counter-influence to the flat-chested flapper with whom Mae never physically identified.

In 1912, Mae had a small part in the musical comedy *A Winsome Widow* produced by Florenz Ziegfeld. She was so funny and charming that she got terrific press, which enabled her to get top billing when she returned to the vaudeville circuit, commanding $750 per week instead of the $350 she had been getting. In 1917, she was featured in *Furs and Frills* and sang the first song Oscar Hammerstein wrote. The following year, her part in *Sometime*, starring Ed Wynn, was bigger. In the second act she did the shimmy-sha-wobble--and it stopped the show. It was the first time that shocking dance was done on Broadway, and it made for a successful run and road tour. Mae had seen the dance in black cabarets; Ethel Waters was a master of it.

She was in the Broadway revues *Demi-Tasse* (1919) and *The Mimic World* (1921). After that, it was on the road again with an act she wrote for herself with Harry Richman as her pianist and foil.

The "anything goes" 1920s were a perfect back-drop for Mae West. Without the wildness and roar of that decade, Mae couldn't have launched her plays. And even so she had big problems with censorship.

By 1924, the Shuberts said they would star Mae in a play if they could find a suitable one. It didn't exist, so Mae started writing the play she wanted--which the Shuberts, and other producers, subsequently turned down. But Mae, her mother, and her manager James Timony backed it.

Entitled *Sex*, it was finally launched in April 1926. The word by itself was scandalous, reserved for medical books or gender distinctions, as in "the weaker sex." The play was a first in many ways; it even had a jazz band on stage in the second act. *Sex* would have been shut down immediately if mayor Jimmy Walker hadn't restrained the District Attorney. It ran for almost a year, but in February 1927--when Walker went to Cuba for vacation--his assistant mayor raided it. Two other shows got the axe that night, too--*The Virgin Man* and *The Captive*, a play about lesbians.

The trial was a bonanza for Mae, giving her a million dollars worth of free publicity. That's the way she saw it, turning everything around to suit her undeviating goal. She and Timony were sentenced to a 10-day jail term each and a $500 fine for "producing an immoral play."

After *Sex* ran for a few months, Mae wrote a comedy about homosexuals called *The Drag*. During the out-of-town tryout John Sumner and his Vice Society threatened to invoke censorship laws if *The Drag* was brought into New York City; *Sex* was still being constantly harrassed, so Mae agreed not to "upset the city."

In 1927 *The Wicked Age* opened. An expose of corruption in bathing beauty contests, it didn't go over, and she let it drop after a month.

Her next try, *Diamond Lil* (1928), was a spectacular success. Mae's sets were as outrageous as her character; one scene was played with Mae lolling in a giant golden swan-shaped bed. Lil was crucial in Mae's development of her larger-than-life character. The ideas were in place, the boldness, humor, self-mockery and the hourglass figure (with the aid of steel and bosom padding) was established.

In between and during the delays in getting *Diamond Lil* mounted, she wrote

Pleasure Man, a musical murder with a cast of 54, mostly gay men. It was raided, and she had to appear again in court. While touring with *Diamond Lil*, and then a revival of *Sex*, Mae wrote a novel about Babe Gordon called *The Constant Sinner* (1930). It had a big sale, and I'd like to think Mae was moved to write this book as a reaction to the inhumanity of the Ku Klux Klan, which had grown to 5 million members and was responsible for an increase in lynchings.

The interracial love story was turned into a play and opened at the Royale Theater on Broadway in September, 1931. Its cast included many talented black artists, including Harlem blues singer Trixie Smith [who can be heard on *Women's Railroad Blues* (Rosetta Records)].

Courtesy of Rosetta Records

Supporting the National Recovery Act of 1933.

HOLLYWOOD

The Great Depression was fierce. Theaters kept closing, and vaudeville was barely limping along. When Mae got the call from Hollywood for a part in a George Raft film, she went gladly.

The films of Mae West had a deep impact on the nation. In a world of despair where the economy was in distress and people were full of fear, Mae West was fearless. Her easy-going nature, nonchalance, and wit brought enormous relief to many. She was always successful, always got her man. Her flesh-and-blood immediacy came from the close-ups she directed. She stood on her own two feet, even though they wobbled because of her eight-inch platforms. The walk evolved from trying to keep her balance--and people found it sexy.

Her Brooklyn accent--dropping g's, using "ain't", "entah" for enter, and her slow delivery of lines (breaking words into as many syllables as possible, like "*fas-cin-a-tin*'"), took the edge off her excesses. She came across with a kind of direct innocence, as "the girl who made good," who earned those jewels.

She didn't hide being bad, as when in her first picture (*Night After Night*, 1932) the hatcheck girl exclaims, "Goodness, what beautiful diamonds!" Mae's fast retort was, "Goodness had nothing to do with it, dearie."

Although it was only a small part, she insisted on writing her own lines. It was this scene which began her rise to international stardom. She was 39 when she went to Hollywood, a seasoned performer who had done everything: sang, danced, acted, was a chorus girl, tumbler, male impersonator, shimmy dancer. She would demonstrate the quintessential creation in her first starring role for the screen, *She Done Him Wrong* with Cary Grant. This remake of *Diamond Lil* was the top box-office picture of 1933. Madame Tussaud's in London lined up her wax likeness with female deities of the past: the Queen of Sheba, Helen of Troy, and Madame DuBarry.

I'm No Angel was even better, and the five songs she sang were very swingy. Her sharp wit kept exploding, resulting in classic lines like "When I'm good, I'm very good, but when I'm bad I'm better." During a seduction scene Cary Grant whispers, "I could be your slave," and the sultry murmur--"That can be arranged"--is truly erotic. They are both fully clothed, sitting at the piano, but the camera work on the eye contact is inspired. It's proof of one of her repeated sayings: "It's not what I do but how I do it. It ain't what I say, but how I say it, and how I look when I do it and say it!"

Courtesy of Rosetta Records

Mae in 'I'm No Angel': Over the course of her career, she challenged the social structure, demonstrated that sexual pleasure is not defined by age, and turned the stereotype of woman as passive upside down.

In 1934, Mae starred in *Belle of the Nineties* and demanded Duke Ellington and his orchestra. Hollywood was accustomed to studio bands, but they couldn't argue with the legend who had practically saved Paramount from going under. This is the film with the campy

continued on page 59

ABOUT THE WRITER: Rosetta Reitz is a jazz historian who retrieves lost women's music on her own label, Rosetta Records. There are 18 albums in the Women's Heritage Series.

TRANSISTOR SISTERS

By Jorjet Harper

The '60s were not exactly "the good old days," but for those of us born during the post-war baby boom, the '60s is, psychologically, our "home." And the landscape of my childhood and teenage memories has a soundtrack that follows along with it, made up of the stream of early rock & roll and novelty songs that gushed forth from the newly-invented transistor radios, sounds we girls preserved in the stacks of gleaming 45 records we lovingly accumulated in our cardboard record boxes.

Those three-and-a-half-minute-long, highly produced sounds we heard thousands of times at an impressionable age—songs that played over and over without the slightest musical variation in sound or delivery, thanks to the wonders of modern electronics and the innovation of lip-synching—those songs are etched in our neurons, never to be forgotten.

Looking back, one can cringe to see the male-dominant, heterosexist propaganda we were fed through these seemingly innocent songs, and the part the "girl groups" played in making us want to live out the fantasy images they were projecting of idolized boyfriends and teenage rivalries and wedding day dreams and pledges of eternal love. On the other hand, these songs, which seemed so defiant and wild then, seem awfully timid and tame--though no less sexist—in retrospect. There *was* a certain quality of innocence and humor to those times and those songs of the girl groups that contributed to the rock & roll sounds of the '60s. And there was an energy that thrilled us in seeing girls like ourselves--more dressed up and grown-up looking but just as down-to-earth—making harmony together in those early "bubblegum music" days.

I grew up in a white working-class neighborhood in New York. From the sooty windows of our not-quite-tenement apartments in Astoria, you could see across the East River to the glittering Manhattan skyline with its crowning glory, the Empire State Building. But in my area of Queens, the atmosphere was all West Side Story without the choreography. I was considered a bookish, teacher's-pet type, though I longed to be one of the tough, cool, self-assured street kids. In 1957, at age nine, a transformation occurred. I went from being an object of mild ridicule to an indispensable member of the "In Crowd" among the girls on my block when I became the first one to own a six-transistor "portable" radio. Never before or since has my social status elevated so swiftly and so radically.

With that little plastic transistor radio blasting, we girls literally did dance in the street, and we didn't care who watched us. We found our choreography after all, in every new dance step: the slop, the stroll, the twist, and (my all-time favorite) the mashed potato. We all watched American Bandstand on TV after school and listened to Murray the K and his Swingin' Suaree on the radio. A few of us sang harmonies on streetcorners late at night, just like the boys, when we should have been inside doing our homework. Occasionally we snuck a cigarette in an alley--it made us cough and feel awful, but we did it anyway, because we were told not to.

Politicians and parents around the country commented on the unwholesome influences of rock & roll that were corrupting America's youth. They feared that by listening to this raucous music we were becoming deaf to authority. There was also fear (though it was usually less publicly voiced) that this racially integrated, largely black-based sound was captivating white children. Which it was. Inroads against racism were being made by rock & roll idols, and, at least in white blue collar neighborhoods like mine, this liberalmindedness was not encouraged. Parents who had raptly listened to Sinatra shoobeedooing and Louis Armstrong scat-singing now professed perplexity and dismay at singers like Elvis Presley and Little Richard.

But my girlfriends and I, we loved it all. The sense of a society that wasn't dictated by grownups. The theatrical, sensational payola scandals. The nose-thumbing at convention and at the music our elders wanted us to like. Most of all, we loved the sounds we heard, the bebop, do-wop, ramalama ding-dong, bomp-boppa-bomp, ooh-baby. We embraced the styles and imitated the sounds of the performers and groups, both black and white, and paid no attention to the disparaging comments of our parents.

We tried out the greasy, heavy make-up, the bows, the half-heels, and we experimented with our hair, putting it up into enormous painful wire mesh-and-bristle rollers, then teasing it up and spraying it with Aquanet until a hurricane couldn't blow it over. We wore spit-curls on the sides, taped in place by pieces of scotch tape. Some of us imagined how, when we were older, we would wear tight-fitting sequined gowns and chiffon dresses with spaghetti straps, like our favorite singers: Mary Wells, Brenda Lee, Connie Francis, Lesley Gore, Dinah Washington, LaVern Baker, Shelly Fabares. We practiced the moves of the girl groups, so we could dance them in the street—which was, after all, our stage. We were, as one song lyric observed, "transistor sisters." And the cheap little plastic music box was the source, as well as the cynosure, of our rock & roll dreams.

RECORD MECCA

Across the river, in Manhattan, many of the songs we found so magnetically attractive were being written and recorded. The Brill Building on Broadway was the hub of the new energetic generation of Tin Pan Alley writers, and many of their songs struck such a profound chord in teens and preteens because the songwriters, not to mention the singers, were still teenagers themselves.

"Nobody cared about money," Ellie Greenwich, one of the few successful women songwriters of the early '60s, has said. She and other pop songwriters have remarked on the "family atmosphere" among the writers of these tunes, the spirit of newness, and the joy at being able to make a living at something they

loved to do. There certainly were some weird characters behind the lollipop smiles--notably brooding, eccentric Phil Spector and the elusive George "Shadow" Morton--but there seems to have been a genuine feeling of camaraderie among the songwriters even while they were scrambling for hit songs. The same "family" feeling existed, according to Mary Wilson of the Supremes, at Berry Gordy's Motown empire, Hitsville U.S.A. in Detroit.

THE SHIRELLES

GIRL GROUPS EMERGE

There were, of course, female singing groups--including my mother's favorite, the Andrews Sisters--and women pop singers in the generation before mine. Patti Page was in her prime while I was a child, and the first song I remember consciously, carefully following the lyrics of was a number one ballad called "The Wayward Wind," sung by Gogi Grant. But none of their songs had that hypnotic, grooving, don't-be-afraid-to-make-a-fool-of-yourself beat that was characteristic of the new music of the late '50s.

The first rock & roll "girl group" I ever heard was the Bobbettes, who recorded the tough and bouncy song "Mr. Lee" for Atlantic in 1957. But the first of the girl groups to make an impact on the music industry around that time, the group that opened the field for the girl group trend, was the Chantels. Their lead singer, 14-year-old Arlene Smith, wrote the song that became their powerful 1958 hit, "Maybe," and paved the way for the rest. Most of my preteen girlfriends could probably, even now, tell you exactly where they were when they first heard that song--it made an enormous impression.

Phil Spector, the "boy genius" of the Brill Building, believed that a female vocal group was the perfect vehicle on which to build his musical empire. He became mentor of a group of five teenagers he called the Crystals, and, to start them off, co-wrote their first hit, "There's No Other (Like My Baby)."

But the group that really made "girl groups" into a phenomenon that forced the record industry to sit up and take notice was the Shirelles. Their four members, including lead singer Shirley Owens, were junior high school students from Passaic, New Jersey, who had been singing together since 1953. They had recorded "I Met Him On A Sunday" for a small label called Tiara, and Decca had bought the master but hadn't done anything with it. So their first big hit didn't come till 1960, when the Shirelles swept both the R&B and pop charts with what has been called "the quintessential teenage song": "Tonight's the Night."

Carole King--the other successful woman songwriter who got her start in the girl group era--and Gerry Goffin were both only 19 years old (and already married) when they co-wrote the Shirelle's follow-up song for "Tonight's the Night." It was called "Will You (Still) Love Me Tomorrow." Spector was the producer. It became a top hit in the United States, staying on the charts for nearly four months. The song was a big seller around the world as well. "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" established the Shirelles, the King and Goffin songwriting team, and Phil Spector as important pop music forces. The B side, "Boys," was picked up by the Beatles, who were as yet unknown in the U.S.; they immediately added it to their repertoire and began performing it in Europe. The success of "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" was so hot that the Shirelle's earlier failed single, "Dedicated to the One I Love," was revived, and it, too, reached the Top 40.

The girl groups had thus become established as a money-making venture. The Dixie Cups from New Orleans hit number one with Ellie Greenwich's song "Chapel of Love." The Cookies had hits with "Chains" and "Don't Say Nothin' Bad About My Baby." The Chiffons, who sang together in their high school lunchroom, had hits with "He's So Fine" and "One Fine Day."

The Marvelettes, high school girls from Detroit, gave Motown its first number one single with their 1961 hit "Please Mr. Postman." Spector had a string of hits with the Crystals by the time he was 21 (since Spector owned their name, however, he could and did use different singers and still call them the Crystals), including "Uptown," "He's a Rebel"--which he released as a Crystals' record, though it was really sung by the Blossoms with lead singer Darlene Love--and Ellie Greenwich and her husband Jeff Barry wrote "Da Doo-Ron-Ron," produced by Spector with the Crystals' LaLa Brooks on the lead vocal. The Shirelles were still hot, too, and had another number one song in 1962 with "Soldier Boy."

There was still room for the dance craze hit as well. Carole King and Gerry Goffin were working on a song in their apartment when their babysitter, Eva Boyd, then 17, began dancing to it. Goffin asked her what kind of a dance she was doing--it looked like she was mimicking a locomotive train. Eureka! Off they all went to the studio to cut a demo, with "Little Eva" singing the lyrics she'd inspired, and the song "LocoMotion" took her on an express trip from babysitter to pop star.

THE TOUGH GIRLS

The two girl groups considered the "tough girl" groups (and, consequently, the most popular in my neighborhood, after the Shirelles) were the Ronettes and the notorious Shangri-Las.

The Ronettes (Ronnie Bennett, Estelle Bennett, and Nedra Talley) began their career at the Peppermint Lounge in New York, where, through sheer tenacity, gall, and good luck, they managed to fill in for a no-show group and became the club's regulars (for a whopping $10 a night each). They were still schoolgirls at the time. When Spector heard Ronnie sing, he reportedly exclaimed, "That's the voice I've been looking for," and he backed the group to the hilt. He produced their 1963 hit "Be My Baby" (also written by Greenwich and Barry).

The Ronettes were popular enough to headline an English tour with the Rolling Stones in 1964, and open for the Beatles in the U.S. in 1966. After Ronnie married Spector, however, in the summer of 1966, he unexpectedly forbade her to sing in public; the Ronettes dissolved, and Ronnie Spector's career went into limbo--until her recent return to the pop music scene as a solo singer.

Ellie Greenwich admits to having been shocked by the Shangri-Las, with their ripped stockings, gum chewing, and delinquent attitudes. These two sets of sisters, Mary and Betty Weiss and twins Marge and Mary Ann Ganser, were genuine tough girls with a genuine New York nasal twang. Their first hit was the unusual "Remember (Walkin' in the Sand)," written (reputedly in 22 minutes on the way to the studio) by their discoverer Shadow Morton, who got his nickname from the way he slunk around the Brill Building. Their next song, "Leader of the Pack," came complete with revving motorcycle and shattering glass sound effects. It became a number one hit almost overnight and was the scandal song of the day. It was banned from some radio stations in the U.S., and officially banned in England, where it nevertheless hit high on the charts and even inspired a satiric answer-record, "Leader of the Laundromat," by a group called The Detergents.

The last, and by far the most successful of the girl groups, was the Supremes. Not rebellious, not tough, and so much more sophisticated than the groups that preceded them, they managed to become enormously popular, the sole survivors of the "British Invasion" that heralded the end of the girl group era, and indeed, left the entire Tin Pan Alley empire in a state of total eclipse. Motown's Berry Gordy, not about to give up to the British without a fight, forestalled the collapse of Motown when he hooked up the Supremes--who initially had a string of flops--with the songwriting team of Holland-Dozier-Holland. The Supremes became the phenomenal--and only--girl group success of the mid '60s. They were not great favorites among the kids on my block, however, since they were too slick, too nightclubby in their cocktail dresses, too glamorous, and their music sounded too tinkly and establishment. They didn't remind us of the streets, of teenage rebellion. And anyway, we were all getting older--and there was Joan Baez and Judy Collins. And psychedelic rock around the corner.

IN PERSPECTIVE

Girl groups have been getting a lot of attention these days, through some nostalgia videos, the memoirs of Mary Wilson, and hit musicals like "Dreamgirls" and the more recent "Beehive." But it's important to keep the phenomenon of the girl groups and the female solo pop singers of the '60s in the proper perspective. At no time did the girl groups ever dominate the pop music scene. Then as now, the focus was on male performers. For every Connie Francis or Mary Wells there were five male singers like Neil Sedaka, Ben E. King, Tony Orlando, Gene Pitney, and Marvin Gaye. For every girl group there were many male groups, from the Coasters to the Beach Boys. And once the "British Invasion" began and the Beatles arrived on the scene, the era of the girl groups was swept away.

But seeing a video that has clips of the original girl groups doing their routines, one is struck by the degree of

continued on page 63

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jorjet Harper is arts and entertainment editor at 'Chicago Outlines' gay and lesbian newspaper, and with several other women has recently co-edited 'Naming the Daytime Moon,' the first anthology of creative writing by Chicago women writers.

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COVERING ALL CAREER BASES

NANCY DAY

By Liz Burnstine

We've all heard the pleas..."Help me raise money for my new album"..."Help keep our space going"..."Contribute to our publication"...and countless other requests. Often, we are unable to give due to many different circumstances. There are those who offer to give, yet never come through. There is also a small contingent that wonders why the pleas never end--and why there are so many.

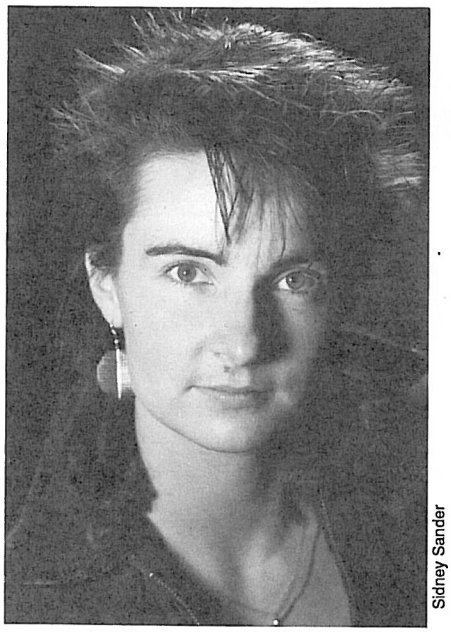
The women's music industry is replete with talented artists, yet few have been fortunate enough to get a recording contract. Most artists must raise money to produce independent recordings, and only then can they begin the arduous process towards "the big leagues." Even women who have name recognition within the women's music circuit may not be able to get an album made on an established label; the resources of the few labels that exist are stretched very thin. [See "The Audio Angle" in this issue for a discussion of which labels accept demo tapes from new artists.]

This doesn't quite fit the glamorous image of a "star," or of being "discovered," like the old movies used to show. Nancy Day says she always had a movie-like image of agents, contracts, and the like, but has realized that this business is not quite like the old movies.

Nancy has recently completed recording a cassette entitled *Daylight*, which is entirely instrumental. Confirming her belief that people are not helpless in the face of adversity, she has taken a number of risks with her career, and she believes most have paid off.

In the seven years that she has been performing music for her living, Nancy has had four managers--five if you count the current one (herself). Each of her past managers let her down in some way, and further changed her image of "the industry"; basically, each ended up with a lot of unfulfilled promises. After the last was gone, Nancy decided that music was her life--she couldn't do anything better--and began to write some of her best work.

Any performer acting as her own manager faces certain awkward difficulties. For example, the audience and the performer rely on the manager/producer to hawk tapes and recruit supporters. When an artist is performing, and dealing with the anxieties related to that, how can there be time and/or energy for these other activities? Add into that the energy and time involved in booking performances, and there is work enough for three people. Like other entertainers who must cover all of their career bases alone, Nancy sometimes loses so much energy doing the business aspects that the creative artist inside her cannot be free.



Sidney Sander

Nancy Day: Willing to take the necessary risks.

Nancy's music, though, is what the audience comes to hear. "I need to touch people in some concrete way--to make them feel something," she says, and puts much feeling and sensitivity in her music. "I place myself into each song's situation," she says, interpreting them in her individual way. She takes great care in maintaining a healthy environment in her work--she is careful that none of her songs are emotionally harmful.

Through this healthy atmosphere she creates with her music, Nancy tries hard to "get people motivated to care about something, to look at what they're feeling, and to think."

Nancy is willing to take risks in her music, and it is also true in her approach to performance and management. One of the biggest risks a person can take is to try to make a career in such a "hit" or miss business. In the practice of law it is said that to represent oneself is to have a fool for a client, and it should follow that the same would be true in music. However, Nancy and others have shown that it is not only possible, but it is often beneficial. There are some drawbacks--as there are with any career--but the benefits can outweigh the hardships, especially when the audience is willing to look beyond the performance and offer support.

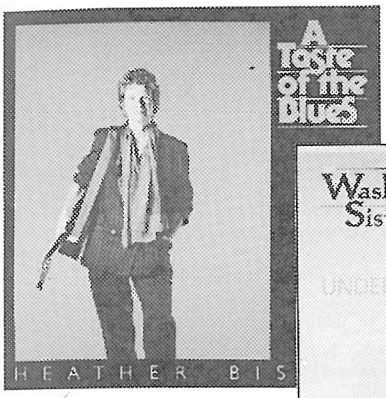
Going on the intuition that her music can change people's lives, Nancy continues working on it, and makes those often-repeated pleas for financial backing. She has been one of the fortunate few who has been able to come up with enough to make an initial recording, which in turn will (hopefully) make it possible to record the vocal album that she has been working towards for the past three years.

So far, much of this has appeared to be negative about the industry and about dreams versus reality. However, as Nancy has so deftly put it in one of her most memorable songs, "You can, if you want, you can change your destiny." [Hear Nancy sing "Destiny" on the November, 1987 soundsheet.]

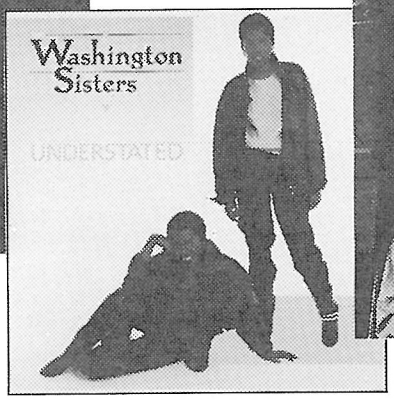
There really is some hope out there for a broader spectrum of women's music. New artists seem to be appearing on the scene all the time, and more and more albums are being released. With womenspace and women's press, this industry can thrive--just keep that support coming! ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Liz Burnstine is just beginning her freelance writing career, but has had a love of music for as long as she can remember. Since she can't carry a tune, the next best is to listen to, and write about, her favorite thing.

NOT JUST GOOD MUSIC . . .
THERES A POINT TO IT ALL!



Heather Bishop
A TASTE OF THE BLUES



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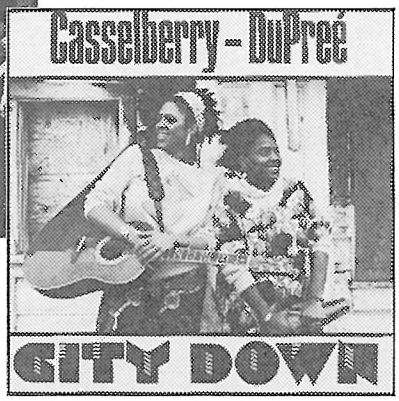

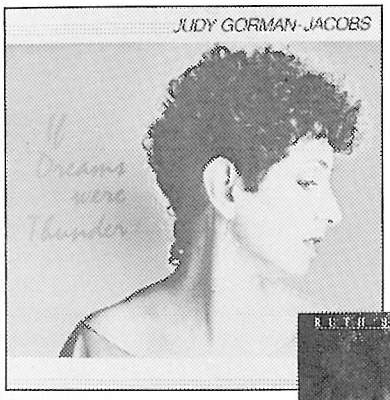

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RE:INKING

THEN AND NOW:

SPEAKING TO WOMEN THROUGH FICTION

By Ann Bannon

In the late 1950s and early '60s, my novels--which became known as the "Beebo Brinker series" after their outstanding character--were published. It was an interesting time in my life, a time of exploration and discovery, a time for spinning tales. The novels came flowing out of my typewriter almost like daydreams, and in fact they served the purpose of giving me an imaginative outlet for my fantasies.

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

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

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

Pat Gargaetas

"To learn that you have shared, even indirectly, in such a momentous self-discovery is a revelation."

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

Today, that feeling of desperate insularity has changed. I can see the transformation in the women I talk to now. Since Naiad Press reissued my books in 1983, it has been my pleasure to meet and get acquainted with many groups of women. Often, at the end of the evening, they come up to say hello and have me sign copies of my books. Some--often women in their middle or later years, or young women who are history buffs--hand me the old familiar printings with their '50s and '60s covers, which still make me wince, well-worn and fragile, and tell me that in reading them, they came to recognize their own true sexuality for the first time. To learn that you have shared, even indirectly, in such a momentous self-discovery is a moving revelation; to find it even now among young women in their 20s and 30s is amazing. There is still a great need for information and support; the arts have a major contribution to make here.

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

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

continued on page 62

RE:INKING articles deal with women's writing as a cultural phenomenon, including women's publishing ventures and individual writers.

NOTE: This article originally appeared in the November 1984 'HOT WIRE' (Volume 1, Number 1), which is out of print. Due to popular demand, we have been reprinting selected articles from that volume.

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ACCESS

WRY CRIPS READERS' THEATER

By Judi Friedman

We are all sizes and colors, women and men, arriving in numbers. Visibly disabled, able-bodied, and those--like myself--with hidden disabilities. We are here to witness and laugh with Wry Crips, the Bay Area Disabled Women's Theater, and we are gorgeous.

The event starts with noticing: our bodies and stances--proud, present, shy, feisty, conscious of the rarity of such a gathering. Women "sniffers" greet us at the door. Smoking is prohibited to ensure safety for performers and audience members with environmental illness, and anyone wearing scented body products or perfume will be kept out. Keeping wheelchair aisles open, we assist each other in settling in as the women of Wry Crips take the long ramp up to the stage.

In 1985, two friends who played wheelchair basketball took action on a mutual dream: a theater company of disabled women dedicated to inclusivity/access, empowerment, and education of its members and audiences. In three years, Wry Crips has become the most pungent and risk-taking of the Bay Area Feminist Readers' Theaters, which include Fat Lip Readers' Theater (Fat Pride), Brown Bag Readers' Theater (Women and Alcohol), Mothertongue/Santa Cruz, and Mothertongue/San Francisco [see "Mothertongue," 'HOT WIRE,' July 1986]. Continually stretching the traditional poetry/prose format, Wry Crips performs a major original script every eight months and makes appearances at political events and rallies.

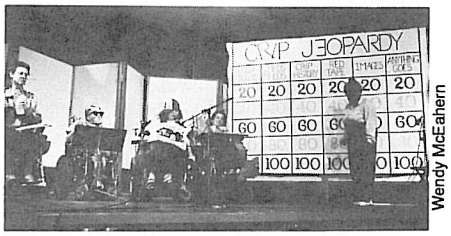
The group has grown into an "umbrella" for member projects. Scripts on environmental illness and psychiatric ex-inmates/mental health system survivors are forthcoming, and an improv group meets weekly. A recent grant from the Women's Foundation will enable Wry Crips to further refine collective structure, increase member and audience outreach, gain technical assistance, and find (or create) more accessible performance and rehearsal sites.

I interviewed six Wry Crips members last fall. Here's a sampling of their smarts and sass.

ACCESS articles present viewpoints and information about issues of accessibility within the women's music and culture network. Correspondence is welcome: Judi Friedman, 2370 Market St. #23, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Wendy McEahern

Wry Crips: Patty Overland (Headband Jo) and Meryl Lieberman (Alexandria Intensia III).



Wendy McEahern

Emcee Squeaky Clean (Peni Hall), Buzzer Lady (Alana Theriault), Obnoxious (Cheryl Wade), Announcer (Jan Levine), Vanna Vanity (Doretha Bradley).

JUDI: The Readers' Theater format allows for honesty. It's powerful because you share what is real.

CHERYL MARIE WADE: [But we also] do characters. In Crip Jeopardy, a takeoff on the game show, we make fun of the kinds of ways we're excluded. Most of us, particularly Jan and I, the gimp hands express, we [couldn't] compete if we had to hit a buzzer the fastest. So, of course, Vicky Ventura--the original Valley girl--wins because she can't even hit the buzzer. It was a fit.

PATTY OVERLAND: We're starting to develop humor about what we're doing and finding some balance. Our first script was hard: suicide survival, death, and lots of anger and pain.

CHERYL: Like the coming out process. It was our coming out script.

PATTY: I think all of us have seen a need to find the humor and to find out what *our* humor is. It makes the audience uncomfortable sometimes, some of the crip humor, but we need that balance. Anger is important, but how do we get through? Well, we bring on Super Crip Girl.

BARBARA RUTH: I love the humor we do. Cheryl and Alana [Theriault] had this sense of themselves as crips that was shocking at first, but helped me understand that recovering wasn't all there was I could do. [We're developing] some sense of crip culture. By telling the truth about our lives, our bodies, and what it is like to live in [them], we give the world a more inclusive view of what it is to be human.

JUDI: Is Wry Crips' theater an art form, personal expression, or political?

IRIS CRIDER: Art is all those things or it's not art. This is a very satisfying form for me, but it wouldn't be [viable] if it weren't related to political issues. Art allows individual expression to people, whoever they are, first of all. And doesn't ever disassociate itself from what concerns society as a whole.

PATTY: In terms of the personal/political, it's always ongoing on both levels. But what is political? To me, I wanna change the whole world. I want there to be no more fucked-up attitudes around disability, any kind of disability. But the beauty of what we're doing is that we're taking our personal stories--sharing something very personal, very vulnerable, very hard to do. [We'll] always need to do the political work. But the art part of it is important. It isn't just that we get up and give our stories.

IRIS: You reach people through art. Through refinement of your expressions. Making them beautiful--whether they're beautiful-ugly or beautiful-beautiful. That's what we're all about here too. Redefining not only disability but beauty *and* art.

PATTY: We could say: Here we are, these crips, and this is what we want in the world. We could write up a whole politi-

cal statement. But with theater, it's *POW*--they see it, they feel something.
IRIS: Or kiss kiss. It doesn't always have to be *POW*.
CHERYL: Patty's well known for her kiss kiss.
PATTY: I like that part of our scripts particularly. How we put out sexuality. We blow people's minds with that, too. We sit in wheelchairs and we read [from] books. That's what we do. It's like: we're sexual? Or: I do sports?
IRIS: "Haven't you accepted that part of your life yet?"
PATTY: We do something really groundbreaking because [this] isn't really how most non-disabled people see us.
JUDI: What about feminism?
PATTY: I don't really find a feminist politic with our group. I'm strongly identified as a dyke because I am a dyke, so that comes through in my work--how could it not? That's who I am. Just as much as I'm a crip, I'm a dyke.
IRIS: You could hide yourself.
PATTY: But I don't. There is a difference as a disabled woman trying to be part of the feminist women's community and the lesbian community. I would like non-disabled women to see the connection more, but at this point I'm not trying to make it [for them].
CHERYL: For me [the issue] around disability and feminism is that feminism comes after you have options. Disabled women don't have them yet. If you're not sure what your choices are, how do you reject something? This has come up in the disabled community. [Able-bodied] feminist women [will say] *they* understand how "as a disabled woman your oppression is connected [to women's oppression, etc.]." Well, that's hard to think if you've never been looked at, if no one's ever loved you--if you feel physically you haven't even had the options of knowing what your sexuality is, knowing whether you can hold a job, knowing whether you can get in the door and be educated. How do you then suddenly identify with a world movement of able-bodied women who don't consider access issues their issues? A lot of women who are disabled certainly are feminist, but [partly] they've gone through a long process of getting educated and having opportunites. Not all disabled women have those opportunities. We're an incredibly under-educated group [overall]. The majority of disabled people never go to college, and a huge percentage never finish high school. Feminism comes out of an intellectual space. It's an ideology. Most disabled people aren't very connected to ideologies yet.

SASSY GIRLS

By Cheryl Marie Wade

hand-clapping or jumprope chant

Clubfoot Annie
wearin' bright red shoes
Harriet the Hairlip
deliverin' the news
Spastic Jenny
strokin' the cat on her hat
And One-Legged Ruthie
who'll teach ya to tap

(chorus)

clap hands
shimmy and shout
rockin' tired ideas right out
skip-a-rope
stomp on the ground
tip those images upside down
Sassy Girls
Sassy Girls

Like Old Blind Wilma
readin' a novel a day
She just ain't doin' it
no ordinary way
Capucine the Deafie
Deaf Lily Rue
Betcha cain't keep up
with all the talkin' they do
Now who ya callin' crazy
Cain't be Mary Louise
Why she's the one
knows how to talk to trees
And who ya thinkin's stupid
Not Dyslexia Su
Ain't it stupid not to notice
all the things she can do

(chorus)

Like Mumtaz, the Mute One
preachin' the word
And Diana, the Cripple
who flies like a bird
Like all of us Crips
who sing a strugglin' tune
And at midnight
Together
HOWL at the moon

clap hands
shimmy and shake
nothin' but worn out notions at stake
skip-a-rope
hear that sound
just a bunch of stereotypes
hittin' the ground

clap hands
shimmy and shout
no harm spittin' some images out
skip-a-rope
stomp on the ground
ain't it kind of fun
tossin' images around
Sassy Girls, Sassy Girls
YEAH, SASSY GIRLS

JUDI: Yet to me, seeing Wry Crips on stage taking power is one of the most "feminist" things going.
PENI HALL: That is about empowerment, and you can experience that empowerment by doing what we do. You might not have the vocabulary to call it that. It might be what makes you move forward, what helps you in some way, but you may not necessarily have the [abstract] analysis.
CHERYL: It's an important issue for us. If you're perceived as an all-white upper middle class group, it's no surprise that you don't have women of color who want to be a part of your group. Well, if you're perceived as a feminist group where you have to have all your political ideology in order, you're not going to get women just out of institutions, or women who are poor and haven't been educated to feel that they can be a part of who you are. So for us, using labels like "feminism" is dangerous, because [labels might] automatically exclude some disabled women. It *is* an issue with us to be out there as women taking power back and taking over our lives. It's not like we want to downplay who we are, but at the same time we're always trying to balance it so that disabled women won't feel intimidated. That's why we don't use the label even though, in reality, our format comes from the feminist theaters. And many of us *are* feminists. We range from a [lesbian] separatist to a straight fundamentalist Christian to everything in between--all along the spectrum of values that conflict, and ideology that conflicts. The nature of our work is that we're dealing with all these in our work.

Wry Crips is open to all women with disabilities as performers, tech crew, writers, etc. Group policy is that members be willing to understand and deal with each others' disabilities and not be closed to anyone on the basis of disability--or any -isms. The expanding Wry Crips "umbrella" may include a one-woman show and the making of a Wry Crips video in the near future. Wry Crips c/o Cheryl Marie Wade, 2222 Derby St., Berkeley, CA 94705. (415) 845-1233. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Songwriter/performer Judi Friedman has coordinated disabled women's services at the West Coast and Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festivals since 1985. She came out about her disability (congenital club foot) as a result of attending the 1982 Michigan festival.

Women with disabilities of all kinds are encouraged to contact festivals regarding services and accessibility issues.

THE WOMAN'S ASPECTARIAN

By Paula Walowitz

Aspectarian astrology is the study of the planets' involvement with each other and their common effect on individuals and groups. After looking at the signs that the planets are in, paying close attention to the very influential sign of the Moon, and noting the angles between the planets, astrology can interpret what energies are available to us on a given day.

This issue will highlight the holidays and festivals of interest to women that fall between Valentine's Day and the Fourth of July. (Only festivals with confirmed dates at press-time are included.) Hopefully, this information will give you some hints about how to make the most productive and enjoyable use of planetary energies at these special times.

VALENTINE'S DAY (FEBRUARY 14)

This should be an outstanding day for most people. There is a lovely formation between the Sun, Jupiter, and Mars, which ought to make this a time of creativity and vitality. Lovers will most likely be indulging each other extravagantly (Jupiter knows no limits), and it's even a

Alison Bechdel

better time to be with a group of friends since Jupiter in such a strong position could urge expansion beyond the "couple" level. Physical activity, self-expression, and material advancement are all favored. It's a go-for-it day, so don't waste it. As a sidelight, Pluto begins its retrograde motion today, and both Saturn and Uranus enter Capricorn (a major planetary transit) this month. Don't expect an immediate personal effect, but watch for national and international events that create shifts in power (and money) during February.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (MARCH 8)

If love or money issues have been troubling you lately, there could be a reprieve occurring now. Venus, which rules possessions and money as well as relationships, has been dancing through favorable aspects since Saturday. It has conjoined Jupiter (expansion, generosity, luck), and trined Uranus (excitement, freedom, individual expression) and Saturn (practicality, ambition, work). It is a good time to put energy into unfinished projects, to strengthen ties with significant others, and to re-evaluate financial investments. Hold off beginning a new project or investment, if you can, until the Moon is in her waxing phase after the 17th.

SPRING EQUINOX (MARCH 20)

Expect some discomfort today. That's not necessarily negative. The Sun/Uranus square is the major influence, and it can be a very positive, exciting one. However, most people value stability above almost anything else, and there may be some destabilizing feelings and events to deal

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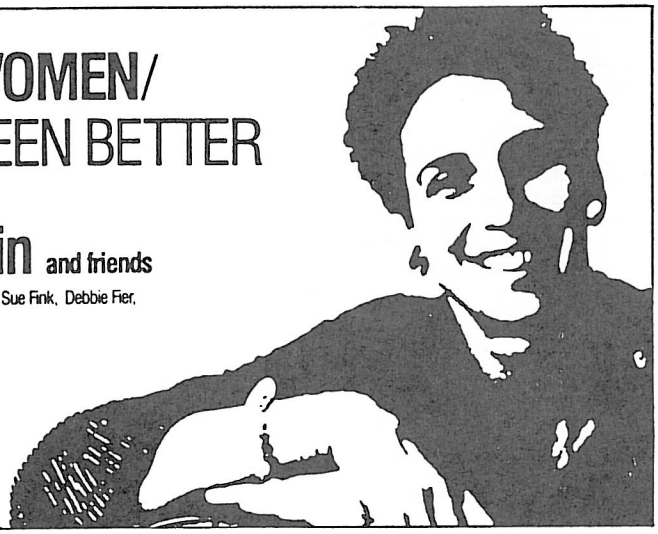

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with now. Especially since the Moon is in Taurus, the stubborn-as-a-bull sign of the Zodiac, challenges to our usual routine and our usual perspective will not be particularly welcome. The best way to handle this transit is to seek out growthful changes in your life and in yourself, even small ones, like enrolling in some kind of class or joining a health club. This is the perfect time to start something new with long-range goals, since the Vernal Equinox is the beginning of the astrological year. Far-sighted projects that are begun now should show results next summer, just like seeds that are planted at this time.

APRIL FOOL'S DAY PASSOVER/EASTER (APRIL 1-3)

And to top it off, this is a Full Moon weekend, and Sunday begins Daylight Savings Time. Whatever you happen to be celebrating, there promises to be a lot of energy at your fingertips. The Full Moon is in Libra, which is the relationship sign of the Zodiac, so be prepared for some lessons in that area. Libra is also the sign of balance, and a Libra Full Moon is likely to point up the imbalances in your life. Pay attention; valuable lessons could be forthcoming. The Full Moon and hard aspects to it may make for a generally scratchy tone until Sunday afternoon, when things get much better. Communication should get clearer and more animated (Mercury/Mars sextile), especially in lover relationships (Venus enters Gemini). Uranus is slowing down in preparation for retrograde motion beginning on Monday, so some people may feel nervous energy building up inside. Electricity and air travel, both ruled by Uranus, may also be affected.

MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S MUSIC AND COMEDY FESTIVAL WIMINFEST/CAMPFEST (MAY 27-30)

Five out of the 10 planets are retrograde now (six if you include Mercury, which will hit its stationary point on Tuesday). Retrograde Venus is now opposing retrograde Uranus, a harbinger of ups and downs in love and money. Unresolved issues from the past may swing unexpectedly into your path in a way that will make them hard to ignore. The lightweight lunar transits may make for generally good feelings, but try not to gloss over any unpleasantness. Deal with underlying causes. Mechanical snafus, transportation mishaps, and miscommunication are common with a retrograde Mercury, so if you're on the road, try to get somewhere before Tuesday.

THE NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL (JUNE 2-5)

And then there were six. Retrograde planets, that is. Energies, however, seem a little lighter. It may be easier to structure your time and make good use of it this weekend than last. The lunar influences are mostly favorable. Thursday's Capricorn Moon benefits hard work and practical considerations. The weekend is covered by an Aquarian Moon, which is perfect for group gatherings, especially of unconventional, individualistic people with wide-ranging dreams (like women's music and culture aficionados). The most powerful planetary effect should come from the Mars/Neptune sextile that will be growing in intensity all weekend. It is a vibrant influence for imagination, spirituality, and creativity, but it is one that requires personal initiative to be activated. In other words, if you wait for something to happen, it probably won't. But if you take this opportunity for creative action, you may surprise yourself.

SUMMER SOLSTICE (JUNE 20)

There is an incredible amount of potentially nerve-wracking but thankfully short-lived energy bouncing around now. First of all, a Saturn/Uranus conjunction has been with us more or less since February. It creates a tension between structure and chaos and an urgency to restructure reality according to one's individual vision. Its effect can be seen on personal relationships, groups, nations, and even the stock market during the past year. Late last night and early this morning, the two are conjunct at the significant 29th degree of Sagittarius (29 is the final and most intense degree for any sign). Add that the Sun opposes the conjunction, and you've got even more tension. Throw in a square between Venus and Mars, a configuration that could cause relationship and/or money trouble, and frankly I'd advise taking the day off and staying in the bathtub until you're pruney.

INDEPENDENCE DAY (JULY 4)

The best way to make good use of a Pisces Moon is to tune in to your inner self, whether to deal directly with emotions you may be trying to run from or to

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Paula Walowitz is a singer, songwriter, astrologer, and all-around nice girl. She writes the weekly 'Astral Turf' astrology column in 'Chicago Outlines' newspaper.

KEEPING OUR VOICES STRONG AND PROUD

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MULLING IT OVER

COCKROCK

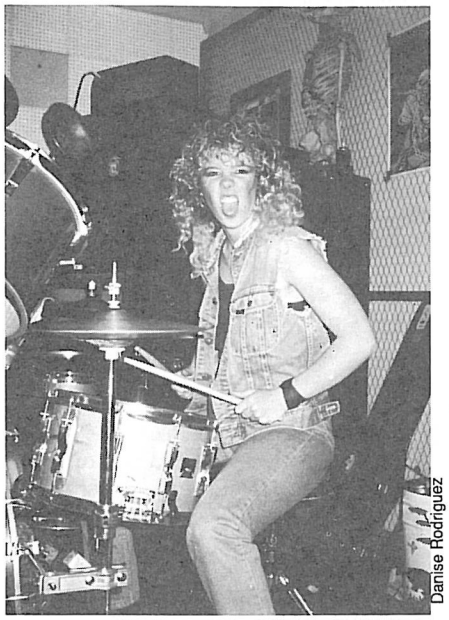
By Cheryl Cline

Well, call me a crank, but I'm getting more than a little weary of certain ...MEN saying women can't be REAL rock musicians, can't even be REAL rock *fans* because *we don't have dicks*. It's not enough that the Tom down at The Corner Tap gives you the eye over his Stroh's and says woman's place in rock is on her back, hahaha, or that the Dick at the Club cracks jokes about the little gals being too frail to be carrying around such BIG amps, or that the Harry at the Saturday night party breathes onion dip all over you while wondering loudly whether the Bangles *really* play their own instruments. Now the academics--the rock sociologists and the humanities professors--are handing out suspicious theories about "the masturbatory celebration" of "Cock Rock" and the "romantic vulgarity" of rock's "penis worship"; theories calculated to keep women, what with our, you know, *deficiency*, out of the way of the menfolk.

The professors' scholarly theories about the *essentially phallocentric* nature of rock merely puts a sophisticated gloss on the crude sexism of Tom, Dick, and Harry. Ol' Tom just "knows" women can't play rock & roll; the sociology professor wants to study the ways in which girls and boys relate to rock music through different discourses of sexuality. But both of them come to the same conclusion: that women are fundamentally *different* from men, and not just different, but *lacking*, and what women lack, of course, is a dick, and lacking a dick, we can never truly deep down in our groins understand what rock is all about, like real ...MEN do.

Simon Frith is a rock critic and senior lecturer in sociology at the University of Warwick, England. In his book *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll* he sets up a dichotomy between female music--"Teenybop"--and male music--"Cock Rock"--in order to examine the ways in which the rock & roll discourse constructs the male and female

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



Danise Rodriguez

"Theories about why women *don't* become rock musicians are bandied about at a time when there are *more* women rockers than ever." (Pictured: Drummer Sandy Sledge, formerly of both Malibu Barbi and Rude Girls.

listener. The way Frith constructs the male and female listener is more interesting to me. Girls' attraction to teenybop lasts, by Frith's own reckoning, about two years (roughly age 11 to 13). Never mind that after growing out of teenybop, girls usually still like rock, even hard rock, even that very same "cock rock" beloved of boys (and ...MEN). There's a sexual dichotomy here, by God.

In male music, according to Frith, "Cock rock performance means an explicit, crude, 'masterful' expression of sexuality. Cock rock performers are aggressive, boastful, constantly drawing audience attention to their prowess and control...the music is loud, rhythmically insistent, built around techniques of arousal and release...What's going on at such 'hard rock' shows is a masturbatory celebration of penis power: girls are structurally excluded from this rock experience; it 'speaks out' the boundaries of *male* sexuality."

Frith, like Tom, Dick and Harry, would have us believe that only men can be aggressive and boastful (so what about Tina Turner?), that loud rhythmically insistent music is *masculine* (so what about Chrissie Hynde?), and that only male sexuality involves techniques of arousal and release (somebody hand this man a physiology textbook). Sure, when David Lee Roth is up there on stage, you could say he "speaks out" the boundaries of male sexuality. When Tina Turner's up there she speaks out the boundaries of female sexuality. But watch them: they make a lot of the same moves. And listen to them: the *music* in either case is pretty tuff stuff, heavy metal and rockin' soul, not exactly two of the more gentle forms of music.

Lest we get the impression boys think *only* with their gonads, Frith explains that "male identity with the performer is expressed not only in sexual terms but also as a looser appropriation of the musician's dominance and power, confidence and control," and concludes, "It is boys...who are interested in rock as music, want to be musicians, technicians, experts. *It is boys who form the core of the rock audience*, become rock critics and collectors (girl rock fanatics become, *by contrast*, photographers)." Emphasis mine.

Robert Pattison, a humanities professor at Long Island University, has written an interesting and occasionally readable book, *The Triumph of Vulgarity: Rock Music in the Mirror of Romanticism*. He, too, has his theory about the place of women in phallocentric rock & roll. His starting point for the discussion of rock music is what he calls "Vulgar Pantheism." It would take too long to explain Pattison's concept of vulgar pantheism

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Cheryl Cline is a regular contributor to 'BITCH: The Women's Rock Mag With Bite' and the fanzine 'Shake.' This article originally appeared in 'Shake #1' and is reprinted with permission.

SOAPBOX *from page 7*

purely as artists, whether or not their art specifically exists to express their political views (e.g., a painter of landscapes or an instrumental musician.)

I have a very hard time dealing with the resentment and hostility I feel from some quarters who imply that I, an instrumentalist playing music stylistically akin to that in the mainstream, am taking advantage of the women's music scene because I don't come out as a lesbian onstage, or specifically express my feminist political philosophy. I characterize myself as a radical feminist who also happens to be a musician. Part of what I am fighting for as a musician is the right, as a woman, to express myself through my art form with as much access to the mainstream music industry and listening public as any other artist. As a feminist, I fight for that right for all women, whether their endeavors be in the arts, crafts, or other areas.

If the boys won't let us into their ballgame, I understand the movement of women who decide to go off and start our own ballgame. We need this women's league to garner strength from one another, to hone our playing skills, and to have the opportunity to play ball in a fun-loving and supportive environment. I would never want to see the abolishment of our league. I also understand the necessity of keeping our league exclusively for women.

However, it must be recognized that in the material world, the boys' league pays players a hell of a lot more, enabling them to play ball full time, to play with the best players possible, and to have the opportunity to realize their full potential. I don't feel that the boys' league should be allowed to remain open only to boys. (I do, however, support exclusivity of membership for the league of the oppressed class--i.e., women--until which time women enjoy complete and total equality in the major leagues.)

Those women taking a leadership role in the formation and maintenance of the women's league (women's festivals, etc.) are a necessary and important part of the process toward equality. I believe those women fighting for membership in the "major" leagues are equally important and necessary.

The question is, what are the ramifications of allowing the latter to also participate in the women's league? Do they dilute the political purpose and effectiveness of the league? Or does the women's league dilute the purpose and effectiveness of the movement by doing what they purport to oppose--i.e., denying feminist women opportunities to play, as does the boys' league?

I think these are some of the questions we should be asking ourselves as we debate the "watering down" of lesbian and/or feminist politics in the women's music scene.

Jean Fineberg, New York, New York

Dear *HOT WIRE,*

There has been a lot of talk out here in sunny California following the cancellation of the West Coast Festival. Many women are requesting refunds. I would just like to say that it disappoints me that the women aren't willing to help share the financial burden with the festival organizers. I'm surprised that *anyone* is requesting a refund; I don't buy the argument that the women asking for money back "can't afford" to lose that money. If they couldn't afford to spend it, they wouldn't have bought the ticket in the first place. If the festival had happened, the money would have been just as gone. It wasn't through mismanagement that the festival was cancelled; why should the organizers have to pay for everything themselves? I have heard women say, "Well, it's a business--they make money." Over the years I've heard this kind of talk about Robin Tyler's productions, and I can't help but wonder if some of that isn't motivated by the anti-Semitic stereotypes about Jews and money. Anyway, it would be a different story if the festival had the money to spare, but they are *losing* money--and people still request refunds. I think we should all, as a community, do what we can to insure that there is a festival in 1988. With no funds, the organizers *can't* do it. It's not too late to send them donations.

Betty Fuller, Bakersfield, California

Dear *HOT WIRE,*

I would like to see more coverage of the feminist theatre movement. I know about At the Foot of the Mountain [Minneapolis], and read about Mothertongue [San Francisco] in *HOT WIRE* a long time ago [July 1986]. Also you had that piece on the Second National Women's Theatre Festival a *real* long time ago [March 1985]. I would be happy to see an article every time about feminist and women's theatre.

Noreen Brill, St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Noreen,

We're with you on this one, and are looking for women to cover events and write thoughtful articles. Writers interested in--and knowledgeable about--theater (or film/video) are invited to send article proposals directly to us. To receive writers' submission guidelines, send a SASE to HOT WIRE/Writers Guidelines, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

To the editor:

Regarding the "incident of racism" at Sisterfire [1987]: when a man disregards women's private space, when he insults and physically strikes out at a woman, and when that woman is then not believed, that is woman-hating.

Alix Dobkin, Woodstock, New York

Greetings *HOT WIRE,*

I sent several back issues to New Zealand friends, whose dollars are woefully smaller than ours. *HOT WIRE* gets around!

I loved the soundsheet in the last issue [November 1987], especially Nancy Day. We need good dance music! So her only available recording is instrumental? Does that mean in a different, non-danceable vein, or merely without words?

Morgan, Seattle, Washington

Greetings Morgan,

Thank you for sending the journal overseas. We hear some amazing stories of places it has reached--every continent now except Antarctica. This fall we heard about a woman who was in Africa wearing a 'HOT WIRE' shirt--she was approached by an African man who said, "'HOT WIRE,' that wonderful women's magazine from the United States!" (It turned out he had traveled in the U.S. recently). Also, we wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to the women who have generously responded to the request for "subsidy subscriptions" to support the archives/libraries and individual women from around the world who can't afford us but really want us. We need our subscribers to ***continue*** *doing this. Finally, for everyone interested in Nancy Day, see the article about her on page 48 of this issue. Specific questions and comments can be sent directly to her at 739 S. Braddock Ave. #5, Pittsburgh, PA 15221.*

Dear *HOT WIRE,*

After reading my first copy of *HOT WIRE* this past spring, I was certainly glad that I had decided to subscribe. Of the three issues I have read, not one article has been a disappointment. Your July issue brought us particular pleasure because of the "Behind the Scenes" article on Pokey Anderson. The women's community in Houston is fortunate to have Pokey, who--along with co-host Cherry Wolf--keeps us informed as well as entertained. Without their program on KPFT, I doubt I would be writing this letter.

Mary Kurtin, Houston, Texas

Dear *HOT WIRE,*

I just picked up your journal and wanted to let you know that I appreciate how much you include "culture" and not just women's music. I haven't been interested up until now because I was under the impression that you only put in music--which doesn't interest me as much as your features like on the writers, JEB, and the vampire stuff. I feel proud and lucky to live now, when there's so much history in the making. Since coming back from the March on Washington I am putting more energy into connecting with the lesbian/gay movement. Sign me up for a subscription.

Denise Ross, Syracuse, New York

Give the gift of a
'HOT WIRE' subscription today

FREESTYLE

MINSTREL MEMORIES: PART ONE

By Kay Gardner

Hello again; I'm back after a three-month sabbatical (sabbat tickle) in which I began my book on music and medicine (and finished the first four chapters). I had to take some time off from "Freestyle" to learn how to use a word processor and to immerse myself totally in the new, big project.

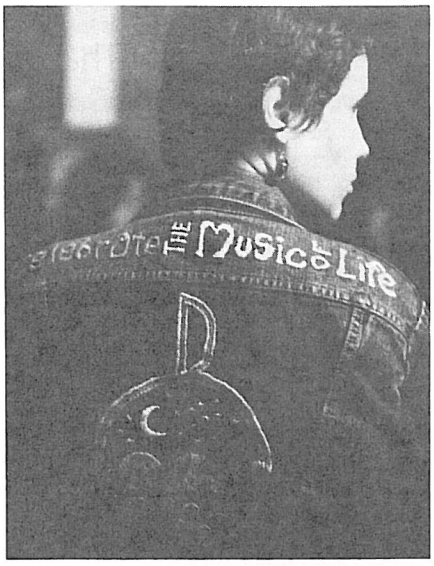
I'd like to share with you what women's music and culture were like for me in the early 1970s--more than 13 years ago, when I was just beginning the minstrel life.

A street-wise woman named Laurel came to New York City where I was living in 1974. We were introduced by a mutual friend who thought that we might make interesting music together. At the time I was with Alix Dobkin in a lesbian band--Lavender Jane--and had just finished my master of music degree in flute performance. Laurel had never had a music lesson, was a completely self-taught guitar player, and intimidated the hell out of me. Why? Because she did everything "wrong" (according to the rules I'd learned in music school), but everything sounded *right*, and she played with a freedom I couldn't even begin to identify with.

For example, Laurel could sit outside on a warm summer's day, look at the clouds floating above us and make up a song, on the spot, so beautiful that the poetry and melody made me weep. She had just spent about five years as a separatist living in the Ozark mountains of Arkansas where the women often played music all night long. The women there made drums from goat skins and hollow logs, then went into New Orleans to play the drums on the streets--after which they sold the drums for survival money.

"What a romantic life," I thought to myself, having recently escaped an 11-year marriage and middle-class security in polyester. I wrote a song about Laurel, "Wise Woman."

Laurel assured me that there was in-



PAID MY DUES

Kay Gardner, circa 1976.

deed such a thing as generic women's music. She and I were playing it together. She'd played it in Arkansas; she'd played it as a wandering hippie in Morocco. I, too, was connected with women's music. Lavender Jane was women's music, to be sure, and I had just played my master's recital performing compositions by women composers, but I needed to know more. What was it about this music that made it so different from men's music?

One weekend Laurel and I heard about a people's fair being held on West 4th Street. "Maybe we'll hear some women's music there," we wondered as we rode the 7th Avenue subway toward Greenwich Village.

The afternoon was half over, people were milling through the streets eating sausage subs and falafel and shopping for art and jewelry and other crafts. Underneath one of the tents there was a videotape playing highlights of some of the "entertainment" events that had already occurred. On screen was a little dark woman playing, of all things, a marimba and singing in a strange, kind of otherworldly voice. A drunk began to harass her, and she let her temper fly like a bat out of Hades.

"What a pisser," I chuckled, and when learning that she'd be playing that night as part of a show of women performers, I suggested to Laurel that we go.

Neither of us had any money, so we unobtrusively slid past some paying concert-goers (a technique Laurel had perfected) and made ourselves quite comfortable in the third row, left, of the West Fourth Street "Methadone" Church.

There were several acts. One was a woman from Brooklyn who sang songs with the lyrics changed to reflect feminist sensibilities. She was good, but it wasn't unique, and it just wasn't what either of us thought was "Women's Music." Another act, The Pennywhistlers--a women's choir which sang lots of Balkan music--performed too. "This is more like it," we agreed, because the music was unusual, the words were about women's lives, and the tunes were in these odd scales (which I later learned were modal scales unique to women). This was women's music.

The lights were lowered and a marimba was rolled onto the platform. The marimba's resonating tubes were painted with glitter. On one end of the instrument was a suspended cymbal and on the other end was a large bell. Candles were burning on the upper corners of the marimba. The little dark woman, dressed in East Indian attire, came on quietly and began playing upwardly-moving rolling minor chords. She began singing, or rather chanting, "I live in a house of many colors, colors of the sun..." The song continued--in what I later identified as the Phrygian mode--and built in its intensity on the same theme, until a new theme was introduced. "Into thine arms, Mother Moon, we put our faith again. We enter thy darkness so lightly. We enter each other with love."

And then Jeriann Hilderley began wailing, almost literally, until her great orgasmic cry shook the church's organ pipes and the bellies of the listeners. Laurel and I looked wide-eyed at each other, nodded and smiled. This was really women's music. Had it not been dark in

FREESTYLE: This column contains the musings of Kay Gardner.

the hall, I'm sure we'd have seen lots of blushes, because this was a sound rarely heard outside the bedroom or a hospital delivery room, let alone in public! The Mother Moon chant returned, and then the House of Many Colors theme returned so that the piece ended just as it had begun. A circle of woman energy.

Laurel and I were breathless, but not so breathless that we couldn't go up to Jeriann after her performance to ask, "May we help you carry your instruments home?" Little did we know that she lived on a fifth-floor walk-up, but it didn't matter. We hoisted the marimba and her drums up the stairs, and when she offered us tea, we gratefully accepted. After finding out we too were musicians, she asked us if we'd like to stay and make some music together. "Of course," we chorused, and the three of us jammed wildly on flutes, guitars, drums, and percussion until morning.

Soon after that Laurel left the city to travel north to Maine. I took up on Jeriann's invitation to travel as minstrels through New England doing small concerts for the rest of the summer. We'd connect up with Laurel again when we reached Maine. Before we left I returned to her loft to play more music. This is an excerpt from my journal about that visit.

Last night I went to her loft to make music. What an incredible beautiful woman! A creative genius using her own body as art. Many instruments were spread out all over the room...her drums, pipes, cymbals, marimba, my flutes...and a wondrous machine that she created, a light projected through a revolving wheel of prism colors onto an opaque screen. She danced between light and screen and I sat in front of the screen, watching her shadow play, accompanying her on my flute. And, O did she dance. The music swept up and she moved. Encumbered by her clothing, she removed all she had on, handing each item to Black Dog, a ready participant. And I? I made love to that shadow woman. I ran my music up and down her sides. I caressed her face, I kissed the silhouette breasts and lingered where her legs met, trilling slowly, letting my music weave in and out and we made love. We became One in song and the room roared affirmation.

We will leave soon together.

Stay tuned for part two. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Kay Gardner, composer, performer, and teacher of the healing properties of music, has been deeply involved in women's music and culture since 1973. Internationally known through her five recordings, video and film scores, broadcasts and concert tours, she is now writing a book about her work in the field of music and medicine.

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SAGEWOMAN is now being edited/published by **LUNAEA WEATHERSTONE.** The magazine will be out on the "cross-quarters"–Halloween (October 31), Candlemas (February 2), Beltane (May 1), and Lammas (August 1) instead of its previous schedule of being issued on the Equinoxes and Solstices. *Sagewoman*, P.O. Box 5130, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.

Cleis Press has sold three selections from ***SEX WORK: WRITINGS BY WOMEN IN THE SEX INDUSTRY*** to *Forum* magazine, reports *off our backs*. According to **FELICE NEWMAN** of Cleis, the sale was made with the enthusiastic support of the authors and with control of titles and editing. Part of the money goes to the authors and the rest will be used by Cleis to reprint two other titles.

PLEXUS, the San Francisco Bay Area women's newspaper, is publishing again, according to *Sojourner*. It has been restructured and now combines its technical operations with ***COMING UP***, the Bay Area's lesbian/gay publication. **JULIE PECHILIS** of *Coming Up* became the coordinator/editor. 584 Castor St. #344, San Francisco, CA 94114. (415) 626-1484.

CHRIS CASH, of the Southeastern Arts Media and Education (SAME) project, plans to edit and publish a new lesbian/gay newspaper entitled ***THE SOUTHERN VOICE.*** It is planned to begin this spring. (404) 875-SAME.

MS. magazine was sold for a reputed $50 million to John Fairfax, Ltd., an Australian publishing company which owns several Australian women's magazines. The money goes to the not-for-profit Ms. Foundation, not to founders **GLORIA STEINEM** and **PATRICIA CARBINE**, who will stay at *Ms.* as paid consultants for the next five years. They told *Ad Age* that they have given up control of the magazine, but that the two women succeeding them–**SANDRA CATES** and **ANNE SUMMERS**, both of Fairfax U.S.–are capable professional women who are feminist activists.

BITCH: The Women's Rock Mag With Bite includes articles on musician/activist **ALIX DOBKIN** (issue #17) and **KAREN KANE**, writer of *HOT WIRE*'s "The Audio Angle" (#18). *Bitch*, c/o San Jose Face #164, 478 W. Hamilton, Campbell, CA 95008.

With their fall 1987 issue, ***SOUTHERN FEMINIST*** will cease publication. They report they do not have the subscription base necessary to continue the newspaper. They will publish a four-page newsletter called *Southern Feminist Extra* eight times per year. For those whose subscriptions have not expired or have recently been renewed, *Southern Feminist Extra* copies will be sent. *Southern Feminist*, P.O. Box 1846, Athens, GA 30603.

ANNIVERSARIES

This coming June marks the 16th anniversary of **WOMEN MAKE MOVIES**, founded in 1972 by Ariel Dougherty as a production and distribution company devoted to films by and about women. They have more than 100 titles in their catalog. Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette #211, New York, NY 10012. (212) 925-0606.

According to *Atalanta*, **CHARIS**, the women's bookstore (and more) in Atlanta, celebrated its 13th year on November 7, 1987.

LESBIAN CONTRADICTION: A Journal of Irreverent Feminism celebrated its 5th year of publication with issue #21/Winter 1988. *LESCON*, 580 Castro St. #263, San Francisco, CA 94114.

BROOMSTICK, the magazine by, for, and about women over 40, celebrated its 10th anniversary with the January/February issue. They plan on making the November/December issue their 10th anniversary theme issue. *Broomstick*, 3543 18th St. #3, San Francisco, CA 94110.

WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS, the directory of resources in women's music and culture, celebrates its 11th year of publication in 1988. Formerly entitled *We Shall Go Forth*, and published by Toni Armstrong, it changed titles in 1984 when it became a project of Not Just a Stage. It is currently published by Empty Closet Enterprises, the publishers of *HOT WIRE*. The 1988 edition is expected to be available by March.

ORGANIZATIONS

The WOMEN AND MUSIC FOUNDATION is a new Dutch organization for composers, musicians, musicologists, and other interested persons. Through various activities, such as a three-day contemporary women's music festival, they wish to call attention to the role women play in music, past and present. They are setting up a documentation center and have published an information guide on women and music entitled *Vrouw & Muziek: informatiegids*. Stichting Vrouw en Muziek, Swammerdamstraat 38, 1091 RV Amsterdam, Netherlands. Phone: 020-947317.

REDWOOD RECORDS has moved from Oakland to larger offices. It is now distributing more than 40 different albums. The annual Redwood Festival has been postponed this year because of the move. New address: 6400 Hollis St., Emeryville, CA. (415) 428-9191.

WILD (Women's Independent Label Distributors) will be convening their annual meeting May 12-15 in New Orleans at the **NAIRD (National Association of Independent Record Distributors)** convention. Traditionally, WILD has met at the Music Industry/AWMAC conference at the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, Indiana. According to a WILD distributor, with male distributors now handling women's music product from some of the larger women's labels, the WILD distributors need to meet with other independent labels to expand their sales catalogs.

MIDWEST MUSIC has recently changed its name to **MERIDIAN DISTRIBUTORS.** According to Karen Gotzler, the company has been distributing to Texas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma for more than three years, and a name other than "Midwest" seemed more appropriate. Since they carry videos and other non-music-related products, the "Music" has also been dropped from the name. Meridian Distributors, P.O. Box 9348, Milwaukee, WI 53203. ●

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MAE WEST from page 41

tableaus where Mae appears as a rose, a butterfly, a bat, a spider, and the Statue of Liberty to the tune of "American Beauty."

Going to Town (1935) was followed by *Klondike Annie* and *Go West, Young Man* in 1936, the year she was the highest-paid performer in Hollywood. She got Louis Armstrong for *Every Day's a Holiday* (1938), and Xavier Cugat in 1943's *The Heat's On*, in which boogie-woogie pianist Hazel Scott played herself. In between those films she did *My Little Chickadee* (1940) with W.C. Fields. She hated him during the filming and forever afterwards; among the reasons for her dislike was their dispute about the writing credits. Mae had numerous litigations about writing, ideas, and credits all along the way. She wrote many of her own lines but didn't always write the whole vehicle. Her film credits include five pictures as screenwriter and four films as original author.

After her major films she tried Broadway again. This time Mike Todd produced her in *Catherine Was Great*. She went to London to play Diamond Lil in 1948, and brought it back to Broadway in 1949. In 1951 she did it as a popular-priced revival. For a few years she had a successful act where she was carried around by musclemen, winners of awards for their ability to flex muscles. It was big in Las Vegas. Her autobiography *Goodness Had Nothing To Do With It* (1959) received good reviews. She did a few TV guest shots, and two more films: *Myra Breckenridge* (1970) and, at the age of 85, *Sextette* (1978).

For a long time Mae lived as though she never married. In essence that was true, but not in fact. She was married in secret to Frank Wallace for a few weeks in 1911, but she dumped him and their flashy vaudeville song-and-dance act. He surfaced in 1935 and tried to get her money; when she wouldn't comply, he billed himself as Mr. Mae West. After going through the courts for years, she finally sued for divorce and made a settlement.

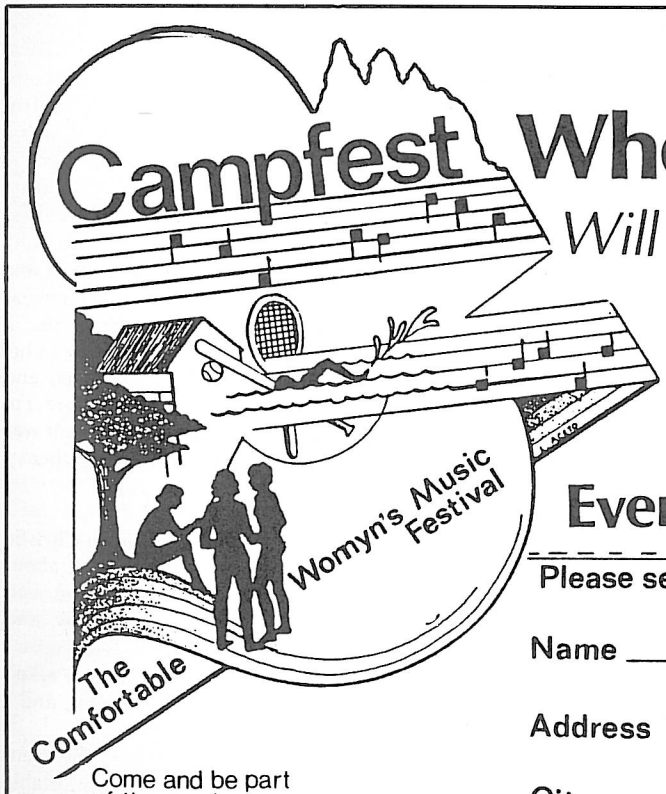
The men she really married, without benefit of law, were James Timony, 15 years her senior, and Paul Novak, 30 years her junior. Timony gave up a prosperous New York legal practice to help her, remaining her manager and partner after their lover relationship was over. In 1939, after 23 years, she let him go. In the mid 1950s, at the age of 63, she chose Paul Novak, a former wrestler in her act. He remained her loyal companion for 25 years, until she died of a stroke in 1980.

For a woman to fight for self-expression in 1910 took daring and courage; Mae West is a part of the bedrock supporting the women's movement. At the age of 78, at a Hollywood press conference, she was asked what she thought of women's liberation. "I'm all for it," was her immediate response.

Many of the beliefs she held were avant-garde for the time, and her whole system together was full of contradictions. She was a spiritual and psychic person, and met her first guru in 1928. Sometimes she had two or three spiritual advisors concurrently. An early believer in the self-help health movement, she was committed to carrot juice and high colonics. Her weakness all her life was her sweet-tooth, which later became critical when she developed diabetes. Mae believed sexual release was key to good health and said, "An orgasm a day keeps the doctor away."

UCLA honored Mae West before she died by naming her the "Woman of the Century." And she was! ●

Rosetta Records has released an album entitled 'Mae West: Queen of Sex,' which features 16 sultry songs sung by Mae, accompanied by musicians such as Duke Ellington and his orchestra. This article is excerpted from album liner notes.



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JEWISH AGENDA from 21

what it is to be Jewish in a world that has a history of anti-Semitism. To me they go very much hand in hand, so to be at an event that was both at one time was great. It made me really happy.

It felt safe to be in the company of hundreds of other people who I think felt similar to myself. Maybe they have had similar experiences to mine, or are some other configuration--maybe gay or lesbian but not Jewish, or were Jewish but not gay or lesbian...however people arrived there, there was *such* a feeling of support. There are not that many places where you can feel totally safe being all of who you are, being out. I felt this incredible sense of being home.

My mom and dad were there, along with my sister and brother-in-law, and my cousin and uncle. My aunt said she'd have come if she knew about it. My uncle and cousin live in D.C., my sister and brother-in-law live in Baltimore, and my parents live in Queens [New York]. Over the years, my family has been increasingly supportive of me in just about every sense of who I am, though it's been a long struggle to get to that point. In recent months, our family has become very close with the death of my partner Lois, and the whole issue of the seriousness of my relationship with Lois just grew and grew. Death has a way of cutting across everything.

When I decided to be part of the service, I called up my parents and told them about it, and told them that I was going to be singing, and that Elliott would be there, and Alix and Ronnie. Part of what got them there is they really enjoy it when I sing with people whose music I grew up on, like Ronnie and Pete [Ronnie Gilbert and Pete Seeger were in The Weavers]. When they see me singing with them, they get such a kick out of it--they love to come. That was a draw.

But on the other hand, my parents really politically support gay and lesbian rights, and wanted very much for me to know that. They didn't march because they physically weren't up to it. My dad really wanted to come, but people advised him not to because of his health.

I wanted them to come because I know how important it is for me to have their support, and I know how few of us have that support. And I thought, wow, I'd love it if my parents would get up and sing with me. I wanted to introduce them and have them be present as a way of validating *all* of us. In the end, I didn't ask them to come up and sing with me because they couldn't get through the crowd--there was no way to move. [Ruth did introduce her family, however, and the crowd went *wild*.]

When my parents told me that they would come, I was so astounded and happy. It's one thing for them to support me in the "circle of our family" or just one to one, but it was a whole other thing for my parents to publicly go to an event. I feel really good about who I am, but having my parents make that gesture of being part of an event that in fact was a statement to the world, that they were part of the people that would be counted, they were part of the energy, they were part of a group that is a really small minority--that minority of straight people who support gay rights--that they should be my parents, wow. It's very empowering. Our family is very close, so for me it's two people who are really major in my life right there, holding my hand and saying, "*You keep going because we believe not just in you personally, our child, but in the people you love and care about--this is in fact a political issue.*" My parents are aggressive people politically and have a base to view the oppression from a political analysis, not just "we love our child and accept her no matter who or what she is." They really view it as an oppression and think it's wrong.

The whole feeling at the gathering was so loving and so warm; it felt like a big family party. It felt like everybody was related. My parents said that there were few events in their lives that have ever touched them as deeply. They loved being around the people who were there; they said that it was just such a "special group of human beings," and that the energy in the room--my uncle said the same thing--was so affirming and so bright. That was one of the common things, that everyone seemed so intelligent.

I asked them if they told the rest of the family and their friends that they came to this event. Mom said, "Of course I did." I said, "Of course? Does that mean I'm out to everybody, and you're kind of out?" and she said, "Well no, that's nobody's business. We came to this event... they don't have to think that." I said, "What did you tell people?" They said that they went to this gay and lesbian event [the Havdallah service] that was part of the March, and they talked all about how wonderful the people were, and how sad it was that more parents weren't there.

One of the comments my mother made to me was, "Why were there so few parents here?" And I said, "Well, a lot of parents disown their children when they find out that they're gay or lesbian, and a lot of us don't tell our parents for fear of being disowned." And Mom said, "That's so sad. And so wrong. Everybody's parents should be here." And she said it so sincerely. It's not that my mother is naive or doesn't know on a lot of levels why all those parents weren't there--but she never experienced gay and lesbian people in such an intimate, personal way before. To her, every child should be loved enough by their parents--you know, their children are their children. And this concert was so non-threatening; it was a safe place for parents to be.

She told the neighbors and friends all this, and I asked her how they reacted. "Some of them cried," she said. Apparently whatever my parents said to their friends was so from-the-heart and so genuine...they weren't presenting a cause that they were asking other people to support; they were presenting a profound experience that they had had, and as a result really touched other people. I felt really happy that what happened at the Havdallah service and at the March could be spread a little bit through these two people, my parents.

It was such a kick singing that Grandma song with my mother there. When I came out to my parents years ago, my way of helping them understand what integrity was involved comparing being a lesbian and being a Jew--that to take one's rightful place in the world as a Jew was the same kind of fight that lesbians face. And that as a Jew I was a survivor, that I had that spirit of fight in me, and that's why I wanted to stand up proud and be a lesbian, be who I was. My mom got very upset with me and said, "Don't you mention the word lesbian and the word Jewish in the same sentence; I don't ever want to hear that again. If Grandma were alive, she'd roll over in her grave." So here it is 15 years later, and there they are at this event where I'm singing this song about her mother. It was beautiful, these things coming together.

ALIX DOBKIN

I received a phone call from Christie Balka [from New Jewish Agenda] about two weeks before the March. She said they were putting together a show, and invited me to do it. I said *YES*--because I really wanted to sing down there. I asked Ruth if I could borrow her guitar, and I was in the show.

I liked the whole evening. The event felt very "family" to me; it felt comfortable and happy. I felt the parts of me represented, gay and Jewish. And it reminded me very much of my upbringing, of

Camp Kinderland, which is a progressive Jewish--and it used to be much more communist-identified--summer camp for kids. It really was a camp representing the whole Jewish progressive culture, mainly in New York City, years ago when I went. We used to do plays about the sweatshops, and we learned songs in Yiddish, and had Olympics representing teams from all over the world; it was a very "brotherhood of man," politically-conscious camp and environment. Especially in the 1950s, it was quite radical.

This progressive background is the first place I heard about male chauvanism, about racism; it was the first place outside of my home that I heard about socially conscious values. You know: unions, pro-union organizing...it wasn't just the camp, it was the whole Kinderland experience. We had reunions, and we used to go to hootenannies. It was big into folk music--everybody played guitars and sang union songs and protest songs and songs from the Spanish civil war.

That was my home, that's where I felt most comfortable--and that was very much the atmosphere that was at the New Jewish Agenda concert and service.

I also loved the fact that there were old people and young people. There were all these generations there, mothers and fathers--that felt *wonderful* to me. It had a very "family" feel; it brought me back.

Politically as well as personally speaking, I think we need all the allies we can get. I think there is a great deal to learn from ethnically-identified and politically-identified groups; these are natural allies. I feel very good in an event like this concert, because it wasn't just "coalition building" where lesbians forget who they are. It was so lesbian and gay identified. And usually our experience in coalitions is that we all of a sudden find ourselves working on everybody else's issues without paying attention to ourselves--and I didn't feel that happen at this concert. That was a really satisfying thing for me; I felt very recognized as a lesbian *and* as a Jew.

I thought all the events of the March were terribly exciting. I loved seeing queers everywhere--that to me was a thrill. On Saturday and Sunday, everything in Washington, D.C.--the streets and the hotels and the Metros and the restaurants--*everything* was just full of lesbians and gay men.

It was personally very exciting and wonderful to see women from all the places that I knew. My sister Julie was there, and it was terrific seeing women from all over the country, even if only for a moment. I saw my producer from Salt Lake City, I saw the women I stayed with in Denver. It was a bit like a women's music festival. And to know it was our town--I felt safe and centered there. That was the most exciting thing about the March for me.

I found the Names Project tremendously moving. If it wasn't for AIDS, the March wouldn't have been nearly as well attended or as powerful. I understand that that was really the issue of the March, which removed it a little bit for me. Still, I appreciated the kind of caring and loving atmosphere that went with it, as well as the militant pride that we felt. It all felt wonderful for me.

It's very exciting to feel "in the center"--that you're in the center, and you are centered with your people. That's a pretty unusual experience.

[Note: Alix was one of the performers on the March rally mainstage on Sunday. See the Robin Tyler interview for more details about the rally.] ●

BANNON *from page 48*

It is a wonderful thing to be "rediscovered," as it were, by a new generation of women with a lively interest in women's history and experience, those who want to know "the way it was." I'm grateful that it happened to me while I'm still young enough to enjoy it! And to write again. People have approached me after a lecture to exclaim, "I thought you must be 80 years old by now!"

Not yet, dear women. I was only 23 when *Odd Girl Out* was published. But I hope that when I *am* 80, I will have given you another book or two that has the potential to say to your daughters what some of the originals said to so many of you--that we are beautiful, wise, and bright; that we are, indeed, a community; and that we are just coming into our gifts and strength. ●

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FILMMAKING *from page 31*

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DEMO TAPES *from page 11*

sions and to run the sessions like a director runs a movie. It's always good to have an objective musical ear when making any kind of a recording, and a producer will give you that.

Finding someone local to act as your producer is your best bet. You can ask around at recording studios to find out who they would recommend, or ask other musicians who they use. Another option would be to ask a musician that you respect to be your producer.

AM I READY?

Seek the advice of a professional--musician, engineer, producer--whom you respect. Offer to pay them for their time--generally not more than $20 per hour. Friends can give feedback, but unless you trust that they will be totally objective with their criticisms, this might not be as useful. It comes down to your personal feeling about your own readiness.

Making a demo tape is often the ground work that anyone serious about her music has to lay before proceeding any further. If you feel you have the material and the talent to do it, then don't hesitate. Choose your material, get some feedback, then book some time in the studio.

Special thanks to Karen Gotzler at Icebergg, Joan Amy at Olivia, and Joanie Shoemaker at Redwood. ●

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GIRL GROUPS from page 44

innocence and joy they embodied, the charming antiquated silliness of some of their material, and by the youthful enthusiasm and hope they projected. It's amazing to remember how controversial all this was at the time--and it's clear that despite the defiance of cultural norms, the singers of the '60s supported most of the social propaganda that is still with us today--and still ubiquitous in the music industry. Then, as now, most of the mainstream songwriters were male--whether their lyrics were sung by male or female artists.

Nostalgia of those songs is very strong for those of us who lived through those times. I don't want to minimize the sexism that the songs of the girl groups projected--and certainly the girls in the groups were susceptible to it as much as the rest of us were. But looking back with divided sympathies upon the songs, books, movies, and television shows we accepted or even enthusiastically embraced in the past is a familiar experience for many of us who call ourselves feminists or lesbian-feminists. Seeing girls we could emulate working together, however, making music as a group, was a positive statement in a sea of negative images to the girls of that generation. The synchronicity--the images and sounds--of women in harmony made inroads into a new political awareness. For young black women, it opened doors of opportunity and hope, providing role models in the mass media mainstream culture. For young white women, it redefined the word "us" to include black women as well. All of these factors certainly had repercussions that have filtered through in later songs, in later cultural experiences.

Perhaps most of all, the girl groups existed in a simple musical age, before all the heavy metal technology made us feel that making music was out of our hands. The women in the girl groups were *like us*. The impression we got was that *we could make the music we wanted to hear ourselves*. And along with the folk music revival, that legacy may have been part of the seed sown in the late '60s and early '70s that blossomed into women's music. ●

ASPECTARIAN from page 53

take a few more strides on the spiritual path. This may not be easy amid all the Fourth of July barbecues, but try not to get caught up in being in a crowd if you really don't feel like it. Follow your own intuition today; it won't steer you wrong. Also, Venus goes direct today after six weeks of retrogradation, which may bode well for relationships, especially those which have been struggling with old issues during this period. ●

COCKROCK from page 54

here, (it takes him too long to explain it, too; I don't think I'd want to attend one of his lectures), but Pattison describes rock fairly accurately as democratic, common, vulgar, eclectic, and romantic, then wraps it all up in the cloak of Romantic, Vulgar Pantheism.

"The vulgar pantheist," Pattison writes, "worships the penis." The Hindus and the Greeks, those old pagans, littered their backyards with "big armadillos." In modern times, "Rock has restored the pantheistic adoration of the phallus to the West. The ideal rock star is young, male, horny, and well-hung."

Not all rock stars match this ideal precisely. "Rock has its female stars, from Janis Joplin to Cyndi Lauper. It has its female groups like the Bangles and the GoGos...But finally women's role in rock is that of devotee. The Romanticism that proclaims sexual liberation for every human has followers of both sexes and every preference, but its priesthood and ideology are resolutely male."

Not to mention its scholarship.

Now I'd be the last to deny that a large part of the appeal of a Mick Jagger or a Bruce Springsteen is due to an interesting design feature of the pelvic region. But rock's female stars can't be discounted quite so easily.

Scholars like Frith and Pattison go to great lengths to explain why women *can't* be real rockers (whether performers or fans) but they don't explain how it is that women *are* rock & rollers. Where *does* a Chrissie Hynde come from? And what's her appeal? Certainly she's more popular than a lot of rock musicians who own dicks. Theories that hard rock is phallocentric or masculinist only work as long as the women who do make rock music--hard rock music--are left out of the discussion entirely.

That theories about why women *don't* become rock musicians are bandied about at a time when there are *more* women rockers than ever, well, it starts to sound suspicious. I'm not a believer in Conspiracy Theories, but sometimes, I think men (you know...MEN) are susceptible to unfortunate bouts of *Testeria*, an unpleasant condition caused by an over-production of testosterone that makes them, well, anyway...At times testeria seems to be an epidemic.

Especially galling are the well-meaning (but underneath testerical) declarations of how rock music is just too sexist for words, and any woman with an ounce of self-respect would rip those Walkperson earphones right off her indignant little head and stomp that Bon Jovi tape flat into the ground.

There's a suspicious smugness about these arguments, all the more suspicious because heavy metal, that favorite punching bag of Serious Rock Critics, is always used as the example to (1) prove that rock music is essentially deep-down *masculine* and (2) that it's irredeemably *sexist*.

Beware "feminist" critics of rock that slam shut the door of the boys' club in women's faces. I *dare* some would-be...*MAN* feminist to prove the hopeless sexism of rock music by the Georgia Satellites--or Creedence Clearwater--or Junior Walker and the All-Stars--or Wire--or Marshall Crenshaw--or CHUCK BERRY! If he thinks he can do it, let him trade in his old Dr. Feelgood albums for something more politically correct. I'll be happy to take 'em off his hands.

I'd like to see a whole lot more serious talk about women rockers. Not "Women in Rock, Say, What a Novel Idea!" but *women rockers*, as in girls at the core of the rock audience, as in Chrissie Hynde and Cyndi Lauper are real musicians. Let's put this cock-worship in perspective here. There's no Big Deal rock symbolism centered around women's genitals, so if Chrissie Hynde is popular not because she has a dick (because obviously she hasn't) and not because she has a cunt, then why is she popular? Could it be--I mean, gosh, think about this--could it be there is something about rock music that hasn't much to do with the genitalia of either sex, something good about the music that's not *gender specific*? Something that's often sensual, but that appeals to men and women who are, as it happens, part of the same species and who are, to come right down to it, more alike than they are different?

The feminist lawyer Flo Kennedy once said that there are few jobs which require a penis or a vagina, and all other jobs ought to be open to both sexes. Rock music, the theories of certain...MEN to the contrary, does not require a dick. Ask Chrissie. Ask Debbie. Ask Cyndi. Ask Belinda. Ask Tina, Katrina, Genya, Whitney, Kate, Ann, Nancy, Rachel, Lene, Suzi, Aretha, Penelope, Siouxsie, Jane, Chaka, Bonnie, Pamela, Lita, Diana, Grace, Janet, Lydia, Vicki, Joan, Pat... ●

SOUNDSHEETS

By Joy Rosenblatt

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From: *Sherry Shute* (EP)

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The record *Sherry Shute* (1986) has six cuts including "No Crime." Sherry asked Catherine MacKay and Gwen Swick--who had played in a rock group in Toronto with Sherry called Hamburger Patti--to produce the EP.

Susan Wilson

MARLA B. BRODSKY

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Marcy J. Hochberg

SHERRY SHUTE

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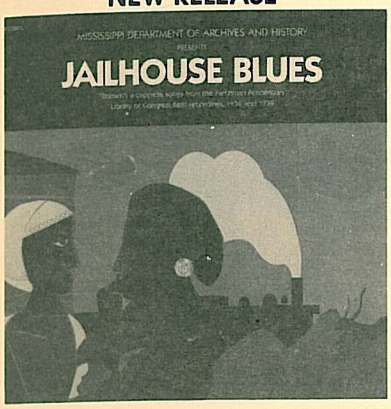

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