

HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

**AUDRE
LORDE**

FESTIVALS

**CAMPFEST: LEE GLANTON
BLOOMINGTON SHOWCASE
SISTERFIRE
BOSTON THEATRE FEST**

FOUR PAGES OF FESTIVAL PHOTOS

MICHIGAN FESTIVAL

**ACOUSTIC STAGE
THE WOMB & THE "BUG"
BACKSTAGE PASS**

MINSTREL MEMORIES/KAY GARDNER

**NATIONAL WOMEN'S STUDIES
ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**

**3rd INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST
BOOKFAIR/MONTREAL**

POETICS OF LÁADAN

NOTEWORTHY WOMEN ON DISC

BENEFIT SHOW FOR PAT PARKER

WHERE IS THE CUTTING EDGE?

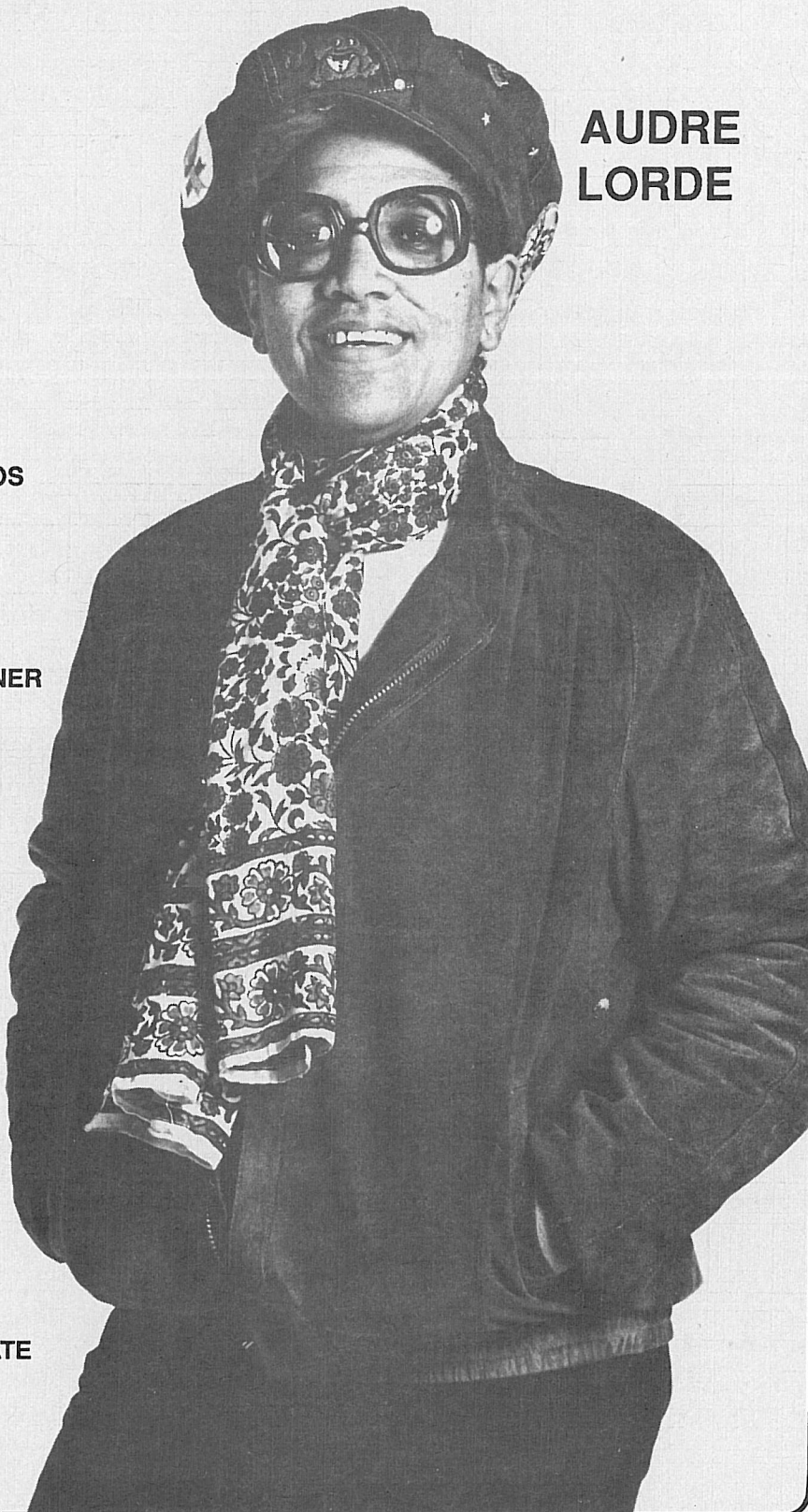
BOBBI CARMITCHELL

FAITH NOLAN

**MARCH ON WASHINGTON
MORNING RALLY**

**HISTORY OF OLIVIA RECORDS
INCLUDING MEG CHRISTIAN UPDATE**

STEREO RECORDING INSIDE



VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1 JANUARY 1989

\$5

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

NEW! IMPROVED!

Beginning with this issue, *HOT WIRE* has changed its production schedule. Instead of coming out in March, July, and November, you will now see us in January, May, and September. For those librarians and Capricorn-types out there who care about reasons for organizational changes, the new schedule puts all three issues of each volume into one calendar year; it's better for selling at festivals; and the two-month delay gave us the first vacation we've had since 1984!

WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS

One of our "enterprises" at Empty Closet Enterprises is the publication of the *Women's Music Plus Directory of Resources in Women's Music & Culture*. The 1988 edition has been plagued by various mishaps, technological as well as human, and has been delayed beyond any reasonable amount of time. For this we apologize heartily. Meanwhile, if you ordered a copy, please know that we are definitely working on the next edition. If you ordered a copy and then moved in the last year, please send us your new address. We are keeping a list of people who have paid for—but not yet received—the directory. Again—SORRY!!!

KEEPING UP WITH THE GOSSIP

Actually, keeping up with the news *and* the gossip is important to us. We have exchange subscriptions with a number of publications, but we want to see a maximum number of women's periodicals. We very much appreciate readers who send us copies of papers, newsletters, and magazines from local areas. Please don't assume we know about every publication that's out there circulating, even if it has been around for awhile.

LOCAL HOTSPOTS-- PERHAPS YOUR HOME?

We are interested in printing articles about "happening" locales around the country. (Our piece on the Bay Area was very well-received.) If you live in a city, county, or state that has several of the following women's music/culture things, we'd like to see your area featured in a future issue: music or theater production companies; coffeehouses; women's music festivals or weekends; choruses; women's land; bookstores; writers' groups; publications and/or publishers; somewhat known performers, writers, or other celebrity-types; film-video producers; etc. etc. etc. You'd be surprised how often we get asked by those mobile-type lesbian-feminists, "I want to move away from my city; where can I go *besides* the Bay Area to find a community where women's music/culture plays an active part?" Writers, please send SASE for submission guidelines.

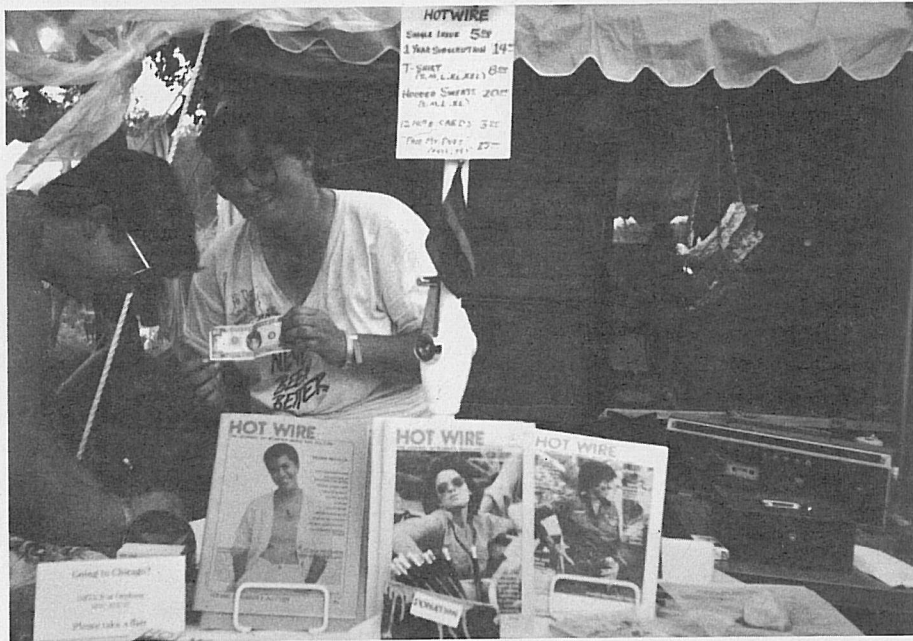
"IF YOU DON'T PLAY, YOU CAN'T WIN"
I realize I'm stretching a little to use that quote from *Desert Hearts*. Actually, if we *don't* have a

cassette of your music here in our office, we can't *play* it, so *you can't win* free promotion from us. Last issue in a Soapbox letter to the editor, a reader wanted to know what we listen to here at the *HOT WIRE* office. We printed an abbreviated list. Subsequently, a number of my performer friends have politely inquired why their tapes weren't on our list. The reason is simple: we don't own them. We can't afford to buy every tape *and* album that comes out... and we are ethically opposed to making pirated cassette dubs off of albums. So, a word to the wise: if you send us one, we will be happy to use your tape not only in our office but also in women's music presentations that we are sometimes asked to give. Performers and record companies sometimes overlook us because we don't specifically print record reviews, but believe me, tapes don't go to waste.

that still sell back issues. We are happy to publicize these. One of the Empty Closet Enterprises projects is the sale of back issues of *Paid My Dues*, the historic women's music journal from the 1970s. Women have been delighted to see that these are still available; we can only assume that other now-defunct publications are likewise missed. Send info to "Hotline" column, c/o *HOT WIRE*.

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Each year (at the AWMAC/Music Industry Conference at the National Women's Music Festival) awards to recognize outstanding achievements/contributions have been given to women who work in the women's music business. The 1988 *HOT WIRE Readers' Choice Awards* went to Ladyslipper and Robin Tyler [see July 1988 issue for details and Readers'



The friendly face of Jean Durkin greeted thousands of festival-goers during last summer's festival season.

VIDEOS WANTED

We plan to run an annotated listing of all of the women's music videos we can get our hands on. Know of any? They can be concert footage; documentary; MTV/VH-1 type music videos; promo items; home movies; etc. Please send all biographical and other pertinent information, and indicate whether this tape is commercially available, was made for private use, or ??.

OUR LIST OF DESIRES IS NEVER-ENDING

We also want addresses of defunct magazines

ON THE COVER: Writer, teacher, poet, visionary Audre Lorde. Read the interview beginning on page two.

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. This year we break with tradition; the awards will not be given out at Bloomington—but they *will* be given.

INQUIRING MINDS DO WANT TO KNOW

Beginning with the next issue, we will be having a new feature: *Inquiring WimMinds Want To Know*. Isn't there something you've been curious about? Isn't there a question you'd like to ask a performer or writer (or someone) but haven't had any way to ask? Write in questions and we will do our best to get answers

continued on inside back cover

HOT WIRE

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HOT WIRE: THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE

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AUDRE LORDE

Interviewed by Jorjet Harper & Toni L. Armstrong

Audre Lorde is one of the most eminent Lesbian poets of our time. She has been widely published in feminist periodicals, and among her books are 'The Cancer Journals' [Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1980], a chronicle of her mastectomy and its aftermath; 'Zami: A New Spelling of My Name' [The Crossing Press, 1982] which Lorde calls a "biomythography"; 'Chosen Poems Old and New' [W.W. Norton and Co., 1982]; and 'Sister Outsider' [The Crossing Press, 1984], a collection of essays and reflections. Her most recent book is 'A Burst of Light' [Firebrand, 1988]. Born in New York City in 1934, Lorde has taught for many years at Hunter College. 'A Burst of Light' contains journal entries from 1984 through 1986, in which Lorde describes coming to terms with liver cancer. In June of last year Lorde had surgery for ovarian cancer. She now makes her home on the island of St. Croix. Hurricane Gilbert -- the worst storm in recorded history -- hit St. Croix before spinning into the island of Jamaica, and Lorde was without power for two days--but it was restored just in time to complete this telephone interview.

HOT WIRE: YOU'VE WRITTEN ELOQUENTLY ABOUT YOUR BATTLE FOR SURVIVAL AGAINST CANCER.

AUDRE LORDE: And I'm still surviving! My coming to St. Croix is part of my survival kit--it's part of my battle to remove myself from ~~the~~ kinds of stress I was under in New York, and to seek another kind of living.

I've been spending winters in St. Croix for the last couple of years because of my health, and I just have not been able to deal with New York winters. So since I taught in the fall term--and was finished in December--I would spend the worst part of the winter here in St. Croix until the weather got better in New York. And I became very involved in the women's community here, and the whole life of St. Croix--there's something that feels very native, and it's like coming home in a sense. I've always had a particular connection to the West Indies, to the Caribbean, and it feels really good. I really moved down here permanently after the ovarian surgery last year. I became in-

cluded in a new kind of mistletoe therapy called vsorel. It's a type of mistletoe that can be administered intravenously and in infusions. I spent three months in Berlin in an intensive program of infusions. I am in good shape; I am on maintenance dosages now, and I go back to Germany about every six months to have certain tests done and to consult with my health practitioner. I am still teaching at Hunter, but I'm on medical leave for six months. I may go back to New York for the term that I teach and then come back here, but this is where I would like to make a base. I'm a New Yorker and I'll always be a New Yorker, but New York City is a city for young people. I need a different pace of life, and this feels to me to be something that heals me.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NOW?

I'm working on a novel, and since I've never written a novel before I'm doing it the way I do most things--which is learn as I go. It is about a Black woman who is a Lesbian, has children, and is really attempting to survive in the late '60s and early '70s. I think good fiction--and I said this before, when I was doing the biomythography--good fiction needs to reflect the knowledge that we acquire through the lives we live, and through art attempts to project that into a space beyond our actual living and construct situations that I think highlight the things we know.

YOU'VE WRITTEN "POETRY IS NOT A LUXURY"--LET ME ASK YOU ABOUT POETS AS LEADERS. IN MAINSTREAM CULTURE, POETRY AND POETS ARE PERIPHERAL, YET IN THE LESBIAN AND FEMINIST MOVEMENTS, POETS ARE VERY CENTRAL, AND IN FACT SOME OF OUR BEST THINKERS ARE ALSO OUR GREATEST POETS. AND IN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN GENERAL, POETS ARE THE ONES WHO SPEAK THE TRUTH.

I think it comes from a long and very noble tradition. Certainly this was true in Africa, certainly it was true in Greece, it's

certainly true among the American Indians--that those who know how little we have to lose, those speaking the truth, those *are* the poets. You can measure within any society, I believe, how far that society is prepared to go to follow its vision by how highly it esteems its poets. Poetry is more than just an indulgence, more than just a pretty way of using words, it is really the skeleton architecture of our lives. In poetry we dare to evoke the feelings, to envision a future that has not yet been--and one of the reasons I feel that there was such a flowering of poets within the women's movement is for this very reason, that we had--and I hope many of us still have--a vision of the kind of future we wish to bring into being, and which helps guide our choices and our motivations of action. For me, one of the most distressing signs I've had concerning the women's movement was that period recently when it seemed as if there was a turning away from poetry, when poetry was considered once again not to be central to our lives--and it *is*, you see, because when we turn away from touching the poetry in our lives and from using it, however painful it may be, we turn away from possibility. We turn away from constructing something totally different from what has existed; we turn away from, I feel, the ability to use what we have to create something that has not yet been. I think it's really important to make the distinction that poetry is not a withdrawing from the Now--it is a total engagement of the Now, with the object of creating Someday.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IT IS SO DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO SPEAK THE TRUTH? WHY IS IT SUCH A STRUGGLE TO SAY WHAT WE REALLY THINK AND FEEL?

I think it's because the stakes are so high, the pretended stakes that they offer us are so high for being silent. And they're not real. Silence--well, I hate to keep repeating myself, but it's true--silence never bought us anything. It doesn't make us happy, it doesn't make us safe, it doesn't make us beautiful. It makes us nothing except perhaps more comfortable, and our oppres-

sors more comfortable. But the lie has always been traditionally that if we do not speak what we know to be true, then we will be allowed to take part in the fruits of whatever the imperfect systems are that we live in. For the disenfranchised—and by that I mean Black people, old people, women, children—for all of the disenfranchised people of society, this is patently not true. But still we buy the lie that silence will protect us. To speak the truth is to demand of oneself that we act. I mean, I cannot honestly say, "Hey, this is intolerable, this is terrible" and then not *act* in some way to change it. So it's much easier to say, "Well, this isn't so bad..." and in that way we protect the status quo. That's what it's about.

RECENTLY I'VE TALKED TO WOMEN WHO ARE RADICAL LESBIANS WHO WILL NO LONGER CALL THEMSELVES FEMINISTS, AND I HAVE TALKED TO STRAIGHT FEMINISTS WHO SAY THAT LESBIANISM IS REALLY NOT IMPORTANT IN THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.

Lesbianism isn't important in the women's movement? Oh, isn't that interesting. That's returning to a position of the early '70s. I thought all of that stuff was laid to rest in '75. No? Okay, well, I may not be the best person to ask this, and I'll tell you why. People, including my daughter, sometimes tell me I'm trapped in words—I certainly consider myself a Lesbian feminist mainly because when I have to identify myself as such—which is whenever it becomes necessary to underline those parts of me—I find no reason to change my language. It's not that I don't think the word "womanist" is a great word for example, or whatever you want to call it—it's just the same as I've never seen the need to change my name Audre Lorde to anything else. I see no reason at this point to change the fact that I'm a Lesbian feminist. *However*, what that means, and whatever names people choose to call themselves, is less important than what they are doing. How are they putting into practice the things they say they believe?

This is underlined for me again by being here. I'm going to a meeting in November of the Caribbean Association of Feminists, which is going to examine the position of feminism in the lives of Caribbean feminists today, but in a very pragmatic, practical way. In other words, what are we doing in our different dialects? This is what is so important. Sometimes I think the white women's movement, or the American women's movement, gets so bogged down in 'what do we call ourselves?' that they totally lose



Audre Lorde at twelve years old with her mother, 1946.



1969



1971

sight of: What are you feeling and thinking; what are you *doing*? How, in other words, are we putting into practice that power that's been supposedly gathering for so long?

There are many, many women who don't think twice about what they call themselves, and who certainly don't use the word feminist and don't even use the word Lesbian, though they are deeply involved in female support relationships, in loving and woman-identified societies. I've learned a lot the last couple of years in traveling, just in looking at women—and in particular at women of Color—around the world dealing with our lives. None of us live single issue lives. Lesbians and feminists should be the title of whole long lists of things in which we involve ourselves, all the way from driver, communicator, educator, warrior, whatever and wherever our lives take us. Those words should not be the be all and end all; there should never be a period or even a semicolon after that. There should just be a colon and then an explanation.

YOU'VE SAID THAT "MAKING GENERIC IDENTITY FROM MANY CULTURALLY DIVERSE PEOPLES ON THE BASIS OF SHARED OPPRESSION RUNS THE RISK OF PROVIDING A CONVENIENT BLANKET OF APPARENT SIMILARITY UNDER WHICH OUR ACTUAL AND UNACCEPTED DIFFERENCES CAN BE DISTORTED OR MISUSED." THAT APPLIES, TOO, WHEN WE CLASSIFY OURSELVES AS LESBIAN OR FEMINIST. BUT ON THE OTHER HAND WE NEED LABELS TO BAND TOGETHER.

I do not want to throw them out, because it is very necessary. I said for example, in the '60s and the '70s it was absolutely vital—"I'm a Lesbian, Black, feminist." It was crucial. And sometimes it is still crucial; I got a letter from a woman who is desperately trying to develop the strength to continue her writing, and she talks about what it means to have someone who stands up and says "Yes, I'm a Lesbian feminist." This is absolutely necessary. If there's one Black woman *ever*

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jorjet Harper is arts and entertainment editor for 'Outlines,' the Chicago gay and lesbian newsjournal. Her grandmother, Minnie Buckingham Harper, was the first Black woman to become a legislator in the United States.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni Armstrong, Jr. is involved in special education in a pseudo-administrative capacity within the public school system. She is also a performer, publisher/editor, avid movie-goer, and collector of vampire literature.

within the sound of my voice who needs to know, yeah, it's possible, then I've got to do it.

But that doesn't mean that that's the end of it, you see? Once upon a time I used to say, "Hey, I'm not going to call myself anything—I am who I am. I don't want to be categorized; I don't want to be labeled." This was my position in the late '50s and in the beginning of the '60s. In a sense what that came out of is still true, but what I saw then was how necessary it is for people to *have* labels sometimes. But you don't stop there; once you define yourself you go on looking at what those definitions and identifications mean—how do you put them into practice in your life? How do I make real for people what I believe I am? So if someone wants to look at me and say "That's frog behavior; we'll call her frog," that's cool—just as long as you don't stand in my way. There's something very arbitrary about titles; what is not arbitrary is that we recognize how titles function and what they're for. We come back to what I've learned about the use of the word "Black" in communities around the world of women of Color. It is very affirming that we identify ourselves as Black—that there are women who I would not think of as Black who identify themselves as Black. At the same time, we must make sure that that does not blanket our differences, that we don't believe that since we all have this same title that we are all the same—because we're not. And if we don't look at the ways in which we hyphenate these identities, then we run the risk of having the differences detonate at a crucial moment, when what we are needing to do is not examine differences but move together.

LOOKING AT THE WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE MOVEMENT, HOW WOULD YOU SAY THAT APPLIES? PEOPLE ARGUE WHETHER IT SHOULD BE CALLED "WOMEN'S MUSIC" OR "LESBIAN MUSIC," AND THAT WOMEN WHO ARE INVOLVED IN WOMEN'S MUSIC SHOULD COME OUT ON STAGE AND SAY THAT THEY'RE LESBIANS.

That makes me so impatient. What do you mean, 'women should come out as Lesbians on stage'? The function of culture in any community, in any society, is to enrich us, is to make us more who we wish to be—to make me more who I wish to be.

BUT THE ARGUMENT IS, WHEN YOU SEE A WOMAN ON STAGE IN A WOMEN'S MUSIC CONCERT OR A WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL, WHAT

HELPS TO MAKE YOU MORE OF WHO YOU ARE IS WHEN THEY CLEARLY SAY WHO THEY ARE; AND IF THEY DON'T, YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO TO SOME OTHER CONCERT.

That is very true, except there are women who do that, and suppose there is a woman whose work you really, really use in your life who *you* would call a Lesbian, and maybe she doesn't use that word... maybe she does in fact call herself 'frog.' If she calls it 'frog' and you call it 'Lesbian', are you going to not avail yourself of it? Now, if she were to say, "Hey, I don't want to have anything to do with Lesbians," then that immediately is something very different. If she is homophobic, if she is heterosexist, if she is in any way anti-Lesbian, then she's got to be called on that. But if she's using different words for what she's doing... This is where I am right now. I think about my mother, and how, my goodness, can you imagine my mother, bless her heart, who has just passed on now, can you imagine her calling herself a Lesbian? But I think of what I learned from her, I think of the tradition of empowered women, I think of the woman-love, and what could be more deeply Lesbian, what could be more woman-identified than that? I think of women I know here who have a whole culture that is totally woman-centered who have never used the word Lesbian.

WHY WOULDN'T THEY?

Because they have seen it as a white person's word from a different culture that doesn't describe who they are. As I said, when I use the word 'feminist' I use it because I think it is important, but there are women who I would call feminists who would never use the word. I have worked with women who are deeply committed to women, who are highly motivated—who would conform to everything I would mean when I say feminist—but they wouldn't even call themselves womanist, they wouldn't call themselves anything. They say "I am who I am..." So it's fine.

BUT CLAIMING A SHARED IDENTITY IS PART OF BUILDING A POLITICAL MOVEMENT.

Yes, it is part of building a political movement; you're very, very right. I think, though, that it is possible to build a political movement with people identified around very specific goals to begin with. And very gradually you make for yourselves maybe another designation, I don't

know, or you come to accept one. I'm saying that the term is important, but it is not *as* important—I'm trying not to be simplistic, and I hope I'm not sounding as if I'm contradicting myself. Terms are important, titles are important, *names*—I have said this over and over again all my life: *it is crucial that we name ourselves*. Once we've named ourselves, we can move on—the name is not the end. And if the name that we have acquired in the process of naming ourselves begins to stand in the way of what we need to do, then maybe we need to expand the name or change the name, but we don't give up the process of naming.

PROBABLY THE TERM 'WOMEN'S CULTURE' IS PROBLEMATIC BECAUSE IT CAN MEAN SO MANY THINGS TO SO MANY WOMEN.

Yes! When I listen to Black Rose or Tracy Chapman or Shirley—who is a Calypso singer here—do I call them part of women's culture? Black culture? West Indian culture? Caribbean culture? But their music is affirming and enriching—I don't want to cut myself off from it, from listening to it.

WELL, TRACY CHAPMAN IS ACTUALLY A CASE IN POINT. A LOT OF WOMEN IN WOMEN'S MUSIC ARE CONCERNED THAT WOMEN'S MUSIC IS GOING TO BE USED AS A WAY FOR PERFORMERS TO GET EXPERIENCE AND TO DEVELOP AN AUDIENCE, AND THEN ABANDON THAT AUDIENCE WHEN THEY MOVE INTO THE MAINSTREAM—IF THEY CAN.

I see what you're saying. It is important that there be those of us who stand up and say, 'I am who I am.' But you've got to give people the right to move at their own pace, in the same way you've got to give me the right to stand up and say "Hey, I am a Black Lesbian feminist." I've got a right to do that, and I won't read or I won't go anywhere where I don't have that right. By the same token you've got to give women the right not to, because it's not yet their time. When you say women's music is afraid of being used, of course it's being used—culture is to be used. The highest thing we can be is to be of use.

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO YOU COULD GO TO A WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL KNOWING THAT ALMOST ALL OF THE PERFORMERS WERE LESBIANS, AND YET THEY WOULD NEVER SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

AND YOU WOULD GET THIS FEELING OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE: WHY AREN'T THEY SAYING WHO THEY ARE? THE SITUATION HAS IMPROVED A LOT RECENTLY BECAUSE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WRITING ABOUT IT.

But you've got to make a distinction between Black and white women, between white women and women of Color. You must. For women of Color, whether we're musicians, whether we're poets, no matter what, particularly for women who are creative, because all women in this American society need to recognize that it's not altruistic connections that make them part of many of the battles, but survival connections--but nonetheless I think this is a consciousness that is not very advanced yet. For women of Color it is apparent in

CULTURE CAN FACILITATE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN WHITE WOMEN AND WOMEN OF COLOR?

I think that we need to open ourselves to each others' knowledge; we need to listen very carefully to each other and to experience the parts of each others' lives that we do not share. This is why we talk about culture making us more than we wish to be. I could never have your experience because we have lived different lives, but I can listen to your music, I can read your poetry, I can recognize that there are feelings that we have that are very very much the same even though they are about different things; I can learn from your experience. But since I cannot *live* your experience--and experience is not a question of what we think, it's a question of what we feel--we need, through our culture, through our music, through our poetry, through our art, to give those pieces of ourselves realistically and authentically in ways that the other--however we define the other--who shares our goals can take in.

I said that about Angelina Grimke because someone asked me, in Lansing, Michigan, why do I always identify myself as a Black Lesbian feminist, and I said, "Because if there's one Black woman within the sound of my voice who needs to know, I do it." And then I told her about Angelina Weld Grimke, who was a Lesbian but we never knew it--I certainly never knew it--and when I was a teenager before I left home, she was living and dying in isolation in a rooming house in Harlem. It would have been wonderful that there were young Black women who needed to know that she was a Lesbian, and it would have really served me a great deal. And that's why I do what I do. I think from the letters I get from Black women all over the country and sometimes all over the world, it is important that I identify myself as a Lesbian. It helps to give them strength, it helps to let them know they are not alone. This is not contradicting the other thing I said, though, that if there is a Black Lesbian who needs to do her work and not identify as a Lesbian--well, maybe that's part of what I need to do, to take the flack for her.



Kitchen Table Women of Color Press Collective, 1982.
From left: Barbara Smith, Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga, Hattie Gossett.

our everyday lives that we are embattled not only because of our sexuality, not only because of our sex, not only because of our class, not only because of our color, but because of *all of these reasons*. And those of us who are getting old, we realize we are also embattled because of our age. I think that these are important considerations.

HOW DO YOU THINK THAT WOMEN INVOLVED IN WOMEN'S MUSIC AND

IN A BURST OF LIGHT YOU TALK ABOUT ANGELINA GRIMKE: "WHAT IT COULD HAVE MEANT IN TERMS OF SISTERHOOD AND SURVIVAL FOR EACH ONE OF US TO HAVE KNOWN OF THE OTHER'S EXISTENCE, FOR ME TO HAVE HAD HER WORDS AND HER WISDOM AND FOR HER TO HAVE KNOWN I NEEDED THEM; IT IS SO CRUCIAL FOR EACH ONE OF US TO KNOW SHE'S NOT ALONE..."

I get letters from women all the time, but they're not women you would know. I just got one from this sister from Stockton California. It's all about her seeking to get power, and what it meant for her to read my work. I get these letters a lot. On the other hand, for example, in 1977 I went to MLA and Barbara Smith stood up in a meeting and said, "I'm a Black Lesbian feminist literary critic..." and it was just so wonderful. I was in the audience, and I thought she was so beautiful and so brave. If she hadn't done that, it would have been probably years before I thought about writing *Zami*--but that's the first time I thought, "hey, I've got to write *Zami*."

I have paid a lot to say the things I've said; I've also been incredibly rewarded for them. There are other women who are paying a lot to do different things. I beg you to judge them by their products. Now when Black women are actively heterosexual in their speech and in their work, that's really damaging and shortsighted, and that needs to be altered or to be turned around. That's something that's got to be moved on, but a woman who does not choose to identify herself, I've really got to give her space. As long as what she's doing has worth and meaning to other Black women, it is useful in our struggles.

AT THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL FEMINIST BOOKFAIR, YOU SAID THAT "NO WOMAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR

ALTERING THE PSYCHE OF HER OPPRESSOR, EVEN WHEN THAT OPPRESSOR IS EMBODIED IN ANOTHER WOMAN." YOU ALSO TALKED ABOUT THE PARADOX OF BEING OPPRESSED AT THE SAME TIME WE LIVE IN A COUNTRY THAT IS OPPRESSING OTHER PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD. IF WE'RE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR CHANGING THE PSYCHES OF OUR OPPRESSORS, AND YET WE ARE IN AN OPPRESSOR SOCIETY OURSELVES, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT THIS?

We are not responsible for changing the psyche of our oppressors; we are responsible, though, for fighting that oppression, for altering the oppression. The question of altering the psyche of our oppressor becomes pertinent when that oppressor has something that we share, i.e., like another woman, like another Black person. We are responsible for altering our oppression; for changing the circumstances of our lives and the constructs under which we live. I may be able to do that by altering your psyche, but altering your psyche is not my primary function. I know that you are a woman; I would like not to have to meet you in the open battlefield, toe to toe, with a machete—I'd like to not have to kill you in order to alter the conditions of my life. But if I have to, then I must. I cannot back down simply because you are a woman. It is not my responsibility to alter your psyche; it is my responsibility to alter your actions. The question of being both oppressed and oppressor—I have learned a great deal traveling as a Black woman. I am a Black woman in a society that defines rights as male and white. I am also a citizen of the most powerful country in the world. Now, if as an African-American I do not stand to that—in other words, recognize the fact that there are powers I have that a woman in Bangladesh does not, that a woman in Burundi does not have although she is Black and she is maybe a feminist, there are things I can do that she cannot do. If I do not accept responsibility for my power, then I am throwing it away; then I am giving it to both of our oppressors.

It is very important, I feel, for women to recognize that. Being women will not save us from being responsible for using our power; being Black women will not save us from being responsible for using our power. Because we are oppressed, we must be very careful not to believe that gives us *carte blanche* to take advantage of the privilege that results from oppressing others.

Women's music is a real case in point, because we use incredibly sophisti-

cated machinery, even down to these clever little Walkmans that we listen to our cassettes on; every single woman who listens to one of those cassettes, or runs a computer—and I do, and perhaps you do—needs to *know* what happens in the sweatshops which are womanned by women in Asia. We need to know what happens in Malaysia and Sri Lanka. We need to know what that expensive machine that we're listening to our music on means in terms of eyesight of the women who are going blind assembling microchips. And if we



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don't, then we can't talk about women's music or feminist culture. I would love to see an article in *HOT WIRE* about that; instead of me on the front page, a group of Malaysian women who work to assemble the parts of the machines that we use to make women's music possible. Women's music is a very potent force for change; the women who are involved in women's music are also a very potent power for change, and we need to see the connections we have to women all over the world.

YOU'VE WRITTEN ABOUT THE EROTIC AS POWER. LESBIAN THERAPIST JOANN LOULAN, WHO'S WRITTEN *LESBIAN SEX AND LESBIAN PASSION*, SAYS SHE FEELS "BUTCH AND FEMME" IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF LESBIAN SEXUALITY, AND THAT WE ARE WITNESSING A "BUTCH-FEMME RENAISSANCE."

If we go back to the whole paradigm of the early '50s and the '40s when what it really meant was a male/female dichoto-

my that mirrored all of the kinds of distortions shown in the larger male/female society—no! I cannot accept the fact that retrogression is progress. If on the other hand you're talking about the genuine differences we all carry around inside of us, the polarities and the extremes and the contradictions that each one of us represents, and how the things lie down inside of us and how we play them off against each other in a relationship back and forth—that feels to me to be something different. That feels to me to be looking with closer and closer scrutiny at what the actual mechanics of relating between two people are. Again, I would say if it's a question of a name, a question of the words you use, that words come often loaded with their own history, so I hope that people who take part in saying "butch and femme" are not simply taking the old definitions. If they are, I think that's very destructive and very retrograde. If they are, on the other hand, redefining what butch and femme means, then I say great. I am not wedded to the use or non-use of words; I am wedded to not having them be used lightly and not having them distorted.

I said it about being Black: it's not our destiny to fulfill white America's mistakes. And it's not the destiny of Lesbians to fulfill the mistakes of the heterosexual world. It's not our destiny as women to relive male mistakes, and we are going to do it unless we begin to—here we come right back to where we started, the question of what vision and poetry is all about. Poetry, music, constructs visions of what has not been; it doesn't show us the path to go backwards into our past. We need to know our past, we need to accept and learn from our past, and we need to move forward.

The function of women's music, like the function of poetry, is to make us more who we wish to be, and therefore more powerful in terms of fighting the battles we all share. And we cannot take one without the other. Most of what American culture has done, and American learning, has been to make us receivers, passive absorbers. One of the functions of women's culture is to activate us. I'm less interested in the fact that you believe the same things I believe as I'm interested in getting you off your duff and putting yourself behind what you believe—and I'm willing to meet you. I believe we won't be too far apart. ●

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IN 'HOT WIRE'**

SOAPBOX

Thanks for long-overdue coverage of photographers Irene Young and Susan Wilson. So many things get taken for granted, just like in families. So many kids grow up with dozens of photos of themselves as infants, then a meager collection of grade-school photos, and finally maybe only yearbook photos. Then probably graduation pix, and most of us *don't* have the traditional wedding album! Anyway, women's music has been the same way. But we've been lucky to have photographers like Irene and Susan to document things, so *our* family memories are more complete. What a hoot to look back at photos from even ten years ago, like in *Paid My Dues* back issues. I'm so glad these photos exist. Here are some other photographers who deserve to be remembered and thanked: Diana Davies, JEB, Tee Corinne, Toni Armstrong, Gail Indvik, Marcy J. Hochberg, Jane Melnick, Laura Cuzzillo, Vada Vernée, Nancy Seeger, Ellen Spiro, and Sharon Farmer. I'm sure there are more, but I'm especially grateful to those women who have specialized in live-action photography. You have a wonderful crew working for *HOT WIRE*.

Libby Reinholdt, Springfield, Missouri

Preserving our culture visually in photos and drawings—as well as in written articles and recorded music (soundshhets)—is a top priority here at 'HOT WIRE.' We are always interested in seeing concert photographs of women taken by women. Also, see "JEB: Enhancer of Lesbian Images" by Jean Wallace [November 1987], and Vada Vernée on page 50 of this issue.

It's really too bad instrumental music—jazz, classical, etc.—isn't popular in women's music. Some of our most talented women will never be "famous" among lesbians who supposedly value "women's music and culture." Ellen Seeling's article was deeply gratifying ["The Politics of Instrumental Music," July 1988] and I read it and hoped others would get excited. But then I thought about the mediocrity on the radio every day, and how most talented studio musicians and back-up players in the mainstream are also not famous—I guess it's human nature to go for the flash and be bored by the substance. Nonetheless, as a fan of instruments well-played, I agree with Miss Seeling: "To me the greatest turn-on is seeing a woman handle her instrument and the performance situation with ease and assurance..."

Linda B. Williams, Madison, Wisconsin

It was nice that Deidre McCalla mentioned Adrienne Rich [interview, July 1988]. Poets get ignored. There are a lot of good poets. I wish I could write, and I can't, and I really like to read the poems of women who can. Adrienne Rich, and Audre Lorde, and Marge Piercy, and Pat Parker and so many more, they deserve to be promoted the same as the talented musicians.

Kristie Brach, Los Angeles, California



Former women's music performer Tracy Chapman on tour in 1988 with Amnesty International Tour, featuring Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Peter Gabriel, and many others.

We remember her as our heartthrob who has performed for us at festivals. We know her by the feelings she expresses, the feelings that reach into our hearts with courage and love. Feelings we can all relate to. Tracy is an avid supporter of human rights. Touring with Amnesty International's "Human Rights Now" Tour, she is helping to expand awareness about prisoners all around the world who have been held and tortured because of their beliefs and their integrity. We smile and cheer jubilantly for this shy, humble heartthrob as she takes on the world. And we look at ourselves with a knowing that there is so much hope for the future! If you would like to stand up for human rights, write Amnesty International, P.O. Box 37137, Washington, D.C. 20013.

Kathy Tully, Buena Park, California

Please accept this \$100 donation in sponsorship of *HOT WIRE*. I am delighted to have the opportunity to become actively involved in keeping it going in its present splendiddness. I will personally consider the magazine *my* cultural work henceforth. I never before considered being "involved" in this way. I have a good-paying job and a loving family; while both are a blessing, it is my curse to be in the closet in both situations. I know *HOT WIRE* and all of women's music & etc. are helping to make closets less necessary—and to make life in them more bearable in the meantime. Thank you.

Name and locale withheld by request

Fascinating to read, the details of Olivia Records' early years [by Judy Dlugacz, July 1988]. I feel I've missed something along the way, though. Olivia Records used to be beyond a doubt "the" lesbian label. But I've gone to a number of performances in recent years where their musicians are *totally* in the closet, from what I can tell. I'm not even sure some of them are lesbians—maybe I'm making an outdated assumption? You used to be able to take friends to Olivia concerts (especially Meg's) and *know* that they'd hear something great about being a lesbian. Now it seems like it's up to audience members to absorb any lesbianism they're going to get through osmosis, from being in the audience with lots of other lesbians—they certainly aren't likely to get much if any *lesbian consciousness* from what's going on up there on stage. I don't get it. I especially don't get it when it's Olivia artists??

Lydia Ruiz, Fullerton, California

I just can't believe it's been 15 years for Olivia Records and all of us. No matter what good or bad happens, society can't take it away from us. There's been a lot of infighting and a lot of water under the bridge, as they say, but here we are 15 years later. Wow.

Grace Kreuger, Norristown, Pennsylvania

I have a confession: I am one of those girls who has perpetuated that idea that women's music is just folk music. I read "The Great White Folk Music Myth" [by Toni L. Armstrong, July 1988] and saw it in a whole new light. I guess I have been exposed to the traveling singer-songwriter type of individual and have not gone to festivals. Also, though I don't listen to "folk" music on the radio (I like your basic mostly-white mostly-male rock, though I wish it *weren't* mostly white male), I do respond to songs that are about my life as a lesbian. So friends pass on records that are like that. I never really thought much about the bigger picture of women's music. Of course the article was right on. Of course it was simple-minded of me not to think of this issue except superficially. (I especially got the point of the line, "It is not constructive to take the attitude, 'I never heard of it, so it never existed'.") And now of course I will make more of an effort to get my butt to events like festivals where I can be exposed to women playing the style of music that I do like. (P.S. I got a 15 on the quiz.)

Mandy Loenzi, Spokane, Washington

I found "Women's Music and Culture Highlights" [July 1988, written by various artists] to be thought provoking. It sparked similar memories for me. I especially connected with Kristan Aspen's comments about Random Productions in Knoxville. Random produced a concert for Martie van der Voort and myself in

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HOTLINE

By Joy Rosenblatt

NEWS

Dramatic forms of political protest are a specialty of **WOMEN IN ENGLAND**. Actions have included: Four lesbians sneaking into the BBC's TV studios during a live newscast and chaining themselves to the broadcaster's desks to protest anti-gay legislation; three lesbians protesting against the same laws by absailing (swinging down on ropes) into the sedate chamber of the House of Lords shouting, "We're gay and we're proud"; teams of women flying neighborhoods with thousands of fake but official-looking posters stating that, by order of local police, "all male persons are to be off the public highways by 8 p.m. every Tuesday and Friday...any male found to be breaching this order will be liable to prosecution... this is an attempt to combat the recent increase in violent crimes against women." (Reported by Alix Dobkin and a variety of publications.)

The Downtown United Presbyterian Church of Rochester, New York conducted its first same-sex wedding on May 20, 1988, reported *Lesbian News*. Congratulations to **LORI DARINETTE KENDALL** and **LINDA JEAN BURLEY**.

A street in Montgomery, Alabama has been renamed **ROSA PARKS AVENUE**. Parks was the black woman who refused to yield her seat to a white person on a Montgomery bus in 1955, sparking a year-long bus boycott. Her action is widely recognized as a major milestone in the black civil rights movement.

Carol Levin and Sally Owen are planning to open a **WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE IN NEW YORK CITY**, according to *New Directions for Women*. Womanbooks closed in August of 1987, leaving the Big Apple without a feminist bookstore. The bank loan Levin and Owen applied for in November of 1987 was provisionally approved pending the guarantee of the loan by the Small Business Administration, which has stated in the past that "helping women become successful entrepreneurs is a special major goal." However, the SBA turned down the loan guarantee based on a rule that states that assistance is prohibited to "book distributors that specialize in selling products that promote or advocate ideas including ideological, political, artistic, or philosophical viewpoints." Levin and Owen have gone to the women's community to borrow money, and have secured enough to start looking for space, but are still in need of funds. Carol Levin, Judith's Room Ltd., 351 W. 53rd St. #2, New York, NY 10019. (212) 246-9736.

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

SISTERSPIRIT Women's Bookstore/Coffeehouse in San Jose, California has announced new bookstore hours. They are open Monday-Friday 6:30-9 p.m.; Saturday 3-6 p.m.; and Sunday 1-4 p.m. The coffeehouse is open until 11 p.m. on coffeehouse nights. Fall performances included The Washington Sisters, Judy Fjell, Terry Baum, Huckleberry Jam, and Hunter Davis. (408) 293-9372.

From the "It Ain't Over 'til It's Over" Department.... A **RALLY FOR ERA**--to help launch the new campaign to pass the Equal Rights Amendment--was held June 30, 1988 at the Capitol Building in Washington, DC. The event featured long-time feminist activist-entertainer **KRISTIN LEMS**, one of the original founders of the National Women's Music Festival.

GROUPS

THE GAY & LESBIAN HISTORY ON STAMPS CLUB welcomes anyone interested in stamp collecting in any country to drop them a line. GLHSC has been serving philatelists since 1982 and will send you, under no obligation, free information about the club and a copy of their quarterly journal. GLHSC, P.O. Box 3940, Hartford, CT 06103.

The **LESBIAN & GAY BIG APPLE CORPS SYMPHONIC BAND** is looking for members. Trimusicangle, 123 W. 44th #12L, New York, NY 10036. (212) 869-2922.

The **LESBIAN & GAY PRIDE MARCHING BAND** is looking for members. Sunday afternoon meetings from 2-4 p.m. at the Rodde Center. 3225 N. Sheffield, Chicago, IL 60657.

"Sixteen lesbian singers seeking same." Weekly rendezvous. All women welcome. **ARTEMIS SINGERS**, P.O. Box 578296, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 764-4465.

THEATER-TV-RADIO

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL NEWS GATHERING SERVICE is the only nationally syndicated radio program in the U.S. to focus entirely on women in the news and to feature women's voices from around the globe. It is now used by 130 radio stations in six countries. **WINGS**, P.O. Box 6758, San Francisco, CA 94101. (415) 861-5434.

According to *Time*, Phyllis Diller has been playing Mother Mary Regina in the San Francisco production of the comedy **NUNSENSE**, in which fifty two of her flock have been inadvertently poisoned by a convent cook, Julia "Child of God"--but the nuns have only enough money to bury forty eight of the dead.

"INSIDE OUT"--a new internationally produced and distributed radio program series by, for, and about lesbians & gay men--made its debut on public radio stations across the U.S. and Canada last April.

KAY GARDNER and **CATHERINE REID** have begun a radio program of women's music and culture on **WERU-FM**, a community radio station in Maine. The show, called **"WOMEN'S WINDOWS,"** began as a feature and has been expanded to an hour. At present, plans are being made to syndicate the show and offer it to public radio stations. Artists and record companies are invited to send recordings. "Women's Windows"/**WERU-FM**, The Hen House, Blue Hill Falls, Maine 04615.

WENDY HOFFMAN has written--and performs in--a multimedia performance play entitled *Incest: Remember and Tell*, reports *New Directions for Women*. She is attacking the problem of challenging laws which do not allow legal recourse for victims over the age of 18 with a lawsuit against her father and uncle for sexual violence. Make contributions to lawsuit payable to the not-for-profit West Side Arts Coalition, c/o Wendy Hoffman, 51 W. 76th St., New York, NY 10023.

FILM & VIDEO

WHISPER, THE WAVES, THE WIND, a documentary by Suzanne Lacy, received an Honorable Mention in the Independent Filmmaker category at the 1988 San Francisco Independent Film Festival, reported the *Bay Area Women's News*. It was filmed on the La Jolla, California beach in 1984, with 150 older women (aged 60 to 100) discussing their individual lives and personal experiences of the aging process. Later footage shows a reunion of several participants who talk about the impact of the documentary on their lives.

Attention fans of **RONNIE GILBERT**: She made cameo appearances in two 1988 movies: *Running On Empty* with Christine Lahti; and *Crossing Delancey*, which also features **SUZZY ROCHE** as the best friend of the character played by Amy Irving.

VISIONS OF THE SPIRIT, a full-length documentary examination of Alice Walker's work directed and produced by Elena Featherston, had its world premiere last April in San Francisco, reported the *Bay Area Women's News*. A reception with Featherston and Walker preceded the screening.

A WORLD APART, a drama about the relationship between a South African daughter and her anti-apartheid crusader mother, won the Special Jury Award at the Cannes Film Festival this last summer, according to the *Chicago Sun Times*.

The first annual month-long **CHICAGO GAY & LESBIAN ARTS CELEBRATION** was held from September 15 through October 16, 1988. Events included **DEIDRE McCALLA** in concert with Romanovsky & Phillips at Park West nightclub; **ANN REED**, **HUNTER DAVIS**, **LORI NOELLE**, and **MUSICA FEMINA** at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse; theater presentations; readings and literature events; visual arts displays; the Gay Horizons Identity Conference; dances; and the 8th annual Chicago Lesbian & Gay Film Festival. (312) 477-5220.

STILL KILLING US SOFTLY is an updated version of Jean Kilbourne's 1979 film *Killing Us Softly: Advertising's Image of Women*. The advertising industry—still devaluing women despite the gains in the women's movement—continues to reinforce and perpetuate myths that are detrimental to women and that perpetuate negative gender stereotypes. Cambridge Documentary Films, P.O. Box 385, Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 354-3677.



An estimated 100,000 people returned to Washington, DC during the weekend of October 8 to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the National March on Washington for Lesbian & Gay Rights, which drew 650,000 participants in 1987. Readers of names from the more than 8,000 panels of the **NAMES PROJECT** Quilt included Susan Sarandon (left), Sigourney Weaver (right), Shirley MacLaine, Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, and other celebrities and activists.

The 12th **SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL** was held June 17-26 during SF's Lesbian/Gay Freedom celebration, according to *Lesbian News*. Sponsored by the non-profit media arts organization Frameline, it is the largest screening of its kind. *Lesbian News* also reported on the 1988 **LOS ANGELES LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL**, held July 8-20 at the Directors Guild of America Theatre. It had more than thirty five features and documentaries from twelve countries, as well as twenty short subjects and thirty feature and short videos.

ACTING OUR AGE, a film that celebrates older women directed by Michal Aviad, was seen on public TV this last summer, according to *New Directions for Women*. Aviad interviews six older women who talk about what it is like to come out as a lesbian after age 50, what it is like to be celibate and lonely after a partner's death, and what it is like to live on \$550 a month. Direct Cinema Ltd., P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417 (201) 891-8240.

In the 1988 release *Gorillas in the Mist*, **SIGOURNEY WEAVER** plays Dian Fossey, the Kentuckian sent to the rain forests of Rwanda in 1966 to take a census of the endangered African mountain gorillas. Fossey was slain in 1985, after devoting her life to saving the primates. She had stipulated in her will that her estate, including book royalties, go to gorilla preservation. Her mother, however, successfully contested the will, and all funds from the movie now go to the family.



RADIUM CITY, a documentary by Carole Langer, details the history from 1922-1977 of the Radium Dial Co. and its successor, Luminous Processes, which produced clock-faces with numbers that glowed in the dark. The women workers were taught to sharpen their brushes by licking them every time before they dipped them into the radioactive paint. Women started dying not long after the company came to town. *Radium City* deals with the fallout from deadly technology that spews profits for the few while killing the many. Praeses Productions, 28 Greene St., New York, NY (212) 925-1599.

The 210-page **POWERFUL IMAGES: A WOMAN'S GUIDE TO AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES** has been published by Isis International, the global women's information & communication network. Includes 600 films/videos/slideshows produced by and for women in 50+ countries. Rachel Kamel, P.O. Box 25711, Philadelphia, PA 19144. The Spanish edition: *El Poder de la Imagen*, 11, Casilla 2067, Correo Central, Santiago, Chile.

SEVEN WOMEN, SEVEN SINS, a film on which seven internationally known women directors collaborated, was shown last May at the Waverly Theatre in New York City, with simultaneous releases in San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles, reported *New Directions for Women*. "What constitutes a deadly sin today?" German television (ZDF) asked seven women directors to film their interpretations.

GATHERINGS

SPIRITHEALER, a retreat for women musicians and artists, is planned for January 16-20, 1989 at Kalani Honua Intercultural Conference & Retreat Center. Plans include workshops; house rhythm section; tech support; equipped music room; sauna, hot tub, pool, secluded resort, and beaches. Event produced by Pacific Freelance/Rixanne Wehren, director, P.O. Box 2352, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745. (808) 329-2699.

The **PARALLELS AND INSERTIONS: A NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RACISM AND OTHER FORMS OF OPPRESSION** conference, scheduled for April 6-9, will include speakers **TONI CADE BAMBARA**, **ANGELA DAVIS**, **PAULA GUNN ALLEN**, **BARBARA SMITH**, **MELANIE KAYE-KANTROWITZ**, and many others. Register by mail no later than March 1. Women Against Racism/University of Iowa, Women's Resource & Action Center, 130 N. Madison St., Iowa City, IA 52242. (319) 335-1486.

The **RUMOURS BAR** is preparing a **RE-UNION** for the Nova Scotia Gay Community in 1989. Entertainment Committee, Rumours Club, P.O. Box 7126N, Halifax, NS, Canada B3K 3B7. (902) 423-6814.

For more info on the next **MIDWESTERN LESBIAN SEPARATIST CONFERENCE** in Southeastern Wisconsin: Burning Bush, P.O. Box 3065, Madison, WI 53704-0065.

Writers and publishers who want information about the 1989 **WRITERS CONFERENCE** to be held at the National Women's Music Festival June 2-4, 1989: Midge Stocker, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60623.

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Joy Rosenblatt, long-time activist in women's music, is one of the concert producers at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago. She also produces the soundsheet feature of 'HOT WIRE' and has an extensive collection of women's music recordings.

THE AUDIO ANGLE

THE MICHIGAN ACOUSTIC STAGE

By Karen Kane

This year at the 13th Michigan Womyn's Music Festival I had the pleasure of being the first sound engineer to work the Acoustic Stage. Since its inception five years ago, there has never been any sound system on the Acoustic Stage, intentionally creating a totally acoustic and intimate environment. ("Totally acoustic" means that no plug-in instruments are allowed on stage, and up until this year it has meant no presence of amplification equipment.) The stage itself is built each year by Rachel Alexander to provide a very "live" sound. The hard wood surfaces reverberate the sound coming from the stage and effectively send it out to the audience. This concept has generally worked well over the years, but as the number of performances on this stage has increased, problems have begun to crop up.

There are several advantages—from the performers' point of view—to having an Acoustic Stage as a totally separate entity from the Day and Night Stages. Kay Gardner, who suggested to Michigan producer Boo Price the idea of having an Acoustic Stage, loves to work there. She says that the presence of many close microphones and the huge scale of the Night Stage—with its crowd of thousands and its complex sound system—separates her from the audience. Character actress Judith Sloan—another advocate for the idea of an Acoustic Stage—says that the spoken word works best in a smaller, more intimate setting. Also, many performers feel that musicians who play classical instruments acoustically on a stage have a diminished sense of musical balance between them when each is amplified using her own microphone—thereby relegating the decisions regarding balance to the sound technician, who may or may not have an ear for that kind of music.

Over the years, the Acoustic Stage audience has grown significantly larger,

THE AUDIO ANGLE discusses information about recording, live sound engineering, and the mysteries of the recording studio.



Sunday morning Acoustic Stage Gospel Choir, Allowyn Price at the piano.

Toni Armstrong, Jr.

especially at the traditional Midnight Candlelight Concert. As the number of bodies of listeners has multiplied—soaking up the sound—it has become increasingly difficult for the women away from front and center to hear what's happening. At Michigan '87, for a perfect example, it was difficult to hear acts such as Sharon Isbin playing her solo classical guitar unless you were up close.

The increasing number of complaints prompted Boo Price and her partner Lisa Vogel to try what we call "sound enhancement" for the Acoustic Stage. Boo and Lisa, along with Myrna Johnston and Shelly Jennings (the Night Stage engineers who bring all the festival's sound equipment from Boston), decided what equipment would work best for the Acoustic Stage. They wanted light enhancement—not overwhelming amplification that would completely undermine the concept of the Acoustic Stage. It was important to everyone that the acoustic essence be maintained.

There were two issues that needed to be addressed concerning the perform-

ances on the stage: how to lightly amplify music, and how to amplify acts that had speaking (such as the play *Gertrude Stein And A Companion*; the San Francisco comedy troupe *Over Our Heads*; storyteller Luisa Teish; or poet Margaret Sloan-Hunter).

For the music performances, we used two hanging microphones and two PZM (pressure zone microphone) plate mics that could sit flat on the floor. The PZM is a new form of microphone that has been gaining popularity over the last few years. It is made of an encased diaphragm which is mounted onto a flat surface plate. Accumulating across the horizontal plane of the plate, the sound waves are collected at the diaphragm. With conventional microphones, sound travels to the mic from two directions (especially from a distance): directly from the sound source and as a reflection from a nearby surface. When the microphone combines both the direct and reflected, the result is often a hollow sound. A smoother frequency response is the result of the PZM when

placed directly flat onto the surface that would otherwise provide the reflective path.

At our Acoustic Stage, two conventional microphones were hung across the stage on a rope strung overhead, and were intended to pick up the overall sound of the stage. The moveable PZM floor mics were placed anywhere they were needed, according to the set up of the musicians. For example, during the sound check for Jambeaux (featuring Marilyn Wilson/oboe, Jane Peckham/piano, and Margie Gage/french horn), I first listened to the two hanging mics to see what the general balance was like. The piano—which was usually very present in the blend—stayed stationary while I moved Marilyn or Margie as close to one of the hanging mics as possible. The PZM floor mics were used as a reinforcement of the sound that still needed to come out more in the mix.

On the other hand, there was absolutely no need for floor mics with the Sunday morning Gospel Choir directed by Allowyn Price. With upwards of 75 women on stage, the hanging mics were enough to capture the blend that was already happening. Aside from the danger of getting stepped on by having such a crowded, lively stage, the floor mics would only have emphasized a small portion of the voices and would have made it sound out of balance.

Amplifying the sets that included speech required a different approach. Wireless, clip-on miniature microphones ("lavaliers") were chosen for these performances. The unobtrusive lavaliers provided clean, audible sound anywhere women were sitting. You couldn't see the microphones, there were no cables involved, and it left the hands of the performers free. The play *Gertrude Stein And A Companion* would not have been nearly as enjoyable if half the audience was straining to hear the dialogue—especially since we had a very full house for the play's first performance on Wednesday evening. The performers would have had a genuinely difficult time projecting their voices loud enough for the entire audience to hear.

This year's sound system also worked extremely well with announcements and introductions of performers. In years past, the emcees needed to project their speaking voices *very* loudly to be heard. This hasn't always worked well, since most people are not trained to successfully do this.

Yet another advantage to having a sound system at the Acoustic Stage is the ability to record the events happening there. For archival reasons, the Day and

Night Stage performances at Michigan are always recorded onto cassette. This year the Acoustic Stage was finally able to participate in that tradition, and everything was preserved on tape.

Production coordinator Ginny Berson has been guiding and observing the evolution of the Acoustic Stage since its beginning. The first year, with Ginny as emcee, the stage started at 9 a.m.—unlike the 4-to-7 p.m. showtime we had in 1988. The way I've heard it, the stage crew in early years had little to do but sweep off the stage in the morning to be ready for the performances and/or workshops.

By 1988, the Acoustic Stage production schedule looked much more similar to those of the Day and Night Stages. A typical day:

SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 1988

9:00-9:30 a.m.	Sharon Isbin sound check
9:30-10:00 a.m.	Panopticon sound check
10:00-11:00 a.m.	Panopticon rehearsal
11:00-12:30 p.m.	Over Our Heads sound check and rehearsal
12:30-2:00 p.m.	Gospel choir sound check and rehearsal

3:15 p.m.
3:30 p.m.

4:00 p.m.
4:30 p.m.
5:00 p.m.
5:30 p.m.
6:00 p.m.

Stage crew call
Emcee call (Adrienne Torf) and
Panopticon call
Panopticon show
Over Our Heads call
Over Our Heads show
Sharon Isbin call
Sharon Isbin show

Trying anything new is always risky; it takes a lot of effort from the people involved to make it go well. Overall, Ginny Berson says she was very happy with the results of the Acoustic Stage's first year with sound. The entire Acoustic Stage crew (Ginny Berson, Raye Kathryn Amour, Christie Delgado, Cathy Welch, Florie Rothenberg, Andrea Rudner, Irys Schenker, and Terry Ellis) deserves a round of applause for making its first year in a new era such a success. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Karen Kane has been in the studio business since 1970. She was the first successful independent recording engineer in the Boston area, male or female. She has engineered and/or produced more than 70 albums.

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NOTEWORTHY WOMEN

OUR MUSICAL FOREMOTHERS ON DISC

By Janna MacAuslan

In writing this article I tried to consider pleasing as many people involved in the current women's music scene as possible: my editor Toni Armstrong, who wants me to write about historical women; our wonderful women's music record distributors (some of whom have seen the light and carry a classical women's music line—and others who should); and our readers, who, of course, are interested in all aspects of women's music, and who buy lots of records, discs, and cassettes.

Sadly, this particular article took about four hours to research, because there is just not that much recorded music by classical composers who are women. Instead of my usual three to four week search—or months-long research projects—I merely ran down to our local Portland library, consulted the two main discographies available about women's classical music, and included some biographical information.

In this issue, "Noteworthy Women" features five artists whose music will be included in Musica Femina's fall '88 and spring '89 tours: Jane Pickering, Francesca Caccini, Isabella Leonarda, Elisabeth Claude Jacquet de la Guerre, and Maria Theresia von Paradis. There we have it—English, Italian, French, and Austrian. Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical. Courtly lady, court musician, nun, another courtly musician, and touring virtuosa.

Little is known about JANE PICKERING. Usually the story goes that the compositions in her manuscript of lute music were written down by her teacher—a man, no doubt—for her to practice. Every well-bred English Renaissance young lady was expected to play the lute. She may have been the daughter of a minor noble. She also may have married a tutor, Henry Prince of Wales. But other scholars agree that the dates don't jibe, for her parents would just be getting married about the time she was said to have ac-

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



Maria Theresia von Paradis



Medallion ordered by King Louis XIV in honor of Elisabeth Claude Jacquet de la Guerre.

quired the manuscript—making it unlikely that she was *that* Jane. (Still with me? This

is the stuff of musicology, and when all is said and done, the only thing we may be sure of is that two musicologists will rarely agree and will continue to argue about it eternally.) So we don't really know who Jane Pickering was, or if she wrote some of the lute pieces in the book of music that has come to be known as the Jane Pickering manuscript.

We *do* know that she penned seventy-seven pieces in the book and did not sign them, while other pieces in the collection have names of authors at the top or end of the music. The pieces were written for a lute with up to nine courses (sets of strings close together like on a twelve string guitar), and were in Renaissance G tuning. A feminist scholar would wonder if Jane Pickering was one more of the hundreds of women whose compositions were not signed for whatever reason. Remember the saying "Anonymous was a woman"? Kristan Aspen and I often open our Musica Femina performances with two duets from the Pickering manuscripts, reminding our audiences of this pit of anonymity into which many women were cast.

The only recording of compositions from the Pickering collection that I could find reference to is by the guitar duo Turibio Santos and Oscar Caceres (Music Heritage Society series, #1944.)

FRANCESCA CACCINI (1587-before 1640) was one of the most famous singers in early Baroque Italy. She was trained by her father Giulio Caccini, who was among the first group to compose in the form that today is known as opera. She is now thought to have been the first woman to compose an opera. *La Liberazione di Ruggiero dall' isola d'Alcina* (The Liberation of Ruggiero from the Island of Alcina) is now available in modern edition. It has been recorded in part on a wonderful two-record anthology called *Woman's Works*, put together by Marnie Hall. (Gemini Hall Records, 808 West End Ave., New York, NY 10025/also available from Ladyslipper Music, P.O. Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705). Musica Femina will be recording an instrumental ritornello from this opera on our upcoming CD and tape,

to be released spring/summer 1989.

ISABELLA LEONARDA (1620-1703) was one of the most prolific of the nun composers in 17th century Italy. She was from a powerful family in Novara, entered the convent at an early age, and eventually rose to the position of Mother Vicar in her convent. She wrote more than 200 works, mostly sacred and vocal, but there are twelve instrumental church sonatas that are among the earliest known instrumental pieces composed by a woman. Her *Messa Prima* from *Opus 18* has been recorded on an album entitled *Music for the Mass by Nun Composers* (Leonarda Productions, #115).

ELISABETH CLAUDE JACQUET DE LA GUERRE (1666/67?-1727) was a child prodigy who was a favorite performer for King Louis XIV. He saw to her education and provided her with a pension with which she supported herself. Her talent was also recognized by her contemporaries, and she wrote in every form—large and small—that was popular in her day. After her death, the king had a medal cast in her honor, showing her seated at the harpsichord. Around the edge are the words *with the great musicians I competed for the prize*.

De la Guerre is not taught in the music schools of today, but her works are just beginning to make a comeback and re-enter the repertoire. She wrote an opera, trio and solo sonatas, cantatas, a ballet, and several books of harpsichord music. Several of her cantatas have been recorded on Leonarda Records (LPI 109), and there is an exquisite recording of some of her harpsichord music by Emer Buckley on the Harmonia Mundi label (#1098).

One of the most widely recorded pieces attributed to a woman composer, *Sicillenne* by **MARIA THERESIA VON PARADIS**, may in fact be a fraud. While it has been recorded by everyone from Itzhak Perlman to Jacqueline Du Pre, no autograph has ever been found—and only a later copy with overly modern har-

monization attributes this piece to von Paradis. It may have been a musicological joke put on by Samuel Duskin, the arranger of a widely circulated edition, or it could in fact have been written by von Paradis (and the original in her own hand lost). She did write many songs, and *Musica Femina* will be recording one of these soon. She also wrote operas, cantatas, choral pieces, concertos, chamber and keyboard works—so much music, but most of it has been lost to us today.

Of interest was that von Paradis toured Europe with her mother, was a friend of the Mozart family, and started a school for girls. She did all of this without her sight, as she was blinded by an accident early in life. She notated her compositions with the aid of a pegboard, devised for her by a teacher, that had different shaped pegs representing the musical symbols.

If this has whetted your appetite for historical recordings of women's music, check out these sources for more:

One of the finest discographies to come out is the *International Discography of Women Composers* by Aaron I. Cohen (Greenwood Press, 1984). He says he got interested in doing research on women in music during a visit to a library in a European monastery. When he returned the second day to continue reading an old volume, the monk in charge brought him by mistake a later edition of the book he had been studying. Soon he noticed that many of the women he had read about the day before had been omitted! He realized that they had been dropped from the later edition by male editors. This made Cohen very angry, and he decided to write the *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* (Bowker, 1981). Then in 1983 he compiled the *International Discography of Women Composers*.

The second edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* will be available in the U.S. soon, and will include the discography. Cohen has expanded it to include more than 6,200

names from many countries. A retired city planner, he could afford to hire a research staff with computers and many languages between them. But much of the initial work was done by Cohen himself, combing through the books on music in European libraries, and taking notes on index cards. He used a reference chart of key feminist words to sift through books in languages he doesn't read. He then copied the page and sent it back home to his team of translators. Painstaking work. And then there were the photographs; he had to omit over 2,000 photos because he couldn't locate the photographers to obtain permission.

These two volumes are a must for every library music section. They are even affordable for individuals, considering what you receive for your \$125. (Books and Music USA Inc., P.O. Box 1301 Cathedral Station, New York, NY 10025.)

A second important discography of women's works in the classical realm was written by composer Jane Frasier of Denver. *Women Composers: A Discography* (Detroit Studies in Music Bibliography Series, Information Coordinators, Inc., 1435-1437 Randolph St., Detroit, MI 48226) is nicely cross-indexed by name, record company, type of composition, and title of the work. While not as extensive as the Cohen work (Jane didn't have a research staff), it is a valuable contribution to your library of women's music.

I hope these highlights have inspired you to check out recordings of classical women's music. Request these discs from your local women's music distributors. If they don't carry them, they should—and maybe they will start if you ask! ●

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 completing their first LP of music by women composers.*

1989 Index-Directory of Women's Media

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LÁADAN

THE POETICS OF LÁADAN

By Suzette Haden Elgin

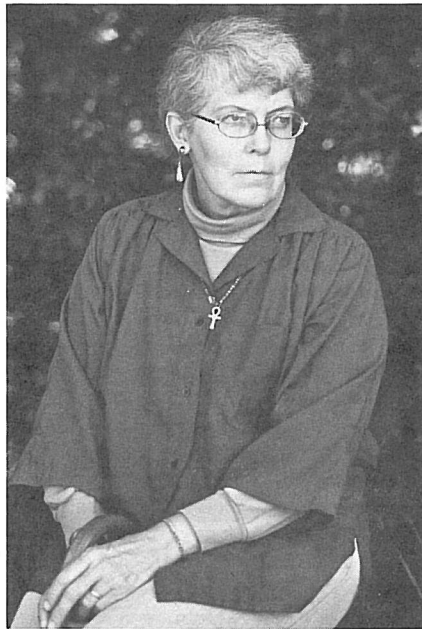
Scholars—perhaps especially male scholars—are much given to the claim that the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis has been proved false. They call it romantic unscientific nonsense when they are being most generous, and ignorant occultism when they are less so. This is very easy to understand, since the implications of the hypothesis are stunningly inconvenient for the military-industrial complex and all of its patriarchal apparatus.

The hypothesis proposes that our human perceptions are structured by the language(s) that we use; if that is true, it means that language—not missiles, or money, or gadgets—is the most powerful mechanism for bringing about social change. Of course the established power structure will do everything possible to make it appear that this is false—because it is directly threatened by that hypothesis.

The Láadan language was constructed as an experiment in the application of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (hereafter SWH), with the fundamental idea being that use of a language based on the perceptions of women has the potential to bring about significant change in patriarchal culture and society.

If we seek evidence for or against SWH in the poetics of languages, we quickly learn that it is evidence *for* rather than against. Suppose we begin with something as simple as rhyme. Rhyme is extremely powerful. Along with rhythm (to be discussed in a later column), it is one of the language devices we most depend upon to teach our children the basic concepts on which our culture is based, and to etch those concepts in memory. And this leads to an obvious conclusion: *What rhymes in a language strongly constrains and controls what that language will use as its symbols and metaphors.*

LÁADAN: "The language of those who perceive," a language constructed to express the perceptions of women. It appears in the *Native Tongue* science fiction novel series by Suzette Haden Elgin. This column presents commentary and translation-lessons.



It's not an accident that the birds we see flying about in the print (and other media) expressions of romantic love and romantic peace are doves. If the dove's name had been "ostrich," some other bird would have had to take its place. But it happens that in English "love/dove" is a perfect rhyme. It also happens that doves are birds that can be portrayed with relative accuracy as snowy white—also very important to the mainstream culture in which everything pure and good is *alleged* to be white—and the snowier the better.

No language is assembled with careful semantic structuring to ensure that the perfect rhymes available to its poets will always reinforce the preferred values of the powerful. Such a tactic—like the somewhat similar linguistic engineering that appears in Orwell's novel *Brave New World*—is always futile because (a) the natural processes of language change will inevitably undermine it and cannot be legislated away, and (b) you would have to retool the language each time there was a *shift* in the dominant values, and that can't be legislated either. But it is always going to be useful to take a look at a

language to determine what rhymes it has available, and then to consider those rhymes as raw material for construction of elements of the culture and its symbol systems.

No rhyming dictionary of Láadan exists as yet, and it has been hard to carry out this task, but the Láadan-to-English dictionary (prepared by Karen Robinson) has made it possible to at least begin. What I would like to do in this brief article is provide you with a first list of Láadan rhymes—restricted almost entirely to perfect rhymes—and encourage you to use them to create the sort of very basic and essential culture-transmitting poems that are represented in English by nursery rhymes, by traditional ballads and hymns, and by such memory aids as "Thirty days hath September." Certainly the poetry of Láadan does not *have* to use rhyme, just as the poetry of the Bible did not use rhyme, and the poetry of many of the world's languages does not. But if it *can* be used, it is so powerful a resource that it seems a great shame not to put it to work. Unrhymed verse is wonderful stuff, and much to be admired, but the reinforcement that rhyme provides is linguistic currency of the largest denomination.

Here, then, for your examination and use, is a first inventory of sets of Láadan rhymes.

It's true that rhyming in Láadan will be complicated by the endings that the grammar dictates must be added to the words. But this is no different in principle from the care we must take in rhyming for English with its smaller set of word-endings, and it can be dealt with. And whether this project appeals to you or not (and if it does, I would like very much to see the poems you write!), it is still useful to consider what constraints are placed on a Láadan cultural system by the fact that—for just one example—the words for "voice, light, frost, to think" rhyme with the word for "woman." It's also useful to consider whether it would be a good idea to add to the Láadan vocabulary—which is still very new—a word for "dark" that also rhymes with the word for "woman."

LÁADAN RHYMES

1. dl -- TO SAY, SPEAK, TELL
ni -- CUP
thi -- TO HAVE
ri -- TO RECORD, KEEP RECORDS
shi -- TO PLEASE
wi -- KNOWN TO THE SPEAKER
 BECAUSE SELF-EVIDENT
2. ili -- WATER
ilhi -- DISGUST
3. rumi -- SHADOW
rushl -- WINE
4. thili -- FISH
will -- RIVER, CREEK, STREAM
dodl -- TO TRY
doni -- EARTH, SOIL, GROUND
6. leyl -- BLUE
hey! -- PAIN
7. oyi -- EYE
ozhi -- MELON
8. ra -- NO, NOT, NEGATIVE
sha -- NAME
sha -- HARMONY
9. meda -- VEGETABLE
mela -- OCEAN
10. nish -- WEED
lish -- LIGHTNING
11. beth -- HOME
heth -- DOWRY
12. wush -- BROOM
rush -- BE LAST, FINAL
lush -- MYSTERY
13. ashon -- LOVE FOR ONE NOT
 RELATED BY BLOOD, BUT KIN OF
 THE HEART
Athon -- SEED-MONTH; NOVEMBER
14. ash -- STAR
dash -- TOOTH
bash -- COMMON SENSE; THORN
lash -- INDIFFERENCE
15. thosh -- SKY
rosh -- SKIN, FLESH
16. dith -- VOICE
ith -- LIGHT
nith -- FROST
with -- PERSON, WOMAN
lith -- TO THINK
17. ath -- BENISON
hath -- TIME
bath -- NAIL, CLAW
lath -- TO BE CELIBATE BY CHOICE
18. lawida -- PREGNANT
Lahila -- HOLY ONE (DEITY)
19. esh -- BOAT
yesh -- SILVER
hesh -- GRASS
mesh -- ACROSS
resh -- WASP
desh -- DRUG
thesh -- HERB
20. ona -- FACE
owa -- WARM
oma -- HAND
oya -- EYE

For those of you unfamiliar with the language, the sound system of Láadan is roughly as follows: A as in CALM; E as in BELL; I as in MIST; O as in CRONE; U as in DUNE/MOON: B, S, SH, TH, M, N, L, R, W, Y, H as in English, ZH like S in MEASURE. And the sound LH, which has no English counterpart, but is like the Navajo barred-L...a kind of hissed L sound.

That is an option that can be easily exercised in Láadan, but that would be very difficult to implement in existing languages such as English.

It's useful to consider how extremely powerful a Láadan song would be that could be easily learned and remembered and sung, that had a beloved melody, and that used the set of Láadan rhymes for "with -- WOMAN." How much could you accomplish with such a song? How much power is that? Thinking about that single example goes a very long way toward clarifying the almost frantic opposition the existing power structure has mounted to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Suzette Haden Elgin, a Doctor of Linguistics, has taught at the University of California, specializing in Native American languages. She has written numerous linguistic texts in addition to 'The Gentle Art of Verbal Self-Defense' series, and eleven science fiction and fantasy novels.

Teaching materials--grammar, dictionary, tapes, videos, etc.--are available through SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624 if not at your local women's bookstore. To join the Láadan Network, write for information directly to Suzette Haden Elgin, P.O. Box 1137, Huntsville, AR 72740.

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ON STAGE & OFF

1987 March on Washington THE MORNING RALLY

By Pat Parker

When *HOT WIRE* editor Toni Armstrong asked me if I'd be willing to do an article about the 1987 March on Washington—specifically the "Third World Rally" and what it meant a year later—I quickly said, "Yes, no problem."

No problem, indeed. Since that phone conversation, I have paced a quarter-inch groove in my studio carpet, chewed enough toothpicks to make a three-year-old redwood tree, and generally became a royal expletive deleted.

Looking back to the March conjured up all the mixed emotions that existed for me then: the sense of having traveled so far and yet having so far to go, while at the same time passing by lush meadows and crystal blue lakes that entice one to stop and rest and abandon the journey.

The circumstances that brought me to Washington on that cold October day had given me cause to worry. I received a phone call from Pat Norman, who was serving as one of the national co-chairs of the March. It seemed that Pat had been doing battle. The powers that be—the individuals responsible for the logistics of the March, who we shall hereafter refer to as the G.O.B. (read gay old boys)—had once again overlooked the participation of third world people. A compromise was made, and the "Morning Rally" was the result.

Pat Norman sounded tired on the phone that afternoon. "Parker, I want you heard," she told me. "These people need to hear what you have to say." I agreed to come to Washington, but I was conflicted. In 1970, I and a few other women had made forays into the male-dominated gay liberation movement. The goal was unity and coalition. The result was frustration, anger, and rage. There were certain factors that we as lesbians had not considered. One, that men—not unlike women—come to the gay life for different reasons: some because they love their same sex; others because they hate the opposite sex. Two, that a white gay man in

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



Pat Parker: "Despite what was missing, I could not help but feel pride as I watched an event unfold that had been a dream."

the closet enjoyed all the privileges of this patriarchal society, and he was not about to give them up easily.

So we found ourselves exhausting valuable time and energy in arguments over the rights of drag queens, the word "girl," and numerous other issues that brought us no closer together—and in fact sent the lesbians out the door angry and disgusted, swearing that the male gay movement was "not ready."

Those memories were fresh in my mind, coupled with the experiences of being a lesbian of color in both the feminist and gay movements. I kept reminding myself that 1970 was almost twenty years ago and times had changed; that the myopic tendencies of the G.O.B. was limited to a few and not the many.

The other part of me wanted to be in Washington. The memory of the 1968 March on Washington led by the Black civil rights movement was vivid. I had not gone to that march because, like so many people in the country at that time, I simply could not afford it, and I am too much of a Capricorn child to put my finger in the wind and take a chance on where I will lay my head down at night. Yet I was well aware of the ramifications of participating in an event of that magnitude. I have talked often with people who

participated in that March, and it still affects them to this day. The rumblings through the grapevine here indicated that this March on Washington would be similar in its effect on people.

So, I boarded a plane last October and headed for the District of Columbia. On the plane from San Francisco to O'Hare Airport in Chicago, there were several small clusters of gay men and lesbians, about twenty in all. The gay-appearing (and note here that what appears "gay" to gay people and "gay" to straight people are a world apart) service representative who took our tickets handed them back with a knowing smile and said, "I know where you're going."

Switching planes in Chicago and boarding the flight to Washington drastically changed the numerical make-up of the passengers. Now the plane was approximately twenty-five percent gay, and the somber passengers who read their books and magazines between San Francisco and Chicago started exchanging names and learning the place of origin of their sister and fellow passengers. The mood lifted, and excitement and anticipation permeated the atmosphere.

Washington D.C. was packed. Gay men and lesbians were everywhere. The proportion of men to women, however,

seemed to me to be greatly imbalanced, pointing up once again the great difference in the economic realities between men and women. That same economic imbalance was evident in the proportion of whites to people of color. In spite of this, the feeling of community and power was covering the city like a comforter. Washington was, for those few days, a gay town. The streets, restaurants, hotels, and parks were peopled by queers. And the sense of power that comes with numbers--plus the realization for some that they were a long way from home, and their parents and bosses were not watching--led to a mass exodus from the closets. People blatantly walked, strolled, and strutted through the streets of our nation's capital holding hands, arms around shoulders with no fear, no turning of heads to spot the enemy. And the enemy was silent. The occasional bold soul who dared to scream out "faggot" or "queer" was immediately surrounded by bodies screaming back, "Yeah, and what are you going to do about it?"

The sense of power was infectious. I flashed back to a time early in the movement when the idea was put forth of founding a lesbian state, a place where we could live in peace and without closets.

Some of the Morning Rally Participants Included

Pat Parker
Shelley Ettinger
Pat Norman & Hilda Mason
Renee McCoy
Faith Nolan
Lifeline
Kwanza
Connie Panzarino
Kathy Tsui
Buffy Denker
Tana Loi
Ginitta & Friends
Native American prayer ceremony
Lavender Light Gospel Choir

At that time I said "no way." I was not prepared to live in a totally lesbian state, because to the gay movement I was still invisible. (Although I feel more visible today, I still believe that no minority can make major change alone; when we join together we create power blocks and become a force to be reckoned with.) And to those in the early days who were aware of people of color, many equated third world lesbians with violence, drugs, booze, hustlers, and poverty. In speaking of the feminist and lesbian-feminist movements, many still say that they are "white women's movements"--yet I was there and have never been white. Still, for a few days in that October of 1987 I considered the possibility that maybe such a thing was now viable. Faggots and dykes of

different races and cultures reveled in their togetherness; embraced each other without reservation.

October 8th arrived, and the early morning streets were filled with people. The morning rally--which has mistakenly since been dubbed the "Third World rally"--was to begin at 9 a.m., following the reading of the Names Project quilt. The people involved in setting up the morning rally sought to fill in the obvious gaps in the program of the main rally, which was scheduled to follow the March. The morning rally producers sought to bring together not only representatives of the third world, but also people who had been there when no one else was. A major criticism that can be levied against our movement today is our glaring failure to teach our history to those who follow, and to honor those who stood alone.

I was honored to share the stage with early activists such as Morris Knight and Buffy Dunker. I went to Washington knowing that Pat Norman had not asked me to come just because she liked my poetry, but because she knew that back in the late '60s and early '70s I took my words into churches and bars, coffeehouses, and parks and said, "I am Black and I am Lesbian; I am proud of both and not willing to compromise either." Pat Norman knew that I had stood alone.

So I was filled with mixed emotions that day. I was exhilarated by the sight of hundreds of thousands of lesbians and gay men gathering to march through the streets of Washington; I was honored when Pat took my hand, led me to the front of the March, and said, "You march here; you deserve it." Yet I was saddened by that fact that so many who deserved to be there were not.

As I walked through those streets, filled with pride, I couldn't help but ask, where is Judy Grahn? She was there in the early '70s breaking new ground--why is she not here? As I watched the main rally, I was thrilled to see people like Whoopi Goldberg risking the wrath of the neo-fascists in our midst and risking monetary losses and damage to her career--but where was Audre Lorde? She did the same thing almost fifteen years ago.

As I watched performer after performer take the stage, I could not help but remember Paul Mariah, a white gay man who took his poems to the straight poetry readings (the only forum available) and tolerated the polite indifference of his peers to the pain and isolation chronicled in his work.

Despite what was missing, I could not help but feel pride as I watched an

event unfold that had been a dream. I could not help but leave Washington filled with hope and expectation of what was to follow. I knew that so many of those people who had never dared to leave their closets would find it extremely difficult to go back into them when they returned home. I knew that so many of the doubts and mistrusts of various gay groups toward each other had been broken down. I knew that hundreds of thousands of lesbians and gay men, buoyed by the energy of that march, had left that town filled with the commitment to continue to struggle for change. I believed that the straight world had best brace itself, for returning into their midst was an army of people who not only believed, but *knew* that they had the right to exist and live their lives openly and without shame.

So when Toni asked me to write this article, I thought--no problem. Then I began to think--where are they? What happened to all that energy and commitment?

I attended a national conference of Black Lesbians and Gays in Los Angeles last February and was appalled to learn that in the opening session of the conference the only lesbian scheduled to speak was a woman doing a slide show. I listened to Black gay men tell, with a great deal of anger, of their battles with white gay men over who should control the pitiful allotment of AIDS funding.

I am buoyed by the knowledge that lesbians in the Bay Area are forming blood drives to give blood to AIDS patients; still I have to ask my gay brothers some questions. Instead of organizing and marching for people with AIDS or ARC, why not instead organize and march for a national health care system so that any person needing medical care can get it in this country? And if tomorrow I call for a march to raise funds to fight cancer--which is decimating my lesbian community--will the gay men be there?

I am saddened by the knowledge that the Pacific Center, which is a center for gay people which offers counseling, intern programs for future gay and lesbian counselors, and support groups, has been left *en masse* by the lesbian and third world staff, because the predominantly white gay male board of directors has not listened to them and has adopted policies and practices which threaten the existence

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Pat Parker is alive and well in Pleasant Hill, California. She is currently at work on her first novel and her sixth book of poetry, and is planning a cross country tour for the fall of 1989.

THE FABULOUS DYKETONES, JUDY COL-LINS, and comic ROSEANNE BARR were the Saturday night headliners at the National N.O.W. convention June 25 in Buffalo, New York. **SHIRLEY CHISHOLM** and **KAREN THOMPSON** were featured speakers. Because the convention occurred on National Gay Pride weekend, N.O.W. honored **DEL MARTIN** and **PHYLLIS LYONS**, two founding mothers of the Daughters of Bilitis, and who were among the first openly lesbian National Organization for Women members. Also featured was music by **MADELINE DAVIS**, a film tribute to the lesbian and gay rights movement, and a salute to the Stonewall Revolt of '69 which is credited with being a major catalyst in the national lesbian and gay civil rights movement.

The 1989 **WISCON** is scheduled for February 17-19. Although it is a thoroughly mixed (men and women) event, **Wiscon** is the only SF convention in the country to prioritize and actively promote feminist science fiction and fantasy. Guests of honor are frequently women, and many women writers (such as **Suzette Haden Elgin**) are traditionally in attendance. Workshops often focus on women's issues. Events include speeches, an art auction, films & videos, a costume masquerade, panel discussions. SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624.

For more information on the **WOMEN'S MOTORCYCLE FESTIVAL '89** (late August), contact Women's Motorcycle Festival, 7 Lent Ave., LeRoy, NY 14482 (716) 768-6054.

Performers in Boston's 5th Annual Folktree Festival of Women in Music (not produced by women) included **SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK, CHERYL WHEELER, ELLEN McILWAINE, QUEEN IDA & HER CAJUN ZYDECO BAND, CASSELBERRY-DUPREÉ, DIANNE DAVIDSON, PATSY MONTANA, BARBARA HIGBIE, and LIZ STORY.**

Mark your calendar: **WIMINFEST, CAMP-FEST, and SOUTHERN WOMEN'S MUSIC & COMEDY FESTIVAL** Memorial Day weekend; **NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL** June 2-4; **SISTERFIRE** June or early July; **MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL** August 8-13; **WEST COAST WOMEN'S MUSIC & COMEDY FESTIVAL** and **NEWMR** Labor Day weekend.

WOMEN

SUE FINK was the featured entertainment at this year's Dinah Shore Golf Tournament held in April, 1988 at Rancho Mirage, California, according to *Lesbian News*.

TV appearances in 1988 included **JOANN LOULAN** (*Oprah*); **JEWELLE GOMEZ & NANCY BEREANO** (*Sally Jessie Raphael*); and **HEATHER BISHOP** (*Fred Penner's Place*).

Remember **DARLENE LOVE**, prominent singer with several of the "girl groups" of the '60s? (See "Transistor Sisters: '60s Girl Groups" by **Jorjet Harper** in March, 1988 issue.) She released a solo album in 1988.

Pals on the way up—1988 Cover Girls we know and love: **JUDY DLUGACZ**, cover of *Bitch* (Fall); **TERESA TRULL & TOSHI REAGON**, *Outlines* (September); **CATHY FINK & MARCY MARXER**, *Sing Out!* (Summer); **TWO IN TWENTY**, *Valley Women's Voice* (May); **JOAN NESTLE, KATE CLINTON, AUDRE LORDE, JEWELLE GOMEZ & CHERYL CLARKE, and ALIX DOBKIN**, *Womanews* (July/August); **OVER OUR HEADS**, *Bay Area Women's News* (March/April); **STARHAWK**, *Sojourner* (June); *On Our Backs*: **KITTY TSUI** (Summer), **MARLA B. BRODSKY** (Fall); *Visibilities*: **ALISON BECHDEL** (March/April), **HOLLY NEAR** (May/June), **KATHERINE V. FORREST** (July/August); **AUDRE LORDE** (September/October); and last but certainly not least, **TRACY CHAPMAN**, *Rolling Stone* (September 22).

According to *Bitch*, **ELLA FITZGERALD** fell off a stage at an L.A. concert. Despite a leg injury, the 70-year-old jazz singer came back and treated the audience to "Since I Fell For You."

SGT. MIRIAM BEN-SHALOM was re-enlisted by the U.S. Army on September 13, 1988, according to *Outlines*. The U.S. Court of Appeals ordered the Army to reinstate her, which they refused to do. After several court appearances—in which they were found to be in contempt and fined \$500 a day—the U.S. Army finally capitulated. Sgt. Ben-Shalom will now serve her six-year term as the only officially recognized lesbian in the U.S. Army, and they are prohibited by court order from retaliating in any way. Any attempt to circumvent this will reportedly be punished by appropriate sanctions for contempt. The Army plans to appeal. The cornerstone of Ben-Shalom's case is that it is a first-amendment issue; the Army claims it has every right to be discriminatory.

KAY GARDNER was commissioned by the Denver Women's Chorus to compose a choral piece in memory of dancing teacher **MARY MILLER** from Buffalo, New York who died recently at the age of 93. Gardner has chosen to set **SUSAN GRIFFIN's** poem "Dancing" for SAA, alto recorder, violin, folk harp, and tambourine. The piece, which will be choreographed by Denver's **SUZANNE RICE**, was scheduled to premiere on December 3, 1988 with the composer and Miller's relatives in attendance. Gardner also was commissioned by **TONI ARMSTRONG, JR.** to write a Hawaiian-themed composition as a birthday surprise to her mother, **TONI ARMSTRONG, SR.** (who is still very much alive to enjoy the tribute).

FERRON is now living in Sante Fe, New Mexico. She won a green card last February in an American immigration selection process that picked 10,000 people out of 1,700,000 applicants for permanent residency in the U.S. "It seemed like an opportunity. I thought I would come and live in the belly of the beast for a while," Ferron said in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. "A lot of my audience is in the States. I chose about the most opposite situation I could get—from Vancouver, Canada to the desert. But creative thought comes from having an option."

Bay Area Women's News columnist **NOELLE HANRAHAN** has decided not to review bands if they don't credit original songwriters when doing covers, she said recently in her column.

JUNE & JEAN MILLINGTON and **BRIE HOWARD** are at work on a **FANNY** reunion album, according to *Bitch* magazine.

Pioneer crusader for women's rights **ANNE V. RIGNEY** ("I worked very hard to get the vote with Susan Anthony," Rigney said on her 100th birthday) died last June at the age of 108. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, Rigney was born in New London, Connecticut and moved to Providence, Rhode Island where she worked in a department store, sold encyclopedias, and joined forces with Susan B. Anthony.

THE FABULOUS DYKETONES rock 'n' roll band—also known as **Tres Sha Na Na**—have, after more than a decade of performing, come out with their first album.

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK played Carnegie Hall on October 21. Also, **BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON** won the Best Gospel Indie award for her solo album *River of Life* (Flying Fish Records).

BABA COPPER, author of *Over The Hill* and noted lesbian activist, died in September, 1988 at the age of 69 in Ft. Bragg, California. She had been ill for some time, but had been actively carrying on her work of writing, speaking, and conducting workshops. Copper's work on ageism has been compared to the early revolutionary feminist writings of Betty Friedan and others.

HOLLY NEAR & RONNIE GILBERT were among the featured headliners at Chicago's Folk Festival held over the Fourth of July weekend. Holly was also one of the featured headliners on the finale of the Newport Folk Festival, held August 20-21, according to the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Port Arthur, Texas—hometown of **JANIS JOPLIN**—has erected a statue honoring her memory. And the New York legislature recognized March 25, 1988 as **JOAN JETT** Day.

PHRANC sings back-up on Ed Crawford's tribute song, "In Memory of Elizabeth Cotton."

MARY MONDAY, "the queen of San Francisco punk," died of cancer on April 29, 1988, three days short of her forty third birthday, reported *Bitch*.

TRACY CHAPMAN has certainly increased her exposure to audiences since her days of playing women's music festivals. In addition to massive radio exposure of her hit song "Fast Car," she participated in a 21-city tour for Amnesty International in September and October. Stops included London, Budapest, Buenos Aires, New Delhi, Philadelphia, and Zimbabwe. By 1989, Tracy will have performed in front of millions of people all over the world.

Israeli chart-topper **SI HY-MAN**'s latest single, "We Shoot and We Cry," was banned from the Israeli Army Radio Broadcast. She participated in a rally along with fifty other performers in Tel Aviv calling for withdrawal from the West Bank, according to *Bitch*. When **JOAN BAEZ** was in Israel last May, she gave concerts whose broadcast was also banned from the Army Radio. She performed a children's concert at a refugee camp and took part in a demonstration outside of an army base in support of twenty soldiers jailed for refusing to serve on the West Bank.

ANNIVERSARIES

THE TEENAGERS

The production/distribution company **WOMEN MAKE MOVIES** will have its seventeenth anniversary this June. Founded in 1972 by Ariel Dougherty, WMM is devoted to films by and about women, and has more than 100 titles in their catalog.....Since its beginnings in 1973, the **LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES** has steadily acquired donations of personal papers, notebooks, diaries, records, photographs, and other important memorabilia that documents and celebrates lesbians. They have established a building fund with a projected goal of \$2 million for a permanent Archives building. To receive the newsletter or contribute toward their building fund: Lesbian Herstory Educational Foundation, P.O. Box 1258, New York, NY 10116 (212) 874-7232.....The November 25 Carnegie Hall concert capped **OLIVIA RECORDS'** fifteenth anniversary celebrations. (Carnegie had also been the scene of their tenth anniversary gala.) The featured artists were Cris Williamson & Band, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Deidre McCalla, Tret Fure & Band, Nancy Vogl, and Dianne Davidson & Band. A fundraising anniversary ball at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel's Grand Ballroom with the performers in attendance followed the concert.....**SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK** celebrated their fifteenth anniversary with a Warner Theatre concert in Washington, D.C.....**LAMMAS BOOSTORE** in Washington, D.C. celebrated its fifteenth anniversary last August. It opened a second branch in April of 1987, when it became the only women's bookstore to have two branches in the same city.....Tret Fure & Band kicked off the fourteenth season of continuous operation as a women-only space for Chicago's **MOUNTAIN MOVING COFFEEHOUSE**. It is now the oldest continuously operating woman-identified/women-only coffeehouse in this country, and possibly in the world.....**WALLFLOWER ORDER** first formed as a dance collective in 1975 to express social and political themes in women's lives through a unique form of dance incorporating theater, sign language, martial arts, humor, and music.....**WOMANSOUND INC.** will have its fourteenth anniversary celebration this March in Washington, DC. The sound company, founded by Boden Sandstrom, has toured with Lily Tomlin and Odetta as well as having provided sound for women's music festivals, the 1979 March on Washington for Gay & Lesbian Rights, and other large gatherings.....**CHARIS**, Atlanta's "women's bookstore (and

more)", celebrated its fourteenth year on November 7, 1988.....The August 1988 special edition issue commemorated the thirteenth anniversary of *THE LESBIAN NEWS* newspaper

THE PRETEENS

The **LOS ANGELES WOMEN'S COMMUNITY CHORUS**, founded by Sue Fink & Joelyn Grippo, started its twelfth season in 1988.....**HERIZON**, the social club in upstate New York, is in its twelfth year of continuous operation as a woman-only space collectively run by its members.....**LADYSLIPPER** is celebrating its twelfth year in business, and co-director **LAURIE FUCHS** is likewise marking her twelfth year of working in women's music.....**AMERICAN WOMEN COMPOSERS** celebrated its twelfth year in the fall of 1988.....**ALIVE!**, the jazz quintet, will mark its twelfth anniversary this May. It began as a trio with Rhiannon, Suzanne Vincenza, and Caro-



Many of our pals were Cover Girls in '88.

lyn Brandy.....Polly Laurelchild and Anne Wilson of Cambridge, Massachusetts founded **ALLEGRA PRODUCTIONS** (concerts and other women's events) in 1977.....**VALLEY WOMEN'S VOICES** celebrated its tenth year in print with a special issue in the Fall of '88.....**THE FULL MOON COFFEEHOUSE & BOOKSTORE FOR WOMEN** in San Francisco closed in 1978 and held a ten year reunion celebration on June 25, 1988.....**THE LAVENDER EXPRESS** completed its tenth year of publication April 1988, proud of the fact that they have never missed an issue.....**WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST BOOKSTORE** in Chicago had its ninth birthday this past November.....**LESBIAN CONTRADICTION: A Journal of Irreverent Feminism** celebrated its sixth year of publication with the Winter 1988 issue.

MERE BABES

This issue of *HOT WIRE* begins our fifth year of publication. Against all odds, we have never missed an issue, nor have we cut back

on quality or size.....*BITCH*, sister-publication to *HOT WIRE* and self-described as the "women's rock mag with bite," had its third birthday last August.

HONORS

SUSAN BUTCHER has won the grueling Iditarid Dog Sled Race across 1,150 miles of Alaska for the third consecutive year, according to the *New York Times*. The race, from Anchorage to Nome, took eleven days, eleven hours, and forty-two minutes—and her closest competitor arrived 14 hours later. She set a new record for the run and won \$30,000. She credits her winning to women's superiority at endurance races and to her dogs.

On March 4, 1989 at the Sheraton Universal Hotel, Southern Women for Understanding will once again host the Lesbian Rights Awards Dinner. Past honorees have included **ROBIN TYLER**, **DEL MARTIN & PHYLLIS LYONS**, **MYRA RIDDELL**, and **DIANE ABBITT & ROBERTA BENNETT**. The award is presented each year to a lesbian who has made an outstanding contribution to the lesbian community. They also present Community Service Awards. To nominate, write SCWU Awards, 9054 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069 or call Jean Conger (213) 274-1086.

OPRAH WINFREY, cited as one of the country's top twenty moneymakers, won the Emmy for Best Talk Show in 1988.

BARBARA HERSHEY, in an event unprecedented in the Cannes Film Festival's forty-one year history, was Best Actress winner for the second year in a row.

GRETA SCHILLER, director of the Emmy Award winning documentary *Before Stonewall*, has been awarded a Fulbright grant to pursue narrative film production in Great Britain, reports *Feminist Bookstore News*.

Second Annual American Comedy Awards: **LILY TOMLIN**, Funniest Stand-Up Female Comic; **IMOGENE COCA**, Lifetime Achievement as a Female Comedienne; **OLIVIA DUKAKIS**, Funniest Supporting Female in TV or Movies; **JUDY TENUTA**, Best Comedy Club Female Stand-up Comic of the Year; **ROSEANNE BARR**, Funniest Female Performer on a TV or Cable Special; **TRACY ULLMAN**, Funniest Female Performer in a TV Series Leading Role and Funniest Female Performer of the Year; and **BETTE MIDLER**, Funniest Actress in Motion Pictures.

PUBLICATIONS

If there are **SONGS YOU ARE LOOKING FOR**, or if you can help find them for others, please write to "The Songfinder" column in *Sing Out!* c/o Jean Kozel, 967 Penn Circle #D-109, King of Prussia, PA 19406. Send SASE.

LESBIAN NETWORK is the Australian quarterly publication similar to *Lesbian Connection* in the U.S. *Lesbian Network*, P.O. Box 215, Rozelle NSW 2039, Australia.

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IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE MUSIC

15 YEARS OF OLIVIA RECORDS

By Judy Dlugacz

as told to Toni Armstrong, Jr. and Jorjet Harper

This is part two of the history of Olivia Records as remembered by President and Co-founder Judy Dlugacz. Part one, which appeared in the July 1988 issue of 'HOT WIRE,' focused on the years prior to Olivia's move to the Bay Area.

We moved from Los Angeles to Oakland at the end of 1977, and in 1978 about fourteen of us were living in this one ten-room house. It drove us all a little crazy. Eventually the living collective broke up into people residing in separate places. We hadn't chosen to live together all those years because we thought it was such a great thing; a lot of it was due to economic need, particularly in the first couple of years when we lived in Los Angeles.

Olivia Records was experiencing a period of rapid expansion. At one point we were sort of at a peak of energy and work and overload in terms of the collective process of our group—getting both tremendous support and a certain amount of flak. But we were doing what we felt were some important things, like *Lesbian Concentrate* and Linda Tillery's first album. I have always thought that Cris Williamson's *Lumiere* was an incredibly enlightened project, even if people didn't like that there was a little boy in it. It was seeing the future about computers, and Cris wanted to do something that involved the children's market. We were doing a lot of exciting things and testing our structure—and getting a little bogged down.

Every time someone new came in, it increased the time of our meetings. They seemed endless. We accomplished a great deal, and learned a great deal from each other—so there were both positive and



Meg Christian: early 1970s

negative things in doing that. But people stopped liking going to any meetings. In the years since Olivia stopped being a collective, I haven't instituted regular staff meetings enough, because to this day the idea of a meeting...well, we tried very hard to make it work.

Most significantly, we were heading into difficult times financially. The degree of stress this was producing cannot be overestimated. We really hadn't understood that everyone wasn't going to react to every record that we did with the same enthusiasm, and we started to be disappointed instead of pleasantly surprised. We wanted to do varieties of types of music, and to represent different cultures, ages, and classes. We had all these dreams

that we could accomplish everything that anyone ever wanted to do in terms of showing the diversity. We just were slightly overzealous in thinking we could do it on a shoestring.

We couldn't afford to do tours, for example, but we did them anyway. It was very stressful—and by the end of 1978 we did not have the money to repress *The Changer and The Changed*, which was the one record that more or less kept us going. We realized if we couldn't do that, the situation had gotten very serious. We involved a consultant at that point. (Actually, I was calling this woman to see if she could write grants for us, and I think she sensed some desperation in my voice. She said, "Well, it doesn't sound like you need a grant—it sounds like something else is happening there.")

She volunteered to come out and work with us when she heard that we couldn't press the record, and we had fourteen people, and were doing all these things, and didn't have any money left. So she listened to everyone, looked at the books, analyzed how things were going. We were advised that radical changes had to be made—people had to go because we couldn't pay the rent or next month's salaries to anyone; we couldn't afford to run the business. We all sat there saying, "No, we're not going to do this," but the truth was that our consultant was really looking at our situation objectively.

This was a very major moment. Decisions had to be made amongst us all as to who was going to stay and who was going to leave, decisions which really came down to who was absolutely essential to keeping it going. We had to go back to bare bones. And that was an excruciating process.

Once we did this reorganizing, it sort of took a lot of the spark out of what we were doing. It was fairly demoralizing because we thought we would just keep growing and growing, and didn't ever think we wouldn't be able to do whatever we tried to do. We had a lot of ideals, and now when I read some of the things we wanted to do, I wonder how we ever imagined we could possibly do them. For example, we wanted to pay people based on need. It was a really warm, wonderful idea—if you have a lot and someone else has a little, then you pay them more. But it just didn't work out that way. How can you fairly determine "need"?

After the reorganization, pretty much the original founders remained. Also, some people left at that time because they were ready to move and do something else anyway. Although it was a very painful process, it was also an op-

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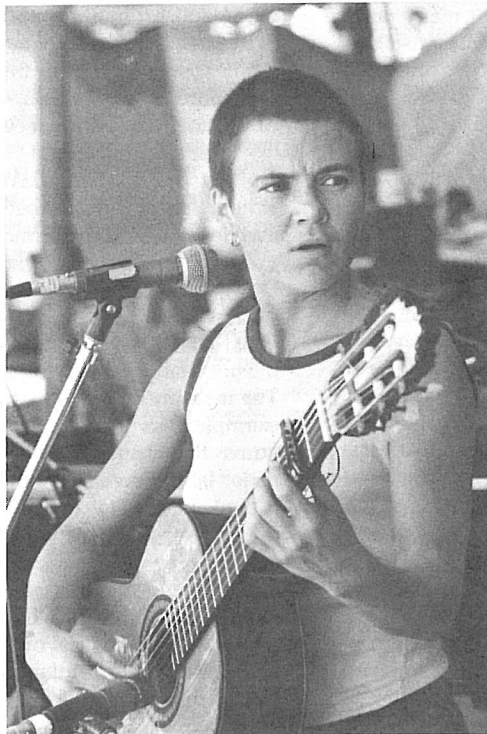
MEG DEPARTS

In 1984, Meg Christian—who had been an original founder and a mainstay of the company—left Olivia Records. The recordings she made during her years with the pioneering women's music company included their first recording, a single with Meg's rendition of the Carole King/Gerry Goffin song "Lady" on one side and Cris Williamson's "If It Weren't For The Music" on the other; Olivia's first album *I Know You Know* (1974); *Face The Music* (1977); *Turning It Over* (1981); *From The Heart* (1984); and the *Scrapbook* anthology, released in 1986 after she left.

Heart was dedicated. Meg told Jorjet Harper in 1984, prior to her departure from the women's music scene, "Gurumayi Chidvilasananda is one of the two heads of this lineage of meditation teachers who teach Syda Yoga, a very simple technique of meditation which I've found to be incredibly powerful. It's very exciting to me that one of the heads of this whole path is this amazing woman...You know when you're around someone who's in a good mood, and their good state rubs off on you, and you sort of absorb their vibes? Well, if you take that idea and magnify it a

written about how she feels her voice has been enriched by Indian music. In 1986, Meg released a tape, available through Ladyslipper, entitled *The Fire Of My Love: Songs For Gurumayi Chidvilasananda*. All the vocals on the tape are Meg's, and she wrote three of the nine songs.

Meg travels widely, but still comes to the Olivia office occasionally. Dlugacz consistently invites her to do concerts, and Meg just as consistently declines, stressing that Syda Yoga really is a full-time part of her life now.



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Late 1970s

"Not only did Meg devote herself to Olivia night and day," says Olivia President Judy Dlugacz, "but she was really the person we depended on to bring home the money for the first three or four years, if not for all the years she was here. Meg was in the position of having been very responsible for the well-being of Olivia, which was a lot of responsibility on an ongoing basis. Also, she had been out on the road for 15 years, and that can get very weary. For Meg, it was a very positive decision—she wanted to make some changes in her life, which included not being on the road in that way anymore."

Meg's increasing involvement with Syda Yoga also had a profound effect on her. She had been studying meditation techniques with Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, to whom her album *From The*

few thousand times, that's what it's like to be around someone who is in a state of absolute harmony all the time."

At that time, Meg dismissed the notion that she'd gone off on a religious tangent. "The teachers and heads of Syda Yoga stress over and over again that the point is not to leave the world, but to learn to live in it," she said. "And just not be so caught up in the roller coaster ride that makes us all crazy and burned out and sick and angry, but rather to do what we came here to do in the fullest, most loving and powerful way that we can do it."

Since leaving women's music to devote her energies full-time to involvement with Syda Yoga, Meg has traveled to ashrams in many parts of the world. She has learned a great deal about Indian music, including learning to play many new instruments, and Dlugacz says Meg has



Susan Lewis

Early 1980s

Dlugacz believes that despite the impact of Meg's departure on Olivia—indeed, on women's music in general—she did not leave on a negative note, and that if Meg Christian decided to record in women's music again, it would be with Olivia.

"She went on to do things she needed to do for herself, but it had a profound effect. It had an economic effect, like if Holly Near left Redwood Records," says Dlugacz. "Meg is sorely missed. Her leaving also had an effect on a *personal* level: Meg represents a lot of what women's music and Olivia Records is all about for many people, including myself. I still miss her terribly. But she was doing it for a long time, so what more can you ask of somebody?"

Reported by Jorjet Harper and Toni Armstrong, Jr.

OLIVIA from page 20

portunity for everyone to consider whether they really *wanted* to continue doing this or not.

Finally, members of the original collective started leaving. It was an amazing thing to watch the way people loved this place, and then the process of saying, "Maybe it's time for me to leave--do I really *want* to be a record company for my whole life?"

To make a long story shorter, since Meg left in 1984, I have been the last remaining founder still working at Olivia. It's funny--at the very beginning, we were in a meeting and decided to officially be a corporation, though we planned to run the business collectively. We said we needed officers, and who wanted to be president? I raised my hand. I was the youngest, and I thought the least I could have was what I expected to be an unusable title.

Kate Winter left right after we did Teresa Trull's *Let It Be Known* in 1980. Part of it was complete and utter burn-out, and the last straw was the way in which the album jacket was handled. Kate was the graphic designer, and we were being accused of putting sexually-oriented subliminal writing on the cover of *Let It Be Known*. The thing about large dots on an album cover is, you can think they look like anything you want. One well-known performer in particular made the accusations, and she started telling audiences about it, which resulted in us getting calls and letters. So we had to go through a process of trying to offset this absurd issue. During that process Kate said, "This is absolutely crazy--this time I've really had it."

Meanwhile, I was scared to death. My mentors were leaving, and these women had been like family--we were siblings in the sense that sometimes we loved each other and sometimes we'd fight. I was not yet thirty years old.

Why did I stay? Because what Olivia is has been absolutely irresistible to me from the beginning. I just felt it was much too important, and I loved it too much, to stop doing it. The importance of what Olivia stands for shouldn't die, and I felt a personal responsibility for it. It was one of the few major ways in this country that we had for visibility as women, and as lesbians in particular.

And I felt that I *could* make it work. I still felt, even with all the problems, that perhaps if we did it another way, and kept it a little more solid financially, and maybe if we stopped being such an intense collective...we could make it work. It had to turn into what I would call a hu-

manistic hierarchy. But to some people, no longer being a collective meant that we were no longer political. And part of me saw it as a failure, because doing it collectively was what we had done for seven years; it was so much a part of what we believed in.

It was scary and everything, but there was also a sense of relief because it had been so difficult. In retrospect, I wish I had come to Olivia with more of a background in business, and I wish I hadn't had to grow up doing the job.

Before, when there were many of us, criticism came our way and we took it personally--but there were six or seven other people to share it with. Not only did I have to go through people's leaving, and my own sense of loss of many parts of what I had hoped to do, but I also had to deal with major financial problems here, and with making a lot of decisions. Because of the position I was in, I got to say, "Yes, I want to do this; No, I don't want to work with you." So whenever I would have to make those hard decisions, somebody at the other end receiving a no would not like me, and somebody else getting a yes would. So I had a lot of positive but also negative coming my way. Not everyone agreed with every decision I made. This was a lot to handle at 28 years old.

For several years in the early '80s I was not very accessible. During that period of time, I was not going to the conferences or going on the road--I wasn't doing what I *should* have been doing, which is being out there--because I just couldn't. I couldn't hear one more criticism. Over the years, I have felt extremely misunderstood, and it was important to me that people understand what I was doing, and *why* I was doing it. I have felt that people sometimes haven't understood my motivations. Some things were hard things that needed to happen, and at times I have felt there was no winning. I didn't understand until recently that I needed to grow into the job description.

CARNEGIE HALL AND SECOND WAVE RECORDS

Our tenth anniversary show at Carnegie Hall in 1982 was a golden moment for me. In one evening, I got to have this wonderful feeling about ten years being *worth it*; what a powerful way for us to celebrate the culture we had created. It felt like that show somehow solidified what had been done.

Betty Rowland, who had produced several of our records, originally suggested that we do a concert with Meg in

Carnegie Hall. And then we thought: we're about to have our tenth anniversary--let's do Meg *and* Cris, because together they made all of this possible.

We did two shows in one night, and recorded the double album *Meg/Cris At Carnegie Hall*. Three months in advance of the concert we had sold out all 2,800 seats for both shows. I couldn't even advertise in New York prior to the show, because it was already sold out except for a handful of the \$100 seats.

People came from everywhere. We did it on the Thanksgiving weekend, which was perfect for people to plan a vacation around. They came from Brazil, from Germany, from England; they arrived in horse-drawn carriages, in limousines, and on motorcycles. We took over 57th Street. It was a remarkable moment, really speaking to both the connection of the audience and Olivia, but also about our history and our own culture.

The *Carnegie* album was the first one we put out on Second Wave, our subsidiary label. We had been thinking for awhile we needed a second label, because over and over again Olivia was perceived as a "soft, acoustic folk label" no matter what we did. The whole purpose of a subsidiary label is to differentiate styles of music. Many record companies do this. The instrumental Windham Hill label, for example, has a subsidiary label for albums that have singers; many of the major labels have jazz labels. In our case, it had gotten to the point where we thought we might as well create a differentiation so that at least some of the things would then be seen as being more rock, or rock-blues, or whatever it is.

So *Carnegie* was our first. Usually when you do a subsidiary label, you have lots of different product on it. So if you only do one or two in a year--as we do--it really takes a while for the differentiation to catch on. Second Wave has been successful so far in that it has enabled people to understand that there really is more than folk music on this label. It's not like it's completely divorced from Olivia; it's more to make the statement: there is something different here, pay attention.

The Second Wave catalog includes Dianne Davidson's *Breaking All The Rules*; both of Tret Fure's albums, *Terminal Hold* and *Edges of the Heart*; *Unexpected* with Teresa and Barbara Higbie; *Meg/Cris At Carnegie Hall*; and the Alicia Bridges album.

To appreciate the decision to do Alicia's record, it must be kept in mind that my hopes and dreams were (and are) for Olivia to reach more and more people, to expand the audience. So I'm constantly looking for ways to do different things

and change.

At the particular point when we started working with Alicia, I was interested in trying to get involved in the dance market, which is very strongly a gay market. I thought there might be ways to create more interaction between what we were doing and the gay community.

At this point in time, Olivia was just getting to a pretty good place financially, and I was interested in the prospect of taking someone who had already been in the industry and seeing what would happen if we made a go of it. In this case, it was a woman who had already had a Top Ten hit record, who was sort of the diva of dance music—and she was appreciative of Olivia. She approached me about doing the album, basically saying that maybe she could help Olivia go someplace else; maybe we could work together and Olivia could help her advance her career without it being as crazy as it was when she was doing "I Love The Night Life" in the mainstream.

I did a tremendous amount of research into the dance market. Because Alicia Bridges was so recognizable, and because that market was still an independent market (independent labels could make it there), I thought it might be a

golden opportunity. I involved all sorts of promotion people and the dance music community, and got opinions—and it looked like we had a good shot. So I went ahead.

Although the album was never a big hit, we got up to fifty-something on the dance charts. We have certainly never charted anyone else, except Mary Watkins on the jazz charts. The record looked like it was going to go somewhere. She was getting gigs around the country, and people were very excited about Alicia coming back. Record stores were asking for as many as 10,000 records at a time. It was very exciting...it looked really possible.

Ultimately, though, we lost a lot of money on the project. It just didn't work—but not for lack of real trying. I learned a tremendous amount from doing it. I had to accept the failure of it, and recognize that I had done everything I could think of. I had to learn a very hard lesson about where to draw lines.

I was real concerned when Meg left in 1984 that I was really looking down the barrel of the end of what we were going to be doing. Then in doing Alicia, I saw that in some ways I was also unintentionally maybe being a part of that. I was starting to feel like there weren't really

new and talented artists coming forward—and I wasn't seeing them if there were any, because I was in my own little office, not going out there. I was hearing a lot of "women's music—get rid of the term" and "women's music—it's dead," and not a whole lot of "women's music—how remarkable, how special."

And then a couple of artists appeared—and I felt like maybe there was a way to have a next generation, that it wasn't just this phenomenon of Meg and Cris and Margie and Holly and Alix and Kay—that there might be this next generation that would take it on and move it forward.

That was another big turning point.

In part three: the 'next generation' of Olivia artists; Olivia celebrates its 15th Anniversary with nine concerts, including a return to Carnegie Hall; the philosophy of Olivia Records today; and plans for the future. ●

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*This syllable rhymes with "juice" like the Latin. "The Order" ©1988 by Therese Edell. Listen to Therese's "Conversation" on this issue's soundsheet.

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CROSSING THE LINE

BOBBI CARMITCHELL

By Mary Gage

'Cause it's all about choices and making your way through a constantly changing array of the gambles and shadows that hang overhead when the blues come your way...

Singer-songwriter Bobbi Carmitchell certainly is making her way—in record studios, concert halls, radio stations, clubs, at music festivals and in hearts—from Pennsylvania to Indiana to New England, and many places in between. When asked about her career struggles and achievements, Bobbi's humorous and easy attitude, and the belief she has in herself, illuminates the light at the end of the tunnel. Perhaps that explains why

audiences respond so openly to her.


Performing full-time for nine years—first with a trio of women known as Wind and Wood—Bobbi has spent almost four years now as a solo performer. And, according to her, the unusually warm response she receives at performances stems from a change within her, not the audience. She has played for a wide variety of audiences: on stages and poolside at women's music festivals; for senior citizens in the hills of Virginia; in music clubs and concert halls; even in the presence of First Lady Nancy Reagan and her husband in Washington, D.C. Bobbi feels that all those years of playing in various situations in front of people have paid off for her.

The experience of this native of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania does not

stop at the live jobs she has had—it continues on through to various recording studios, where she has worked on diverse projects such as singing background vocals on the albums of other artists; writing music; and recording commercials and jingles. She used many of her talents while she was part of Wind and Wood, and appears on their album *The Limo Is Waiting*.


Bobbi Carmitchell has most recently finished her first solo album, *Crossing the Line*, on the Locust Lane label. Like many other musicians in women's music, Bobbi did not wait passively to get picked up by a record company—she created her own label, Locust Lane Music, which she named after the street she grew up on.

"In the beginning," says Bobbi, "playing with a band was easy for me because I

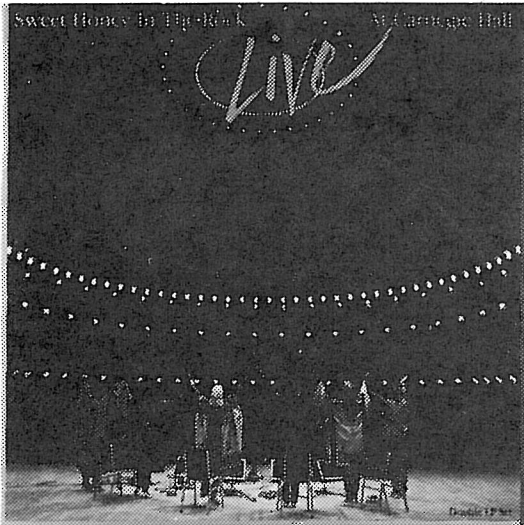


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could stay in the background--playing my music mostly for myself and not really using it as a tool for the entertainment of others. Now, after being on my own for so long, I feel as if I can do both."

The transition from playing as part of an ensemble to having the spotlight totally on her did not come easily. Bobbi says her feelings during her first solo performances were uncomfortable ones. She found that when she was nervous, she would talk and talk....and talk. She recalls how she'd regale with accounts of how Lassie (yes, the dog) helped Mama cow to birth baby cow (a true TV episode), or perhaps tell how her sister was caught dangling from a sky ride, and the only

rescue solution offered was that she be dropped into the dolphin tanks below. Or there's the one about...

But moving ahead, Bobbi learned to re-listen and re-watch herself through tapes--or her memories--of the performance. She would project herself into the audience and view her performance with their eyes and ears. She learned to carefully select which remarks would be said to which audience. She interviewed, criticized, praised, and challenged herself at every opportunity. But most importantly, she learned to listen more closely to her instincts.

She says that the combination of years of experience earned her time to get

to know herself as well as her audience. "When you play such places as weddings, out-of-town clubs, ferry rides or camping resorts, those people don't know who you are--and many times don't even know each other," she says now. "So, as an entertainer, you have the challenge of giving your audience the opportunity to share something in common--the desire to enjoy themselves through your performance." Through this way of thinking, the instincts Bobbi has developed tell her to be aware of all situations. The audience, the time, and the place all have an impact on her delivery.

And, she says, even though the delivery is important, even more vital is for a performer to know herself well. "You need to know your weaknesses in order to know what to work on. If, for instance, you have poor eye contact, go to your job and actually hold eye contact with any one person. Try it again--using two people at the next job. Soon, you become more comfortable with something that *was* a weakness," she advises new musicians. "You also need to know what strengths you have. Rely on them to build up confidence in yourself."

Bobbi's advice seems to hold true in many different cases, but what about mistakes? Is there any room for them in her performances? "Everyone makes mistakes...just not necessarily in front of so many people." Her advice on this one: "Acknowledge it," she says. "The audience is not going to miss it."

Bobbi Carmitchell shows her versatility in many aspects of her new album *Crossing the Line*, which she produced herself. Five of the eight songs are her

continued on page 58

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National Women's Music Festival SHOWCASE 1988

By Toni Armstrong, Jr.

The Showcase—traditionally the "Day Stage" portion of the National Women's Music Festival, held on the Indiana University campus in Bloomington, Indiana—is generally acknowledged to be one of the most exciting and interesting experiences of the festival weekend. The 1988 Showcase, as in past years, featured a

timely I make all the decisions about who gets hired. I tried in the past doing selections by committee, but it just didn't work as well." During the year she also scouts at other festivals and concerts, encouraging acts to send audition tapes by the November 1 deadline.

"The Showcase stage should rep-

that political music is coming back into popularity. "Music today in the Top 40," she says, "is obviously going back to more political lyrics. A lot of the labels are starting to pick up artists who are politically-oriented. But as a small circuit, we have been able to keep that alive all along. If we start dismissing that from our stages,



Vada Verneé

The Hampton Sisters: Well over a decade of making jazz together.

sampling of a wide variety of often surprising talent.

"Showcase creates a safe space for women artists who either are very new to the performing artist network or who are Main Stage quality but still need exposure," says producer Denise "Dino" Sierp. In selecting the acts, Dino listens to more than 100 audition tapes. "I listen to them all," says Dino. "I know people don't think so, but I listen to every one. Portions of this article appeared in the 'Lesbian Music HOTMIX' column in 'Outlines' newsmothly.

resent a good portion of the women's network regarding lesbian identity and sharing our culture. It usually doesn't get exposure in any other type of network except our own," says Dino, who was a Showcase performer herself in 1982, playing piano for singer/songwriter Barb Bell. "It's important to remember what our women's music roots are based on: first, 'I am gay' and second, 'I care about society'."

Dino acknowledges that being "lesbian identified" and "politically aware" are not always the same thing, but notes

we are only going to lose—or shrink up—what we created that has become so big."

Showcase producer since 1983, Dino says she consciously looks for several things when selecting acts. "I try to have a good mix of women who are from different women of color communities, as well as ones who are very lesbian-identified and politically-identified. I also try to get diversity with musical styles, theater, comedy, and storytelling."

Dino says she makes every attempt to get a good balance between these factors. "I do the best I can from what I have

to choose from, but if I get in a bind one year where I'm lacking one or the other--and I don't have the time to go look for it--then some years we might be a little off in the balance. Last year [1987] I heard we lacked lesbian identity and women of color--and I agree," she says. "But this year I felt really good about the selections."

As an innovation in 1988, Showcase expanded to include night shows and dances. On Thursday night starting at 9 p.m. after the AWMAC Music Industry Banquet, the evening Showcase was in the large Wright Quad cafeteria, which is used for university student dances. Emceed by the Washington Sisters, the night was opened by Olivia Records' newest artist Dianne Davidson, followed by The Vulva Woman--actress Shawna Dempsey from Toronto who does a poetry rap in full costume on the vulva, a presentation which she calls "a complete wear-and-care manual for the concerned owner." The Toshi Reagon Band--including Ann Hairston on drums, Michelle Johnson on bass,

focused on different perspectives of women and their spirituality. Performers included Jane Winslow; the local Bloomington choir; Melanie Monsur; Ruth Barrett and Cyntia Smith; Artemis SS. Preeshl; Nurudafina Pili Abena; Kay Gardner (backed up by Nuru and Adrienne Torf); Diane Mariechild and Shuli Goodman; and Nan Brooks. Many of these artists were also participating in the festival's Spirituality Conference, and on Sunday Mainstage Kay Gardner with The Rainbow Chamber Orchestra presented the world premiere (first public performance) of *A Rainbow Path*.

"The Friday night Spirituality Showcase was disappointing," says Dino. "Not in terms of content, certainly, but because of how late it went. Mainstage ended late, so we started late--and to be honest, we had scheduled too many acts to be starting late." Dino admits that one of her weaknesses as a festival producer is that she tends to overprogram. "There were forces beyond my control--like sound and equipment problems," she says. "Working

teristic leather with her four-piece blues dance band, featuring players from Girls Night Out (Alizon Lissance, Kathy Burkly and Sandy Martin). New York stand-up comic Sara Cytron told jokes to the crowd during the very long set change, and finally the seven-piece Latin-jazz band Blazing Redheads from San Francisco closed the evening. Emcee Karen Williams proved herself to be a talented dancer as well as comedienne.

"Indiana University has been very supportive," says Dino. "They provided a good location and extra security patrols. Despite harrassment from some fraternity people one night--a situation which required extra help from on-campus security--and despite how late the Showcases ended, the evening dances were definitely the highlight for me. The festival is so packed with energy--women need to get physical, to get out and dance."

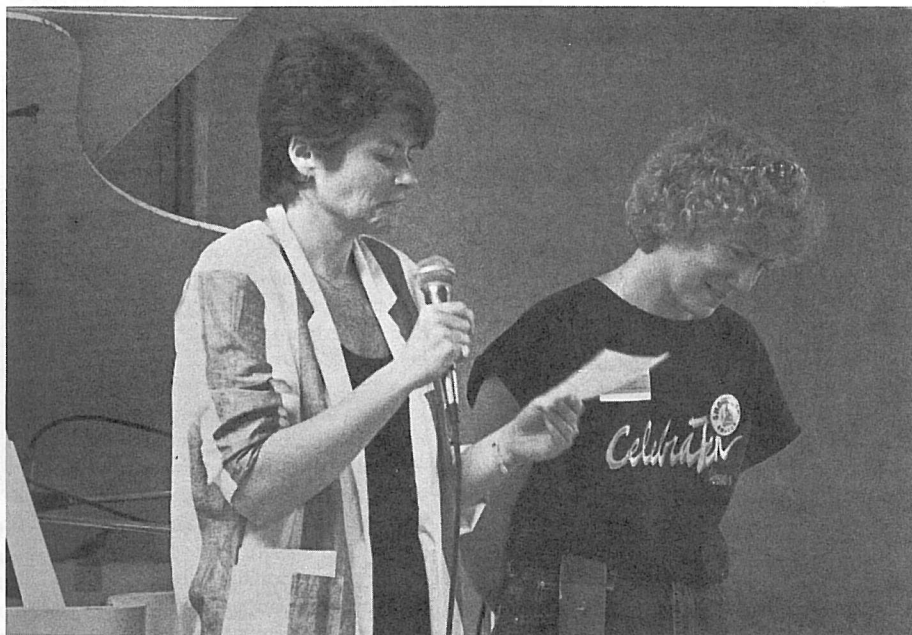
As in past years, afternoon Showcases were held in Alumni Hall. Friday performers included Asian political folk-singer Patricia Shih; New Yorker Susan Stevens doing five different sports characters from the 1900s (Dino says Billie Jean King has endorsed this show, which was recently playing off Broadway); Canadian comic Sheila Gostick; the Hampton Sisters, who have been doing jazz since they were eight years old (one is now sixty eight and the other is seventy two); and rocker Kitty Barber, whose set began extremely late. Dino says it was upsetting to everyone that because of technical problems some performers--notably Barber--did not get the exposure Dino believes they deserve.

On Saturday afternoon, Showcase opened with a forty-five minute storytelling and slideshow combination, featuring Jennifer Justice doing lesbian erotica and romance stories, with Susan Wilson's slideshow of women. Other performers included comic Karen Williams from San Francisco; Faith Nolan from Toronto and band; and singer/songwriter Bobbi Carmitchell. [Editor's note: Hear Faith and Bobbi on the soundsheet in this issue.]

"I enjoy all of the Showcase performers, but the Hampton Sisters were really something special," says Dino. "Never in my six-year history have I seen the audience out of their chairs so many times in one set. The Hamptons represent the beauty women have strived for throughout history; they deserve all the

continued on page 58

ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni Armstrong, Jr. has sworn off the Type-A lifestyle; unfortunately it hasn't sworn off her.



Kate Clinton (left) with Showcase Producer Dino Sierp.

and Sherry Shute on guitar--ended the night with the dance portion of the Showcase.

"Thursday we had a great opener: Toshi, Dianne, and Vulva Woman," Dino says. "It was especially good that it took place on campus rather than in a bar setting. Having it on campus made it accessible to the majority of the festival goers. This first event kicked off the festival in a good way."

On Friday night, the Midnight Showcase followed the evening concert. Entitled "A Women's Spirit Celebration," it

two locations put extra burdens on the crew--both crews worked eighteen-hour days. We had a totally new crew in a totally new location. Anyway, the Friday night Showcase was forced to start and end outrageously late. I feel bad about this; it *really* hurts the performers when that happens, and the artists on that night deserved to have a large audience. Also, much of the music was meditational, and that late at night people are so tired they fall asleep," she says.

Saturday night went much better, opening with Marla B. Brodsky in charac-

ONE PRODUCER, ONE COMFORTABLE FESTIVAL

CAMPFEST 1988

By Marcy J. Hochberg

Campfest, held over Memorial Day weekend, distinguishes itself as "the comfortable women's music festival." Located outside Oxford, Pennsylvania—about an hour from Philadelphia—Campfest is the only festival I have ever attended where I didn't have to choose between eating and doing something else; meals are not scheduled in conflict with other events.

The relaxed pace is just one of the comfortable aspects of this festival. It is held on a campsite with recreational facilities including a swimming pool, tennis courts, and table tennis. The cabins hold about ten women (compared to the Southern festival, with cabins holding sixteen to twenty). Most performers play more than once, which is convenient for festival goers who may have missed artists the first time around. And this is a more personal festival than some of the larger, more established gatherings. At the opening ceremony, for example, jackets were presented to women who had worked there for the entire five years.

Campfest boasts a minimum of spaces that "guests" cannot enter; the staff and performers eat the same food as everyone else; and new and established performers appear on both Day and Night Stages—and sometimes both. "That," according to organizer Lee Glanton, "is a political statement."

Amid the peaceful, relaxing setting and the vacation-like atmosphere lurks a strong, if often unobtrusive, political consciousness and perspective. Lee Glanton has an intense interest in the future of lesbian/feminist culture, as well as women's music and communities.

This year there was an active choice made to present performers and musicians who were explicitly lesbian and feminist in their work and on stage. Lee explains that this is the first time in her five years of organizing Campfest that she felt that this was a real necessity. The film *One Fine Day* was shown, and performers included The Fabulous Dyketones, the '50s "rock & role" comedy show band; The Washington Sisters with Edie Herrold

and Melanie Monsur; the seven-piece band Amethyst; Heather Bishop & Sherry Shute; Linda Sheets; Kitty Barber; Bobbi Carmitchell; Faith Petric; Sue Rider; Gayle Marie & Jan Martinelli; Suede; Susan Herrick; the dancer Artemis; and the Sisters Of One Eye dance troupe.

The concept of building a community of women has been a dream of Lee's since the early '70s, when she would sit with friends and analyze different environments, and dissect situations and interactions, seeking a combination that could work and endure.

She recognized that all successful communities require an economic base. After producing concerts locally for about a year, she says she decided that a festival could be an economic base for a community in that it required a huge amount of labor—labor she thought that anyone could learn to do. Since the work could be done by everyone regardless of age, predisposition, or background, it could create bonds that weren't artificial or limited by more traditional, societal barriers.

She laughs now, thinking about her naivete and blind determination. "It seemed simple enough," she says. "Misconception enabled me to go into it cold."

A great deal of the comfort, safety, and camaraderie of Campfest clearly springs from Lee's founding philosophy. Her goal was to set up the festival in such a way as to diminish to the greatest extent, in every possible place, a sense of "we/they." She sees the festival instead as a perfect embodiment of *yin* and *yang*. "The women who want to come to the festival are absolutely dependent on women who want to make it," she says. "We are in a symbiotic relationship."

The idea is to create the time and space to allow women to network with one another to talk and exchange feelings and experiences, and to get beyond the hurdles that are their differences. "It's giving women the opportunity of trying to see for just a moment what it's like to live where they're not so defensive," she says, "where they're not focused on what is wrong with one another or their point of view, but are building on what they share."

Lee says a festival is a rare chance to

break down some of the more narrow, geographic limits of a sense of "community." And a small festival like Campfest, which hosts 900 to 1,000 women yearly, can be a transitional experience for women who are not quite ready to travel farther, such as to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

Campfest has a neighborhood-like quality to it, and Lee is aware of the process of introducing some women to aspects of a community that they may not have had access to before. Going to a smaller festival demystifies the unique energy and bonding that often emerges, and makes it easier to go to a larger festival later on. "It gives people a glimpse of the dream," she says. She hopes the experience of a festival also encourages women to recognize and be more supportive of their own communities at home. Women's bookstores, coffeehouses, and the lesbian & gay press need our energy and financial assistance to continue to serve us. Looking at how many of these groups have to struggle to survive is indicative, she feels, of our not valuing and cherishing these things dearly enough.

Lee Glanton says she worries that lesbians and feminists have lost sight of the real issues, the ones we gathered around at the outset. "Right now it's like we're moving towards assimilation into the mainstream," she says, "instead of building the culture we were forced into creating previously out of need." She compares the impact of the early radical feminist movement on women to the function that Southern churches performed for blacks: it kept people connected to their roots, and gave them a base of support and unity from which to operate.

"For example," she says, "the radical feminist position on rape used to be: 'Why are we as a society raising males in such a way that rape is commonplace?' This has been diluted to a focus on the rape victim, and on the structure that's in place to help them deal with it through the system and with the law." We're no longer actively engaged in trying to change the structure that allows the violence to happen. Instead we are content to accept a willing-

A version of this article originally appeared in the July 1988 issue of 'Outlines.' It is reprinted with permission.

ness to bandage the resulting wounds and call it progress.

Lee speaks adamantly about her hope that women's culture will return to some of the basic premises voiced by the lesbian/feminist community early on—like the dream that each woman would strive to be all that she could become, and be supported by other women in all of her choices.

"Somewhere along the line that changed," she says. "In order to be a feminist or a lesbian there was this whole set of dogma...like whether you shaved or didn't shave. Somehow the commonality that all women share became a need to all

"Younger women don't realize," Lee says with obvious frustration. "They believe these battles have been won. We have to start at a younger age—we have to be in the schools. And we have to learn how to give self-esteem, to bolster little girls so that they feel good about being little girls. We need to expose young children to the different kind of energy that is created when women are just with themselves."

Lee Glanton has a vision of a community of women gathered in a space where they can come freely and feel safe, and use that sense of safety to empower their lives. "Over the years with Campfest



Marcy J. Hochberg

*Campfest
organizer Lee
Glanton:
"It gives people
a glimpse
of the dream.."*

be the same way. Personal choices are irrelevant compared to the enormous things we all share. We have been afraid of divisiveness, and we've suffered from an attempt to be all-inclusive. Our friction is not necessarily harmful to the community; our friction is our strength. I hope that while we continue to struggle to be all-inclusive, we can address the unnecessary divisiveness. Then we can begin to look at the diversity as something which ensures our survival and our growth."

The Campfest producer says she is honestly frightened by the level of ignorance she sees about the history of the women's movement of the last fifteen years, particularly among younger women. She believes her generation is at fault for not making the issues credible to these women.

I have found that community that feeds me," she says. "And a sense of responsibility to that community has prompted changes in my own life."

One new change is her creation of *WomonGathering*, a festival celebrating women's spirituality that debuted in 1988, a couple of weeks after Campfest on the same site. Right now her aim is to keep it simple, to develop the staff (many of whom have never been to a festival, much less worked at one), and to let *WomonGathering* develop its own distinctive personality.

"How many people," she says, "have the opportunity to have dreams and try to make them real?" ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Marcy J. Hochberg is a staff photographer and writer for both 'HOT WIRE' and 'Outlines.'*

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By Nancy Seeger

"The 4th of July alternative!"

That's how the sixth annual Sisterfire women's festival was billed this year, as it took place for the first time over the 4th of July weekend. And actually Sisterfire--and all it represents--harmonizes quite nicely with the Independence Day themes. Sisterfire is a celebration, a multi-cultural celebration of women artists who freely sing, play, act, dance, speak, sign, and--this year for the first time--film their ideas and dreams for all to share. Unity (of diverse races, creeds, and cultures) and freedom (of choice and expression) are tenets upon which Sisterfire was built. These themes are definitely highlighted by Sisterfire's being held on the 4th of July.

Sisterfire is in its second year at the Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The two-day festival, sponsored by the non-profit, community-based cultural organization Roadwork [see "Roadwork: Putting Women's Culture on the Road," March 1986], continues to bring to the community some of the finest, most diverse women artists in the country. Many familiar features and artists continue to be a part of Sisterfire, such as the round robins (this year dealing with such topics as Palestinian and Israeli artists and women, children, and AIDS); the deaf stage; the Marketplace; and the Hearth (children's area). As Sisterfire continues to grow and develop, new features and faces spring up as well--such as the Demonstrations Stage and the Women's Film Festival.

Dottie Green--the independent radio, film and TV producer who was Sisterfire's administrative coordinator this year--suggested the idea of adding the film festival. Films were shown on both days at dusk, using a special projector for long distances. Two films by local filmmaker Michelle Parkerson were shown: *Storme: Lady of the Jewel Box* (a documentary about male impersonator Storme DeLaverie) and *I Remember BETTY* (a short on the Washington, D.C.-based "rock-apella" trio BETTY, seen this fall on the HBO *Encyclopedia* series, and who performed live at Sisterfire and the Michigan festival). Green was particularly proud that Sisterfire could boast of the premiere

showing of the film *Painted Landscapes of the Times: The Art of Sue Coe*, directed by Helene Klodawsky. This film concerns the British painter and illustrator whose work, including "The Rape Series," is as controversial as it is moving and relevant. The one film which caused the only apparent glitch in Sisterfire's smooth running operation was *Women Loving: Films by Barbara Hammer*. This consisted of three experimental films celebrating lesbian sensuality and lifestyles. The audience became audibly irate as it watched images such as pixilated vegetables, and fruit opening and closing or being chopped up, and a woman swinging a used tampon in front of the camera. It didn't seem to help the adverse reactions when it was announced that Hammer was a pioneer lesbian filmmaker and that the audience should be more appreciative of what it was watching. Negative audience reaction prevailed, and the film was eventually discontinued.

Sisterfire underlines its commitment to the deaf community by presenting the Deaf Community Stage, as well as ensuring that performances on all stages are interpreted into American Sign Language. The Deaf Community Stage, featuring performances by deaf artists, is planned and produced by a group of deaf and hearing women. This year, deaf activist Patti Wilson [star of *Two In Twenty* lesbian soap opera; see July 1987 issue of *HOT WIRE*] performed her poetry and shared experiences from her past, which detailed her political development and entry into deaf activism. Various women from the audience were allowed to get up on stage and share their thoughts and stories. One woman explained how she could never understand what her deaf friends gained from music concerts and festivals--what was the point of going without being able to hear words or feel music? Finally a friend coaxed her into going to a Sisterfire festival, and after being moved by the music and the whole atmosphere she said she finally "got it." She's never missed a Sisterfire since.

Dottie Green hopes that in the future Sisterfire will be able to integrate deaf performers into every stage of the festival. She sees a time where there will not be an

issue of having the separate deaf stage, but that there will be a complete blending of hearing and deaf talent on every stage.

A new feature, the Demonstrations Stage, was introduced this year. Situated in the Marketplace, this stage was added--among other reasons--to give the Marketplace more of a carnival feeling. The Demonstrations Stage will have a theme each year, such as mime or belly dancing or--as it was this year--alternative health. The demonstrations included Cynthia Goodman giving massages; Laurel Gillis from the Maryland Women's Rugby Club; and a talk by Jody Hymes on crystals and healing, meditation, and psychic development. With the addition of this new stage the Marketplace becomes more than just a place to eat, buy books, or jewelry; it becomes an area for an exchange of ideas, a learning place for new and alternative ideas.

Children have always been an integral part of the Sisterfire festivities. The Childspace--now called the Hearth--was moved a couple of years ago to the heart of the festival proceedings, where it serves as a childcare space and as a performance space with its own diverse programming. Stories, theater, songs, dance, and puppetry all happen on the stage of the Hearth. Its diversity and vitality make it an inviting place and, more often than not, festival-goers are drawn to the happenings there. As Roadwork says, they encourage the audience to spend time at the Hearth and "taste the energy of Sisterfires to come."

Of the non-musical acts on the adult stages this year, of special note was Nucleus, Inc., a theater company founded by Yolanda King and Atallah Shabazz, the eldest daughters of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, as a means of "promoting positive energy through the arts." Together with four other company members, they create plays which use song, dance, comedy, and drama to address such contemporary concerns as drug abuse and teen pregnancy.

Also of special note, Fulani! gave their second public performance at this year's festival under the direction of Sweet Honey In The Rock members Aisha Kahlil and Nitanju Bolade-Casel.

This ensemble is inspired by the cultural music and dance traditions of the Fulani people of Africa. Fulani! had the audience dancing on the grass.

Making her women's festival debut this year was Buffy Sainte-Marie, one of the mainstays of the '60s political movement. Sainte-Marie addresses subjects ranging from child abuse to Native American oppression. She charmed the audience with her rendition of the theme song from *Sesame Street*, the children's TV show on which she appeared for more than five years.

Roadwork reported that attendance was down this year. There were approximately 3,500-4,000 festival-goers, which is only half the record-setting attendance of 1987. Several factors may have contributed to the decline in numbers: scheduling the fest on the 4th of July weekend, when people may have other plans; the incredible heat wave the D.C. area had been experiencing all summer; the economic crunch women are feeling after eight years of Reaganomics; and the controversial participation of men in the festival, including the 1987 skirmish—much publicized in the women's press—between separatist craftswomen and two men.



Fulani! had the audience dancing

Men have always been invited to Sisterfire. "Not to be open to men is certainly not the philosophy Roadwork works by," says Dottie Green. Roadwork's purpose is to provide women of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds with the opportunity to express their cultural perspectives; Sis-

terfire is one way in which to express these perspectives. For whom these women perform is open to any person—man, woman or child—who chooses to witness it.

Sisterfire is not losing its women-focus, according to Green, since Sisterfire is now and will always be concerned with presenting and celebrating women's creative spirit. This is the foundation upon which Sisterfire is built, and this does not change according to who is in the audience to share in the celebration. Although men will continue to attend as interested viewers—and to work as vendors and as volunteers—only women will act as coordinators, as Roadwork feels women should always have control over particular festival areas and events. Also, men will not be invited to perform on stage, since the celebration is about women's experience and it is those experiences and cultures which will be showcased.

Green says she believes that "for awhile we [women] needed to be together and build as a group without men." Now, however, she thinks it is important to broaden our scope and to educate men as to what women are all about. Sisterfire is seen as one way to provide such an

festivals such as Michigan. She believes that having both kinds available gives women more opportunities for choice. She personally prefers not to attend the women-only festivals, as she likes to share the experience with her women and men friends.

"I've attempted to broaden Roadwork's constituency," Green says. "Women who are not lesbians are interested in celebrating this experience, they are willing to come out...we must continue to invite women of the whole spectrum to be a part of it, and the women-only group is invited as well." Green states firmly that Roadwork does not want to shut any lesbians or feminists out. "We cannot fight among ourselves," she says. "If we have a difference, we need to come together, talk about it, work it out, and present the resolution to the rest of the world."

Women who want to have input into Sisterfire are encouraged to become a SisterSpark [volunteers who put the festival together and who have a say in what goes on] and to come to meetings.

"We have got to march together [straight and gay, men and women], every kind, all doing it together," says Green. "It's a human issue—we all deserve rights."

Sisterfire as an ongoing entity is seen as ever-changing, growing and developing. Green personally says she would love to see an art gallery at next year's festival. She envisions Sisterfire as having and/or supporting activities all year long, culminating in the Sisterfire festival. She thinks it is important to keep it visible in everyone's mind throughout the year.

With two good years under its belt in Upper Marlboro and good relations with the town, things look good for Sisterfire. With the community's support, it looks like we may have Sisterfire for many years to come. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Nancy Seeger is a librarian for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. She has contributed arts reviews and articles to the 'Washington Blade,' 'Talkin' Union,' 'Unicorn Times,' and 'Belles Lettres' as well as being a regular 'HOT WIRE' contributor.

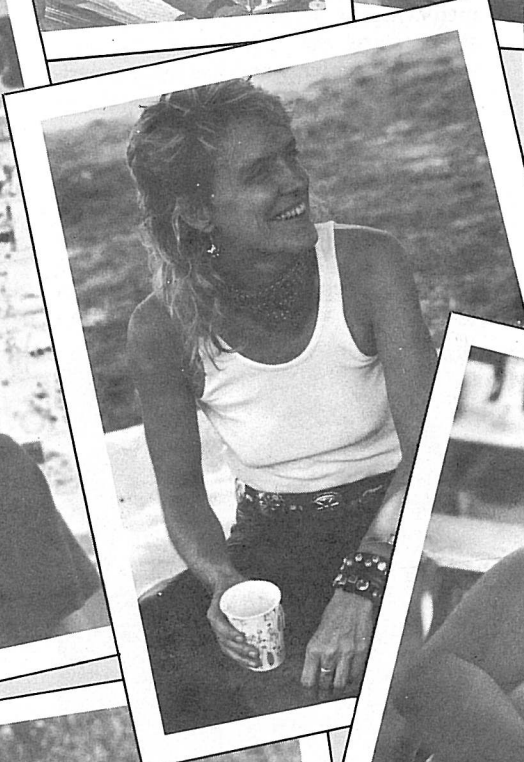
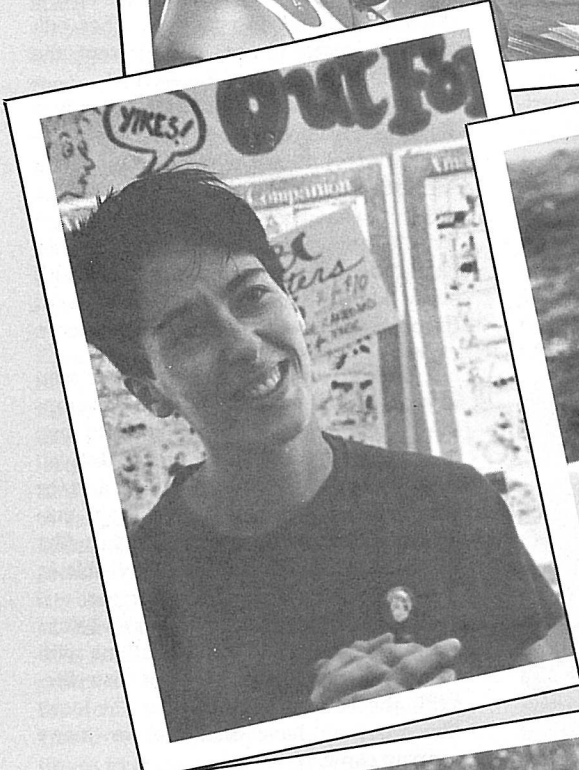
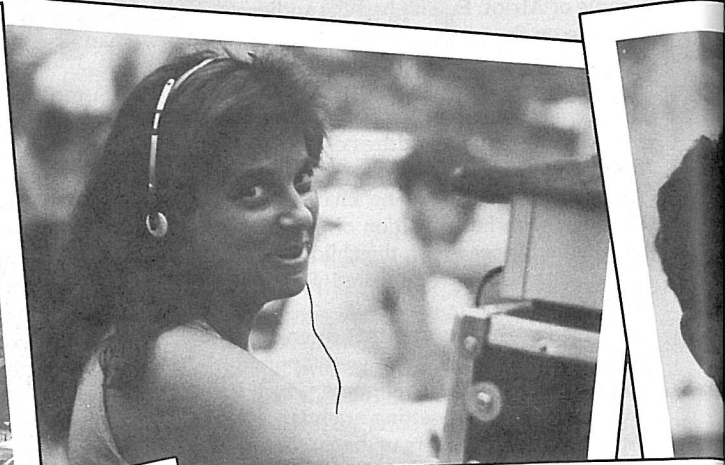
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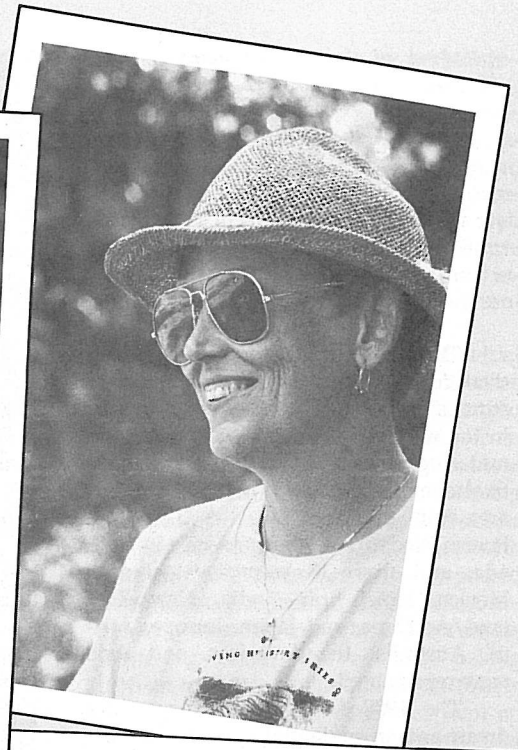
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education; it has the potential to educate people in the experiences of lesbian, straight, and bisexual women.

For women who want the women-only festival experience, who are tired of being surrounded by men in their daily lives throughout the year, Green suggests





MICHIGAN BACKSTAGE PASS

WOMEN YOU SHOULD KNOW: How many of these women's music industry faces can you identify by name? Answers are on page 59. (All photos by Toni Jr.)



Trouble in Paradise

THE MICHIGAN "BUG"

By Laura Post

The Michigan Womyn's Music Festival for five days each summer constitutes the largest community of womyn in the world. 7,500 women descended in mid August on the forested 650-acre festival site. They came to the Shelby-Hart area from every state in the U.S.; from Puerto Rico; from every province in Canada; and from 15 countries—including Mexico, Israel, Iran, India, New Zealand/Aotearoa, and Japan. Europe, Africa, Australia, the Americas, and Asia were represented.

The 1988 festival was a woman's dream and an epidemiologist's nightmare: there were 36 concerts, 200 workshops, 150 craftswomen—and an outbreak of infectious diarrhea.

The first sign of the outbreak came well in advance of the August 10 opening of the festival gates, with rumors that several women who had been on the land helping to lay groundwork for the self-created village were ill. The complaints of the first women to come to The Womb healthcare area centered on crampy, persistent diarrhea, headaches, nausea, and general malaise. The initial impression was of a nonspecific "Festie Crud" resulting from dehydration; the daytime temperatures on the land reportedly surpassed 110 degrees as western Michigan was baked last summer along with the rest of the Midwest drought zone. Other speculations included food poisoning (from spoilage caused by the extreme heat); the possibility of the water supply being contaminated with some type of toxic waste; and the theory that a "bug" was going around.

The "crud" persisted prior to the festival, and the unrelenting, severe illnesses of workers suggested causes other than reactions to heat.

Over the weekend of August 6 and 7, several events occurred which began to shape the course of the epidemic. First, a few women were noted to be ill: feverish, dehydrated, and incapacitated enough to require hospitalization and treatment with intravenous fluids and antibiotics. One woman, who had a temperature of 104 degrees, says she felt "thoroughly terrible, as sick as I'd been as an adult. I couldn't walk, had total body cramps, and

explosive diarrhea." At Festival expense, for the purposes of treatment of and possibly identifying the causative agent, she was hospitalized, with various tests and cultures being done. By Tuesday, August 9, she felt sufficiently recovered to return to the land and to work.

She described the care, both at the Womb and in the hospital, as very helpful and wonderful. "They were fabulous," she says. "Two workers took me to the hospital and stayed with me through the emergency room. I hadn't been alone at the Womb, either. They did a great job."

On Monday, the less ill women still on the land were asked to come to the Womb so that their individual herstories could be elicited and any common denominator determined. According to the Womb staff, lots of women showed up. The Womb workers consulted together and determined that there was reasonable evidence for a contagious, bacterial cause of the diarrhea and that an antibiotic, Bactrim, would help prevent further spread of the diarrheal epidemic.

In the days prior to the Festival, the number of women on the land grows from 40 or so in mid July to 400, which again increases to 500 by early August. The snowballing numbers made containment of the contagion—as well as identification of the initial carrier(s)—more difficult. Part of the process involved the usually autonomous Womb staff contacting the Festival producers, Lisa Vogel and Barbara Price, on the morning of August 9—the Tuesday prior to the first official festival day—to discuss further measures. While the producers are always interested in and kept informed about festival issues, this represented the first time since 1982 that they had to be involved in a major health care decision.

It was not until Friday, August 12 that the bug was named: the very toxic bacterium shigella. It is contagious (via food, water, and person-to-person contact) for 36 hours before symptoms show, and for three days after the start of medication. It can produce illness up to seven days after exposure; there was wisdom in the advice to seek health help at home for those women (like myself) who did not develop symptoms until after the Festival.

According to a report in the August issue of *Outlines*, the federal Centers for Disease Control recommends the following precautions to curb the spread of shigellosis: no kissing or sex for three days after medication begins; disinfect the bathroom with chlorine bleach daily; and use only paper plates and cups to avoid spread of the bacteria. During treatment, eating dairy products, especially yogurt, is discouraged, and no solids are to be eaten the first few days; drink lots of liquids to avoid dehydration, especially Gatorade if your body will tolerate it; and avoid Ampicillin and Tetracycline—use sulfa drugs instead.

The majority of people with shigellosis undergo a spontaneous cure after about a week and do not require treatment other than supportive therapy (fluids and rest). Antibiotics, however, may hasten clinical recovery in severely ill people, and help to avert serious illness in people already compromised by dehydration and heat/work exhaustion. One antibiotic used to treat shigellosis is Ampicillin, resembling Penicillin, but this can cause vaginal yeast infections in some women—clearly an unwanted side effect in this context. The preferred antibiotic—Bactrim—results in fewer side effects of the yeast infection type, and eradicates strains of shigella resistant to Ampicillin.

The outbreak was reported to the County Health Department on Friday August 12. Immediately thereafter, the Michigan Department of Health was notified. Along with the State Department of Health, the festival producers invited the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in to try to determine how the illness had been introduced to the festival. There were two different outbreaks, so the possibility exists that there were multiple carriers who introduced the bacterium to the festival. The CDC worked with the producers throughout the weeks following the festival, and expressed the opinion that the producers, the Womb, and the Festival community were exemplary in their response to the sickness.

Though this was its only occurrence in the thirteen year history of the Michigan Festival, it is not uncommon for shigella to appear in large gatherings.

Since it is so contagious, it has been known to spread to fifty percent or more of a population once it is introduced by a carrier. According to *Outlines Arts & Entertainment* Editor Jorjet Harper, at last year's Rainbow Gathering in Texas, half of all attendees at the yearly outdoor countercultural event contracted shigellosis. "Another interesting fact," she says, "is that in addition to being a naturally-occurring toxin, shigella is also manufactured by the United States Army."

In the case of the Michigan Festival, organizers were able to identify it relatively early and treat it effectively, thereby containing the spread to 10 percent of the Festival population (as estimated by the chief of the Disease Surveillance Section of the Michigan Department of Public Health). Other estimates put the spread as high as twenty-five percent.

The CDC is continuing to study the festival response for application to other large gatherings which may be affected in the future. In conjunction with the CDC, the Festival has distributed a questionnaire randomly to 25% of the Festival participants: sent anonymously by the Festival through its confidential mailing list, the survey may help gather more information to assist other future events.

The healthcare staff of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival in 1988 was comprised of 19 workers, coordinated by Barbara Ann Caruso, a woman who has had that responsibility for nine years. The Womb is subdivided into three areas—medical, herbal, and bodywork—each equally important and each with a designated healing supervisor. The power and vitality of the Womb is not a function of the supplies—on which less than \$1,000 is spent annually—but on the continuity of workers, most of whom have worked together long-term, across the traditional educational/philosophical lines which can make mainstream hospital/clinic care so fragmented and unsatisfactory.

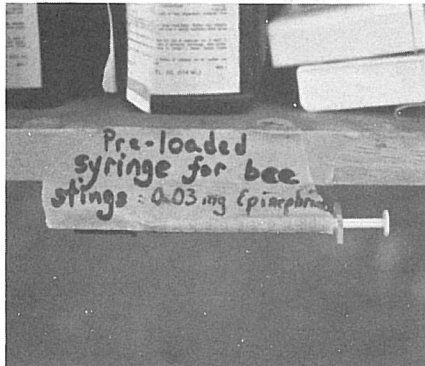
Ongoing inservice training and shift supervisors provide additional resources and solidarity. Typically, decision-making occurs as a process within each shift; rarely (not in 3 years) has it been necessary to contact the healthcare coordinator. Only in extreme instances would input from the festival producers be required for the healthcare decision. Mutual trust and respect, as well as multiple, diverse experiences and trainings, and clear communication, are the mainstays of Womb care.

During the epidemic of 1988, several actions were taken. The initial decision to treat with antibiotics—despite the fact that the majority of health concerns at Michi-



Kaopectate and other Womb wares.

Laura Post



Epinephrine in case of anaphylactic reactions to bee stings.

Laura Post



A young woman receives banana and Maalox treatment at the Womb.

Laura Post



Gatorade and thermometers—along with Bactrim, weapons in the war on shigellosis.

Laura Post

gan are treated effectively by herbalists—was one such action. Though there may have existed herbal responses to the epidemic, the size of the population involved, the uncontrolled environment, and the probable dire medical consequences of uncontained diarrhea—as well as possible social ramifications for future women's gatherings—dictated the most effective, definitive treatment for the dysentery.

In an epidemic, each individual bears a responsibility for the collective population; therefore, women refusing to take antibiotics were prohibited from working. At festival expense, Bactrim was made available to all women suffering from crampy diarrhea; Clorox in buckets for handwashing was placed near each band of Porta Janes; notices were posted throughout the festival; and announcements were made from the concert stages informing about the ailment, asking women who felt any intestinal distress to stop in at the Womb. Food was kept on ice, rubber gloves were used by food handlers, and new water was frequently obtained; women were advised to see a personal health care provider if symptoms appeared once home from the event. Despite these actions, many festival attendees remained unaware of the contagious illness until they went home—including several who became ill enough to require hospitalization. Some women have been critical of the way in which the Festival chose to transmit information about the seriousness of the disease, and felt that more should have been done to alert every woman on the land.

Information was passed to producers of women's festivals later in the season. At the West Coast Women's Music and Comedy Festival (September 1-5), though dehydration in the sweltering, dry central California Sierra Nevada foothills was rampant, not one of the approximately 3,000 attendees reported diarrhea suggestive of the Michigan bug. Again, Clorox and rubber gloves, in combination with disposable paper plates and plastic cutlery, kept the community safe, despite the fact that many of the same women who had attended Michigan and been exposed to the diarrhea there were also in attendance at the West Coast Festival.

The conclusion is that, despite relative isolation in the land, dangerously

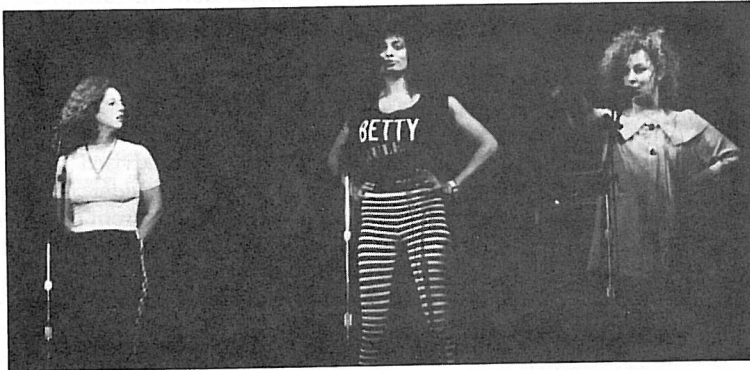
continued on page 58

ABOUT THE WRITER: Laura Post is a contributing writer to 'HOT WIRE' and is a San Francisco physician in her spare time. She gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Lisa Vogel and Barbara Price, members of the Womb staff, and Julie in the preparation of this article.



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Michigan Day Stage—Sherry Shute, Edie Herrold, Kitty Barber, and ASL Interpreter Eve Silverman.



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Bitsy Ziff, Alyson Palmer, and Amy Ziff: BETTY at Michigan.



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

ASL Interpreter Shirley Childress Johnson, Michigan Night Stage.



Marcy J. Hochberg

Blazing Redheads Danielle Dowers and Susan Colson, Bloomington Dance Showcase.



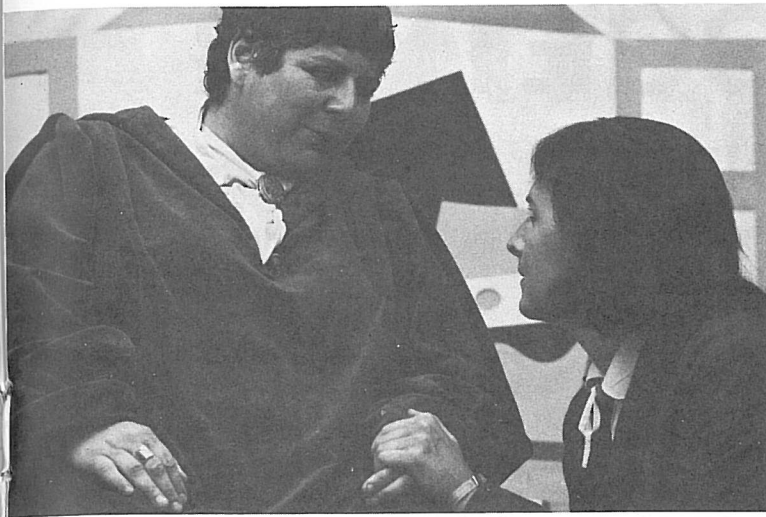
Nancy Seeger

Sisterfire '88 performers included Ferron.



Marcy J. Hochberg

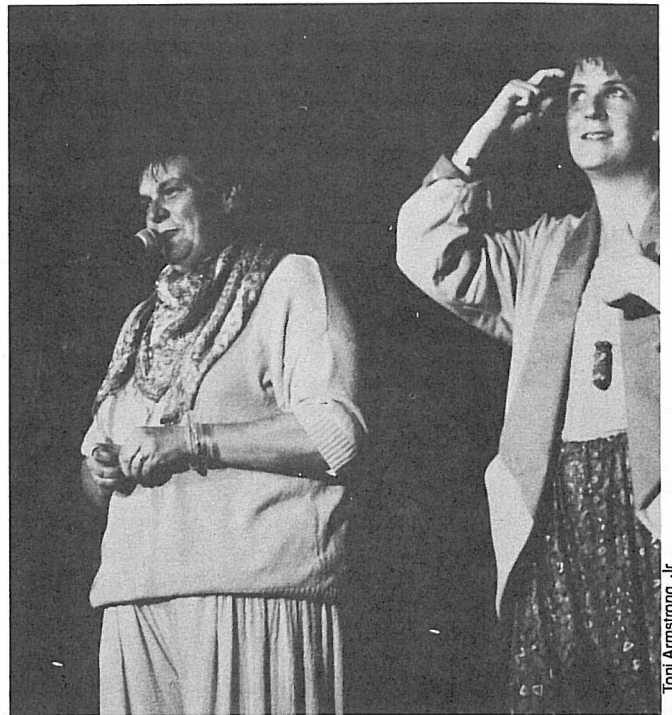
Shull Goodman, Adrienne Torf, Diane Mariechild, and Kay Gardner--NWMF Spirituality Showcase.



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

'Gertrude Stein and a Companion' play, Michigan Acoustic Stage.
Pictured: Miriam Margolies and Pamela Rabe.

1988 FESTIVAL PHOTOS



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Maxine Feldman, mother of the Michigan anthem "Amazon,"
with ASL interpreter Sherry Hicks Glover.



Marcy J. Hochberg

Maria B. Brodsky & Band--lesbian dance music at the Bloomington Dance
Showcase. Band members included players from Girls Night Out.



Marcy J. Hochberg

Surprising duet: Lucie Blue Tremblay and Rhiannon,
National Women's Music Festival Night Stage.



Marcy J. Hochberg

In Bloomington: Annette Aguilar, Jaque DuPreé, J. Casselberry,
and Toshi Reagon.

COMING TOGETHER

THE BENEFIT FOR PAT PARKER

Imagine going to an eight-hour show featuring such singers, poets, novelists, and comics as Karen Ripley, Kyos Feather Dancing, Lisa Cohen, Jeannine Strobel, Sharon Isabell, Monica Grant, Margaret Sloan-Hunter, Willyce Kim, Gwen Avery, June & Jean Millington, Judy Grahn, Mimi Fox, Avotcja, Karen Williams, Stephanie Henderson, Julie Homi, Nancy Vogl, J.G., Judy Fjell, Venita (Sugar Bear) Taylor, and Rhiannon.

For the women in the California Bay Area, it happened on July 10, 1988 at Ollie's bar. The show, which cost \$5 to \$15 on a sliding scale, was called "Coming Together: A Benefit for Pat Parker." The event was conceived and produced by Haley, the booking agent for June Millington and other Bay Area artists. Haley and Pat Parker became friends through women's softball, when Haley coached the team for Ollie's and Pat was their pitcher.

The purpose of the benefit was to raise funds so Pat could attend a nine-week course at the Cancer Support and Education Center in Menlo Park, California. The non-profit CSEC was founded by Maggie Creighton with the stated goal of "providing people with cancer, and their families and loved ones, with new tools for successfully confronting the emotional crisis associated with cancer. Patients are taught how to mobilize their will to live,

enemies; nutrition counseling; and individual and couples counseling. The fee for the program: \$1,850. While the Center has a policy that no one who truly wishes to participate in the program will be turned away, participants who cannot afford the program are asked to write letters to friends and families; to have fundraisers; or even to sponsor bake sales to raise the money.

Out of that need, the "Coming Together" extravaganza was born. Haley pulled off what has to be one of the most remarkable events in the herstory of women's music and culture. All the performers worked for free. Women's businesses were asked to donate books, record albums, services, and trips for an auction. The location, the sound equipment, and the labor of the sound technicians were all donated. Local delicatessens provided food for the entertainers. The Ollie's softball team along with the Outlaws—a team coached by Pat Parker in Pleasant Hill—turned out full force to move equipment, wait tables, prepare food, stage manage, sell raffle tickets, and to lend other kinds of support.

"I have never in all my years as activist and performer in this community ever seen anything like this," said Pat Parker later in an interview with a reporter from *Coming Out* magazine. "When Haley originally approached me with the

filled; the adjoining bar was filled; and love and energy encompassed the entire place.

"I still cannot believe what happened," says Pat. "It is such a rare occasion when someone gets to really know how her peers and colleagues and community feel about her. There were people performing who I had worked with—some I haven't seen in 10 or 15 years—some I have never even seen before. Some who were performing that night weren't even born when I started out, and then there were those—like Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich—who couldn't be there but who sent money. I will never forget it as long as I live. It makes me feel so blessed, and even more determined to beat this cancer."

Benefit organizer Haley says, "Pat has given so much to the community, and we wanted to give some of it back. People were so generous. The business community sent so many things for the raffle, I was afraid that we'd never be able to get everything done by midnight. Women came through the door and donated not only the sliding scale fee, but even more. The love and support for Pat was all over the place."

And she was so right. Women in the Bay Area are still talking about that benefit. Eight hours of women's culture, and

**From 4 p.m. to midnight on a hot evening in July,
there were no factions in our community--
no separatist versus coalitionist, no monogamist versus
non-monogamist, no feminists versus bar dykes.**

in support of their overall medical treatment program. They are taught how to be 'better fighters' and take personal responsibility for utilizing their own emotional and physical resources as a part of their recovery program."

The course includes more than 60 hours of group work and training, weekly massage to teach patients to get in touch with their bodies and not view them as

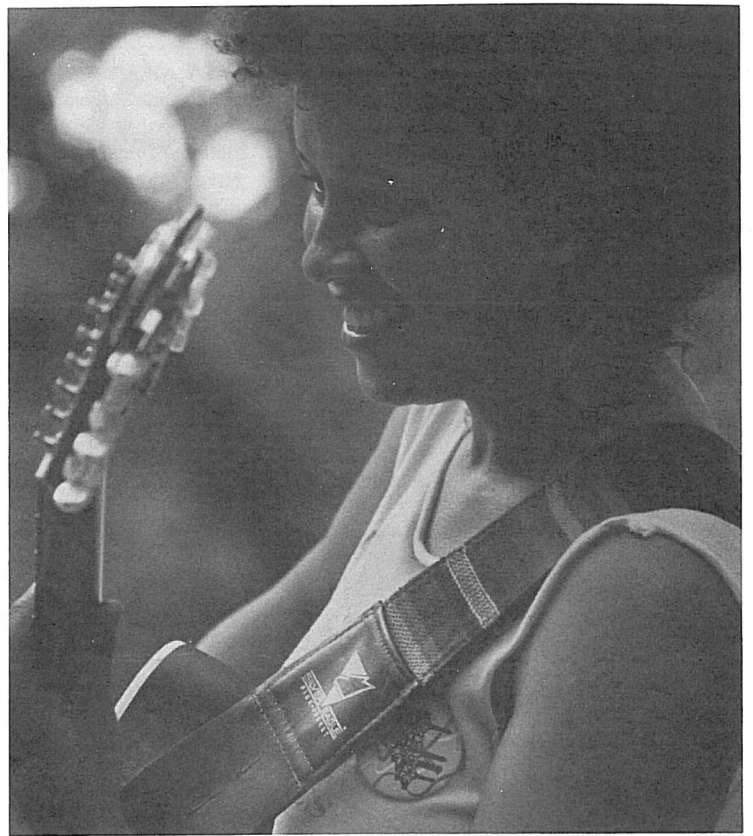
idea for this benefit, I said no. I am used to *doing* benefits for other people, not having them done for me. I think what was in the back of my mind was, *what if she gave a benefit and nobody came.*"

Was she ever wrong! People came and came. Performers worked gigs in one part of the Bay Area and then came and played in the benefit show. The room which serves as Ollie's dance floor was

staged so that it began and ended just as advertised! And from 4 p.m. to midnight on a hot evening in July, there were no factions in our community, no separatist versus coalitionist, no monogamist versus non-monogamist, no feminists versus bar dykes. There were hundreds of people who simply came to say, "Pat Parker, we love you and we love your work—and we want you to stay alive." ●

FAITH NOLAN

*"I'm a working class,
Black lesbian.
In everything I do
I have to fight for that
voice to be heard."*



Faith Nolan is a folk-blues singer, guitarist and songwriter. She is a folk-blues musician in the widest sense of the form; not only does she play guitar, sing, and write her own songs, she also plays blues harp, bass, banjo and tambourine, and is constantly experimenting with other instruments from drums to berimbau. Of course the folks-blues is so much more than instrumentation—it is also moment, event, subject; the poignant expression of the soul; the truth, the telling on ourselves and the world; the telling about your trouble; the telling about your bad ways; the calling down about the oft-times meanness of everyday life. "It's about everything," Nolan says. "It's about reality, love, being broke, struggling for justice, lesbian rights, Black rights. It's about working people's lives, and always has been. When I sing the blues I'm trying to share that everyday emotion. You see, the blues is a durable form. It was made for such expression."

Faith Nolan was born in Nova Scotia, on Canada's East Coast. Life for Blacks in Nova Scotia was not—and still isn't—an easy thing. Black Nova Scotians are known for their plain talking and their cutting sense of humor. No exception, Faith brings these to her music in her pointed lyrics. Contrary to popular myths, slavery did exist in Canada, and similarly to Black Americans, Black Nova

Scotians still live under unequal conditions. Nolan grew up in both Halifax, Nova Scotia, and in the working class Cabbagetown in Toronto in the '60s. Her commitment to representing the life of Black and working class peoples in her songs is a conscious commitment, and one that is grounded in her own life experience, which—along with the experiences of women she grew up with—fill her songs.

Her music is her political work. Nolan definitely has an explicit social and political agenda. And she remains firmly rooted in her race, class, and gender as she composes her lyrics and music. Like the lyrics of the song "Regina" on her album *Africville*:

*Regina why did you kill that man
the policeman took your statement
he said there's no defense
for killing a white man
it just don't make sense
you sit in the jail cell
for trying to save your life
because you're a black woman
because you're not white
Regina why did you kill that man*

The story is taken from the real-life experience of one of Nolan's childhood friends, and Nolan doesn't pull any punches about the racist and sexist reali-

ties in our lives. Nor does she pull any punches about how class operates, or about the rights of working class people. Her song "Box Factory" on *Africville* tells of her experience working in a factory at nineteen:

*I worked in a box factory
from six a.m. 'til three
only nineteen and in tip-top form
and I be tired every morning*

*We'd go to lunch for a half hour
the boss would use our time
to lecture us on power
He said you'd better move faster
or your job would soon be gone
He'd lie and drone on and on*

*There's no union in a sweatshop place
There's no union to help me fight anyway*

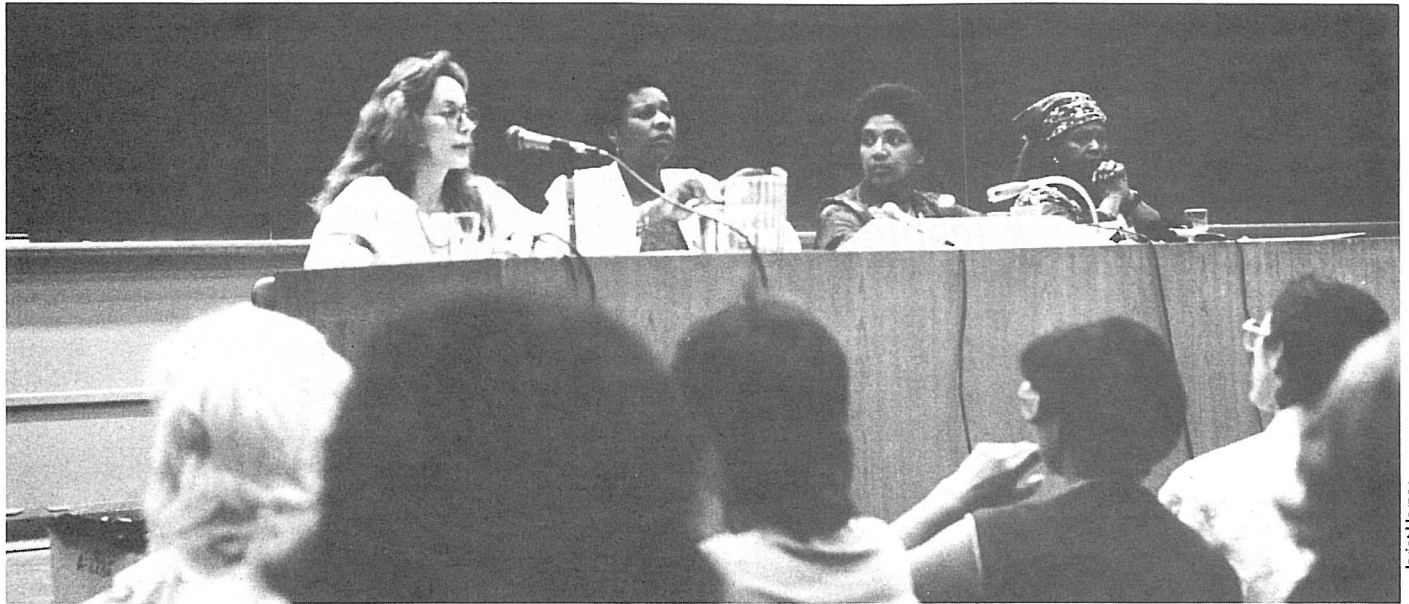
Whether it is about Black rights or gay rights, she is unequivocal in her call for liberation. She is a socialist and a feminist and a gay rights activist, and she employs her music in bringing these issues to her audiences. Her reggae-style song "Divide and Rule" (from *Africville*) has virtually become the anthem for progressive struggle in Toronto.

In performance, Nolan is pugnacious
continued on page 57

ABOUT THE WRITER: Dionne Brand is a poet and writer living in Toronto.

LESBIAN VISIBILITY: HIGH PRIORITY AT SUMMER CONFERENCES

By Jorjet Harper



'Speaking of Power' in Montreal. From left: Daysi Zamora, Maria Campbell, Audre Lorde, and Miriam Tlali.

Jorjet Harper

Last summer I was privileged to be able to attend two important women's gatherings: the Third International Feminist Bookfair, held in Montreal, Quebec from June 14 through June 19, and the National Women's Studies Association Conference, in Minneapolis from June 22 to June 26. While these two events differed in organization, atmosphere, and specific purpose, they were similar in at least two important ways: both were strongly feminist in overall presentation, and both gave prominent space to lesbians—and, therefore, to promoting lesbian visibility.

MONTREAL

For a lesbian feminist booklover, the Third International Feminist Bookfair, which convened on the stately, hilly campus of the University of Montreal, was a rare opportunity to meet feminist writers from around the world. As one woman from Venezuela said, it was "the chance of a lifetime to meet with our many sisters." A lesbian from Boston remarked that since this was possibly the only time the fair would be held in the Western Hemisphere in the foreseeable future, it was possibly the only time she could ever

afford to go.

Canada was suffering from the same heatwave that hit the United States this summer. Participants slogged through the unseasonable Montreal heat as they walked between the main area of the bookfair exhibits in the large Arena building and the workshops, most of which were held in labyrinthine academic buildings nearby. Many women gave talks and participated in seminars in addition to browsing at the bookstalls of almost 200 publishers.

The fair consisted of four interrelated aspects. First, the books themselves: the central Arena, with rows of neatly lined bookstalls, in which publishers displayed and sold their woman-, feminist-, and lesbian-related publications. The second was the very organized workshops that were held, usually three to choose from during any time period. Third, the series of readings by writers, including a Lesbian Poetry Reading and a reading by Native American authors. Fourth—and sometimes most important—was the unplanned, spontaneous meeting of women, facilitated by the workshops and evening social events, where we got a chance to really talk to one another about our thoughts, our lives, and our work.

GRAND WELCOME

The French Canadians certainly know how to throw a party. For the Tuesday night Opening Ceremony, shuttle busses took us from the campus to a beautiful large meeting hall that was set in the mountain above the city. Murals depicting important moments in Canadian history were painted all around the ceilings of the lavish interior, and paneled glass doors opened onto a long stone patio, where a staircase led down to a wide observation deck that provided a spectacular, panoramic view of the shimmering city below.

After fanfare, congratulations, and short speeches by Bookfair President Nicole Brossard, organizers Diana Bronson and Ariane Brunet, and a succession of women government officials including Canada's Minister of Communications Flora MacDonald and Quebec's Minister of Cultural Affairs Lise Bacon, a free cold buffet was provided for everyone. Wine was poured for all of the several hundred people gathered. It was an unforgettable image, as hundreds of women—Asian women in saris, African women in head-dresses, French Canadian dykes in pants and suspenders with their arms around

each other—all toasted to the success of the Bookfair. This grand gesture of welcoming and generosity was not only a festive way to mark the fair's beginning; it was also an acknowledgement that some women had travelled halfway around the world, overcoming many political and economic difficulties to attend.

STRONG LESBIAN PRESENCE

Radical Lesbians from Quebec were very visible during the fair. Brossard, the fair's president, is herself a respected intellectual and an outspoken lesbian who has published a number of books with lesbian themes. Brossard has written: "The lesbian is living proof of women's 'genius.' All women would like to believe in the 'genius' of women but only lesbians believe in it, take inspiration from it, live it. To believe in *Woman*, through women, is a philosophical act to which lesbians are the only women to have shown themselves disposed." To see an openly lesbian, radical woman as president of this kind of politically sensitive feminist event, standing on a podium with high-level women government officials—and all of them seeming to be pleased as punch to be there together—is a rare and welcome sight anywhere.

Of course there were disagreements among the fair's participants. Perhaps most generally, there was an obvious intellectual division between women who see lesbianism in a larger—sometimes even metaphorical—sense, as a new consciousness growing out of feminist roots, and women who see lesbianism as a civil rights issue that should be a subset of women's struggles for liberation, who want lesbians to stop making such a fuss in the women's movement and work for "women's equality." One concerned young woman I spoke with from Santo Domingo told me that of course women "should be free to sleep with other women if they want," but was "worried that lesbian issues are overwhelming the women's movement."

WORKSHOPS

The Bookfair took great care to overcome language barrier problems in most of the workshops and seminars by distributing headphones as one entered each conference room. You could then tune in to the proper channel for a sentence-by-sentence running translation delivered in French, English, or Spanish by women translators who sat in a closed booth at the back of the room. This not only made it possible for us to understand each

other, it also strongly boosted the "United Nations" feel of the conference.

The fair attracted a veritable Who's Who of creative lesbian writers and thinkers, including Audre Lorde, Ann Allen Shockley, Gloria Anzaldúa, Beth Brant, Gerd Brantenberg, Olga Broumas, Judith Barrington, Anne Cameron, Judy Grahn, Mary Daly, Sonia Johnson, Joy Harjo, Sarah Hoagland, Irena Klepfisz, Charlotte Bunch, Jan Raymond, Catharine MacKinnon, Dale Spender, Chrystos—and many others who are probably less familiar to U.S. readers right now but who certainly also belong in the constellation of "lesbian household-name" writers, including Bente Clod (the only out lesbian novelist in Denmark) and Suniti Namjoshi of India/Canada.

Among the wide-ranging array of workshops was a lively exchange between lesbian publishers and writers called "Promoting Lesbian Writing" with Barbara Grier of Naiad Press and Nett Hart of Word Weavers from the U.S., Lillian Mohin from Onlywomen Press in Great Britain, and Gerlinde Kowitzke of Frauenoffensive, the oldest lesbian publishing group in West Germany. "Lesbian Memory and Creation" was a panel with Judy Grahn, Anne Cameron (author of *Daughters of Copper Woman*), and British lesbian novelist Anna Livia. "Lesbian Writing: Issues of Representation," included talks by lesbian philosopher Sarah Lucia Hoagland, Bente Clod, Michele Cause of France/Martinique, and Martha Rosenfeld of the U.S.A.

In the "Lesbian Periodicals" workshop, women's experiences working in the lesbian print media ranged from large-circulation newspapers with offices and full-time staff, to small-run clandestine newspapers hastily distributed in bars in countries where the word "Lesbian" on an envelope could land the addressees in prison. Naturally it was an exhilarating experience to get to speak with such dynamic, committed lesbians, as well as an enlightening, humbling one to learn firsthand from them about the severe conditions under which they must live and work.

Of course, in Quebec the notion of separatism has strong political meaning for the French-speaking inhabitants trying to maintain their culture and language in an English-speaking country. The province of Quebec itself is home to many radical lesbians and lesbian separatists, who are active in a wide range of French-language lesbian publishing ventures, including *Treize* (a biannual political and cultural review), *Vlasta*, a Journal of 'Amazon Utopian Fictions,' (begun in France), and the bilingual, for-lesbians-

only, *Amazones d'Hier, Lesbiennes d'aujourd'hui* (*Amazons of Yesterday, Lesbians of Today*). Some of these women were part of the organizational team that put together the bookfair, and this also contributed to the high visibility of lesbians at the event.

Lesbian separatism became an issue during the Lesbian Poetry Reading, when several men tried to enter the all-woman reading and created a stir. They were prevented from entering, but one man was insistent enough to go get security guards. When the two male guards he had summoned heard both sides, they agreed with the women at the door that the woman-only space should be respected. Nevertheless, the incident sparked controversy among the 60-odd women in the packed room, which briefly interrupted the reading. At a plenary session the next day, the poet Chrystos, speaking as a Native American lesbian, told the gathering, "There are more of us than you can begin to believe," and made an eloquent plea in favor of women-only space, citing that many lesbians risked the homophobia of their cultures and communities to come to an event like the Feminist Bookfair and meet with their lesbian sisters, and that we should be able to gather together without the distraction of having to "defend our pitifully small space" at such an event in the future.

'SPEAKING OF POWER'

There were, of course, many workshops and activities that dealt with feminist topics other than lesbianism, among them a series on Writing from Prison, workshops on Reclaiming History and Memory, and many workshops in which women panelists described their experiences in their own countries, as active feminists, writers, and publishers.

Friday evening was a definite highlight of the conference, as U.S. poet and essayist Audre Lorde, acclaimed Black South African novelist Miriam Tlali (it had been uncertain for a time whether Tlali, who lives in Soweto and whose novels are banned in her own country, would be allowed to come to the conference at all), and Nicaraguan revolutionary and prize-winning poet Daysi Zamora joined a panel called "Speaking of Power."

The International Feminist Bookfair convenes every other year. The first took place in London in 1984, the second in

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

Oslo in 1986. The Fourth International Feminist Bookfair, to be held in 1990, is slated to take place in either India, the Philippines, or Spain—so start saving now for your airfare.

NWSA CONFERENCE

The National Women's Studies Association 1988 Conference was, by comparison, much narrower culturally, and—because its focus is women's studies rather than feminism *per se*—much broader-based in its range of topics. Indeed, the number of workshops one could attend at any one time was amazing. With an average of 25 selections in each time slot, there was something for just about everybody. The overall conference theme was "Leadership and Power: Women's Alliances for Social Change," and brought together over 2000 women scholars and writers.

homophobia and heterosexist bias. Although Lesbians have spoken on a majority of plenaries in NWSA history, not until this historic moment has a plenary specifically celebrated Lesbian leadership and power. This plenary is to, in part, publicly acknowledge the fact that lesbians often assume leadership roles—within feminist dialogues, in contributions to literature and the arts, and in the commitment to social and political justice."

Plenary speakers, including Beth Brant, Michele Parkerson, Joan Nestle, Gloria Anzaldua, and emcee Rosemary Curb, addressed an audience of over a thousand women. Barbara Grier of Naiad Press awarded the Naiad Press/NWSA Scholarship Award before the speakers began their talks.

Native American writer Beth Brant spoke of the difficulty of being recognized

remembrance of that book helped her to survive, because, the young woman said, "I wanted to live long enough to kiss a woman." Nestle stressed the importance of celebrating our lesbian erotic vitality.

Black lesbian filmmaker and writer Michele Parkerson spoke of the "deconstruction of heterosexism." "In a sense," she said, "homophobia is to heterosexism what racism is to white supremacy." In this struggle, she said, we must utilize our greatest asset, which is ourselves. "The Lesbian & Gay Rights Movement is the only movement being fought for love."

Writer Gloria Anzaldua, co-editor of *This Bridge Called My Back*, said that for her, heterosexism had not been the biggest oppressor. "Cultural and race oppression have made me suffer more.

When you are a bridge, you're a mediator," she said, "and a lot of times the *you* gets lost."

In addition to the plenary, there were a number of workshops on lesbian issues, almost all of them well attended. There were a few problems and troubling encounters at the conference, however; one woman said she had been handed a flyer with a skull and crossbones on it, and the words "Lesbians Get Out." For the most part, lesbian energy, lesbian creativity, and lesbian visibility were very much in the forefront. "No feminist enterprise can afford to stand separate from the Lesbian enterprise," said Toni McNaren, a professor at U. of M., and a call was made at the plenary session for the topic of lesbianism to be the overall theme of a future NWSA conference. ●



Feminist publishers at the Firebrand booth in Montreal.
From left: Lillian Mohin, Nancy Bereano, Joan Pinkvoss.

HISTORIC MOMENT

Significantly, for the first time in the conference's history, a full plenary session was devoted to lesbian issues, scheduled in a prime-time Saturday morning slot in the cavernous Northrup Auditorium, entitled "Lesbian Alliances: Combatting Heterosexism in the '80s." In an official statement about convening this plenary session, the NWSA acknowledged that from the organization's beginning more than a decade ago, "Lesbians have been at the center of the Association's scholarship, administration, artistic creativity and vision of the future. The Lesbian Caucus has been the largest group within NWSA to work on freeing us all from

as both a Native American and a lesbian. She had just come from the first gathering of Native American gays and lesbians, she told us, held the previous weekend. "There are too many of us now," she said, for a coverup, for denial. "If you believe in the existence of a blue heron, wild rice, a marsh marigold, you have to believe in me."

Joan Nestle, co-founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, said we must resist the "evacuation of desire" in the coming decades, we must "fight back with our bodies, for our bodies." She cited the words of a young Polish woman who had "had the chance to read *The Well of Loneliness* at age 12: after she had been sent to a Nazi concentration camp, her

WHEN YOU CONTACT THE MEDIA

BE DIRECT.....Tell them specifically what displeased you about their coverage (e.g., underestimation of reported size of crowd) or lack of coverage; negative or stereotypical portrayal of lesbian and gay people; representation of a civil rights march as an AIDS event; sexist, racist, or homophobic etc. language; assumption that lesbian = "gay."
BE BRIEF.....Plan your statement. Rambling will cause the media people to tune you out.
BE POLITE.....State your position in a calm, reasonable manner. Sarcasm or abrasiveness may cause the other party to ignore you.

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Dykes to Watch Out For



© 1988 BY ALISON BECHDEL

SAY, MO, I'M HAVING A COMING-OUT PARTY IN A COUPLE WEEKS AND I'D LIKE YOU TO COME.

A COMING-OUT PARTY? SURE! I'VE NEVER FIGURED YOU FOR THE DEBUTANTE TYPE, JEZANNA...

VERY FUNNY. YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN: COMING OUT AS IN TELLING PEOPLE YOU'RE A LESBIAN.

BUT I ALREADY KNOW YOU'RE A LESBIAN.

MO, IT'S A GOOD THING I HIRED YOU FOR YOUR STUNNING GOOD LOOKS AND NOT YOUR KEEN WIT OR PIERCING INTELLECT. HADN'T YOU HEARD ABOUT NATIONAL COMING-OUT DAY?

OF COURSE I HAVE. I WAS JUST TEASING YOU. DID YOU REALLY HIRE ME FOR MY LOOKS?

NO, SO THE IDEA IS, EVERYONE TAKES THE NEXT STEP IN THEIR COMING OUT PROCESS THEN AT MY PARTY WE CAN CELEBRATE AND SHARE OUR STORIES.

THE NEXT STEP, HUH? GEE, I'M OUT TO PRACTICALLY EVERYONE I KNOW...

YEAH? HOW DO YOUR PARENTS DEAL WITH IT?

DON'T TELL ME ANY POLITICAL CORRECTNESS INCARNATE SHT' OUT TO HER OWN PARENTS?

UH... ANY PARENTS?

I KNOW, I KNOW. I'M PERPETUATING MY OWN INTERNALIZED HOMOPHOBIA AS WELL AS THAT OF MY FAMILY AND SOCIETY AT LARGE. COMING OUT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOL WE HAVE AGAINST THIS CULTURE'S FEAR, SHAME, AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT HOMOSEXUALITY.

YOU CERTAINLY HAVE THE RAP DOWN, WHY NOT TELL YOUR FOLKS THE GOOD NEWS?

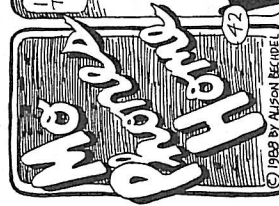
BECAUSE I'M SCARED SHITLESS.

THAT'S WHY I'M HAVING A PARTY! WE'LL ALL BE THERE TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER AFTER WE'VE TOLD WHOEVER WE'RE GONNA TELL!

OKAY, OKAY. YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL TELL THEM. WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THEY'RE GAY TOO.

ATTA GIRL!

Dykes to Watch Out For



© 1988 BY ALISON BECHDEL

I NEED TO DO THIS ALONE, HARRIET.

OKAY, OKAY. I'LL BE IN THE SHOWER IN CASE YOU GET DISINHERITED.

UH... DAD... I REALLY DON'T FEEL LIKE DISCUSSING POLITICS RIGHT NOW.

VIR-GIN-IAT IT'S YOUR DAUGHTER! PICK UP THE EXTENSION!

UH... DAD? I'M GLAD YOU CALLED! YOUR MOTHER IS A MESS. YOU'RE WRECKING THE DUKE'S CAMPAIGN... MAYBE YOU CAN CALM HER DOWN!

MONICA, I'M EXHAUSTED! I'VE BEEN FUNDRAISING ALL WEEK. I HOPE YOU'RE VOLUNTEERING TOO... IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH TIME TO JUST PUT UP A FEW POSTERS, YOU KNOW...

GREAT! YOU'RE DOING JUST FINE! THEY SAY THE FIRST STAGE PRESENT GO THROUGH IS DENIAL. NEXT COMES GUILT. NOW YOU'RE SURPASSED BY SKY. WHAT DID WE DO WRONG?!

I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE STOPPED BREAST-FEEDING YOU SOONER!

MONICA, STUART NEXT DOOR JUST GOT HIS PH.D. I REALLY WISH YOU'D THINK ABOUT GOING BACK TO SCHOOL. YOU CAN'T WORK IN A BOOKSTORE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!

LISTEN, WILL YOU JUST LISTEN, WILL YOU JUST LISTEN FOR A SECOND? I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING!

NO, NOTHING'S WRONG! I JUST WANT TO TELL YOU SOMETHING IMPORTANT... ABOUT ME. UM... I JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT... THAT I'M A LESBIAN.

A LESBIAN AS IN GAY, YOU'RE GOOD LIBERALS, YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!

WHAT?

BUT ARE YOU SURE?

MONICA, DON'T BE RIDICULOUS! JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE A FEMINIST DOESN'T MEAN YOU HAVE TO BE A... A LESBIAN. HAVE YOU HAD A BAD EXPERIENCE WITH SOME BOYFRIEND?

UH... DAD... I REALLY DON'T FEEL LIKE DISCUSSING POLITICS RIGHT NOW.

VIR-GIN-IAT IT'S YOUR DAUGHTER! PICK UP THE EXTENSION!

THE 1988 BOSTON WOMEN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL

Reported by Judith Sloan

"Oh my god, how many people are in the house, and are we going to be able to pay our bills?!" That is the most frequent thought running through Sophie Parker's mind during the ten days of the Boston Women In Theatre Festival. Parker is the director of the festival, working with four other women all year long to produce an event presenting plays, readings, and solo works of women from all over the world. March 1988 marked the fourth year of the festival, which began in 1984 as a way for actresses, playwrights, and theater companies to have their work seen by large audiences. The question of paying bills is one that plagues producers of any performance and, traditionally, theater is one of the toughest. No one involved with the Boston Women In Theatre Festival makes a salary.

Financial complications aside, this year's festival was richly diverse, and I felt lucky to be performing on the bill presenting a new original work-in-progress called *When Your Gear Shift Breaks...Stop Clutching*, which features Rheba, a hairdresser-turned-rock-&-roll-singer who reveals the "insides" of her customer's deepest fears and dreams. I was scared and excited, while simultaneously being thrilled at the skills of the lighting designer, the stage manager, the entire technical crew, and the quality of the theater. I remember looking at Sophie Parker's face, just minutes after my technical rehearsal, taking note of some serious bags under her eyes, and thinking that she needed a nap. I probably needed a nap myself, as everyone is always overworked at these events, but Parker's face looked so weary, I felt fortunate to be a struggling actress and not a producer of a festival.

This year, one of the things I was most impressed by was the ability of the festival to bring together diverse groups of people. This was epitomized by the performance of a theater group called Charabanc Theatre Company from Belfast, Northern Ireland. They performed *Somewhere Over The Balcony*, a play set in the Divis flats housing project on the edge of

Belfast city center. I sat in an audience of mostly Irish people, learning and laughing about the effects of war on the individual lives of three women living in Divis flats, and stretching my ability to understand a foreign accent and sensibility. As the program notes explained: Like many housing projects of the 1960s, the initial purpose was to provide decent living conditions for inner city people. The deterioration of poorly designed and badly maintained communal facilities has left residents in conditions which are degrading, unhealthy, and dangerous. This situation is common to people living in large

large Irish audience at the Women's Theatre Festival. "We had a whole team working in the Irish community," she said, "and then a whole team working in the Jamaican community for both Charabanc and Sistren [a theater company from Kingston, Jamaica]. That's part of why those two performances were so well attended."

These were among the successes of the festival; not only the final performance, but the way the festival coordinated efforts with different communities. According to Parker, the festival was an event which strived for artistic high



Charabanc Theater Co. in 'Somewhere Over The Balcony.'
From left: Sarah Jones, Carol Scanlan, Eleanor Methven.

public housing projects, but Divis residents soon had a bizarre new dimension to their troubles: the British Army chose the Flats as the optimum site for a military observation post. This post sits atop a 22-story tower block; thus shielded, the soldiers can carry on their "observation" of the people of West Belfast.

I asked Parker how they got such a

quality. The event was multi-cultural in a city that is racially divided.

"We got the Irish and Jamaican community to work with us and each other, and brought people to performances who don't go to theater very often," she said. "We exposed people to work that comes from foreign places, that speaks to every woman's experiences. You can identify

with Charabanc, even if you don't live in a war zone; it makes you understand what's happening in Northern Ireland in a way that a newspaper article never does. We recognize that humor is a response to that day-to-day wearing down; that of course it would be, yet in America we never hear about women in Belfast. You hear about the men killing each other, but you don't hear about how the women are keeping themselves or their families together; and that speaks to everyone, gay or straight."

Speaking of gay and straight, the festival had gotten some criticism for being oriented towards heterosexual women. I asked about the kind of complaints they had gotten and how they responded. Organizer Katherine Kelly says, "I think some women wanted it to be a woman-only event, and that is not what we are about. There are lesbian plays and performances and they are advertised as such." Parker said, "We are committed to presenting theater about women's lives, gay and straight. If there is one thing there is an abundance of in the women's and lesbian community it is criticism." She felt the women's community didn't come, and the audience was small. Kelly, on the other hand, said, "I think our audience actually tripled in numbers. There were many shows over the course of ten days, and women had to choose. We had a very large audience for several shows. It's different than a women's music festival where women take time off from work and their lives, and see everything at once. It's a different kind of commitment to see theater. You go to individual shows even if they are over the course of ten days."

The actual ticket prices are not that high when compared to music concerts or going out to dinner. In considering the ever-present financial burden, Parker says that they may have to have a shorter festival, with a few well-known groups to bring in an audience, and fewer performances.

Part of the problem is in education--educating the audience about theater. Women may be afraid they won't understand what plays are about, or that it won't effect them personally. As a theatergoer, I have found the opposite to be true. I understand more from seeing live theater in a way that television and film will never touch me. Part of the performance is the audience. Whether it is sitting in a mostly Irish audience or a women's audience or in New York, part of my understanding and excitement is because it is happening live.

"The audience needs to take risks also," Parker says. "Maybe someone came

and saw a show they didn't like--or a bad show. We have produced some work that was not great in the past. But people need to take a risk and try something new. That's what it's about. We need the audience, and they need us. We want to hear about what women would like to see, and to hear complaints." Parker is honest, and unafraid to hear from women who want to put their two cents in.



Wes Thomas

Judith Sloan as Rheba the Beautician.

Parker, herself a performer who has temporarily given up acting, is deeply committed to theater and to producing this particular festival. "Where do you see women; where do women go to get pictures of who we are, or how we can be? We go to the theater," she says. "And there is no theater without the audience.

The work I see during the year--the videos and scripts sent in to the festival--is the most exciting part of what I do. There is no other art form that speaks to me this directly."

Many of my friends asked me, "Judith, how was your show at the festival? How was the festival for you?" Well, the audience for my show was small. But the things I learned and the connections I made with other actresses, playwrights, and technical crew are invaluable. There is no other women's event that comes close to meeting my professional needs. As long as I choose to be an actress, to be in theater, a profession with so many problems, I might as well join forces with other women who have similar problems.

The 1989 festival will be held March 16-26. For further information, contact Boston Women in Theatre Festival, 64 Wyman St., Jamaica Plain, MA 02130. (617) 424-1411.

And now I have a question for *HOT WIRE* readers. Please send me responses. I want to know if readers (a) go to see theater regularly, (b) if not, why not? Is it because you don't know enough about it? Aren't aware of what's out there? Please write to Judith Sloan, P.O. Box 1867, New Haven, CT 06508. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Judith Sloan has been performing for the past 16 years. An actress, writer, and comedienne, Sloan has been touring with a one-woman show called 'Responding to Chaos.' She is most well-known for her portrayal of Sophie, an elderly Jewish woman who brings an old world way of being into contemporary life.

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SOAPBOX from page 7

June—I really enjoyed working with them. Their enthusiasm for, and support of, women's culture really touched me. Martie and I did several gigs in the South and found all of the women there to be wonderful to work with. They were all so energetic and friendly...so refreshing after all the traveling one does on a tour. In Lexington, the producers stood out in the front yard as we drove away, waved and yelled, "Ya'll come back now, you hear?!" Okay, twist my arm.

Also, I enjoyed taking the women's music quiz. I scored only 26 but because I found a few mistakes, I gave myself a few extra points. (Ha! I'm an expert now.) Question 4 asked for the name of two of the bands that Carol McDonald has played in. Your answer key did not include Goldie and the Gingerbreads, a group she was a part of in the '60s. Question 26 asked for Olivia Records' most prominent electric guitarist. I didn't answer Tret Fure because she's actually on the Second Wave label. I know I'm splitting hairs here but hey, anything for a few extra points. (I know that Olivia and Second Wave are almost the same company...some sort of distribution arrangement maybe? Can someone explain that relationship?)

Jamie Anderson, Tucson, AZ

The editor is curious: what other errors and omissions did readers spot in the quiz? All replies to this question will be printed in the May issue. The Second Wave/Olivia connection is explained in the article beginning on page 18.

The best point made in the article "The Great White Folk Music Myth" is that the stereotype is racist. That can't be said often enough. One major irritant of trying to deal with the white women's movement is how often we hear "it's a white thing; how can we do more outreach"—all the while ignoring the major contributions being made every day by women of color. Women of color who've been fortunate enough to attend women's music festivals—especially like Michigan—are *certainly* aware that women's music is *not* just white girls with guitars. Also, I want to say that I want to see more women of color do their own productions so the non-white women's communities can have their own thing. Productions by straight white men might present acts like Holly Near or Casselberry-DuPre...but straight white men ultimately don't represent "our" community in any way...they're in it for the money, and they can't be expected to care about what *we* really need or what we're trying to build for ourselves in terms of community. They don't even have real access to our community except through advertising and a certain amount of word of mouth. It's like that when white women—even gay white women—are producing women of color. Except in unusual cities, segregation is a real thing between white lesbians and lesbians of color. The gay community is a microcosm of the larger society, even if we don't like to admit it. So one way to help remedy this is to take the advice in the article, and *don't* keep perpetuating the myth that only

white women are what's happening in women's music.

Bea Holmes, Gary, Indiana

Do I ever wish I could have seen that tour you mentioned in your quiz article, with the more than a dozen black women including Linda Tillery, Pat Parker, and Mary Watkins ["Varied Voices of Black Women"]. I would like to hear first-hand accounts of it from *HOT WIRE* readers who may have had the good fortune to be participating in women's music of the '70s. I don't suppose anyone out there has photos?

Theresa McNally, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

Well, it's true that women's music has a lot more in it than just folk-style music. But I feel the need to speak up in favor of songs and songwriting. It's true that each style of music has something to offer, and rock and classical and jazz and funk and all of those call forth a unique response in the listener. But when I'm dancing, the focus is not on thinking and feeling about my life or my emotions—except maybe feeling-good excitement. Good songs have a unique ability to make us think about our lives. I think we should encourage and support women who are writing lesbian and womynly things in songs—it doesn't exist in the world unless we cooperate and get it out there. I'd be very interested in seeing a list of songs that are actually clearly about being a lesbian (not just love songs, but also songs like "Leaping Lesbians"). I don't have a very big record collection, or I'd do it myself. I guess I mean songs that are *so explicit* that people at our jobs would *know* what was meant by the pronouns! I mean songs you would hide from your folks if you were still in the closet and planned to remain there. I mean "out there" songs like "Rosalie" (Teresa Trull), "These Women" (Alix Dobkin), "Mademoiselle" (Lucie Blue), "Imagine My Surprise" (Holly Near), and "Seduced" (Heather Bishop). I bet there aren't that many of these songs in the whole herstory of women's music. When you think of it that way, it's important not to criticize the singer-songwriter genre.

H. K. Hamilton, Duluth, Minnesota

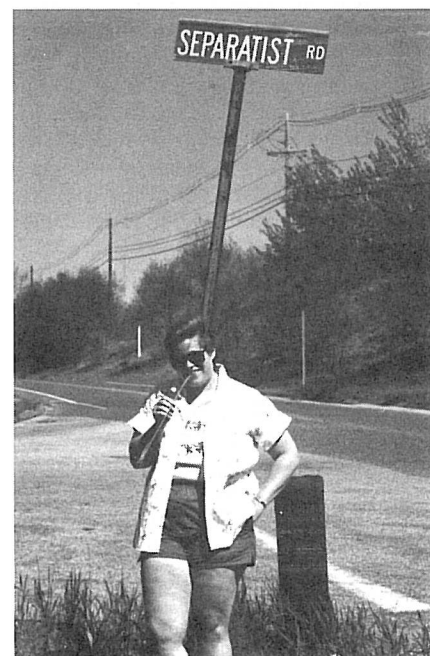
Editor's note: We'll be happy to compile and publish such a list if readers are inclined to sift through the lyric sheets of their album collections. Please send information to us in this format: Song title; written by; performed by; album title/record label; year.

Readers please note: Someone wrote in praising our inclusion of printed music ["Rosa" by Therese Edell, July 1988 issue]; the letter writer said it reminded her of *Paid My Dues: The Journal of Women and Music* [from the 1970s]. The letter got lost in the shuffle, but the thought is a good one to pass on.

Great combination: Betsy Rose's "Time Out For Healing" in the same issue as the spoof "Lesbian Intellectuals Anonymous" [by Diane Germain, July 1988]. (You have a great sense of humor over there at *HOT WIRE*.) I'm proud that the gay and lesbian, especially lesbian, communities around the country are taking

sobriety and recovery seriously. No point in staying stuck in the oppression of being too drunk and drugged up to take political action. No point in spending so much time and money supporting bar owners and drug pushers when we could be healthier, happier, and making real changes in the world. Drugging and drinking perpetuates our real and imagined helplessness and hopelessness. Meg Christian's *Turning It Over* album is still very inspiring and *all women's music fans should own it*. It's great that festivals routinely include Clean & Sober support services, and that the Clean & Sober contingents are bigger and bigger in Gay Pride Marches. While all of this is true, we need to be careful to maintain a sense of perspective—no point in giving up substance/sex/food addictions only to become 12-step Junkies!!! Thanks for the little smiling nudge with the LIA piece.

Sue Hoppe, Worcester, Massachusetts



Vacationing subscriber Lisa Kuhn from Somerville, Massachusetts found an appropriate resting spot on this street in Connecticut (summer of 1988).

I never gave science fiction a second thought until I started reading *HOT WIRE*. I imagined it was all boys with laser guns and silver space ships, ho hum. You have had several interesting articles, however, that got me interested. This last one by Jeanne Gomoll, "The 'Me' Decade and Feminist Science Fiction" [July 1988] was the best. I strongly encourage you to publish more pieces that thoughtfully examine feminism and speculative fiction. I am now happily an avid reader in search of suggested titles.

Gwen Muldowney, Hackensack, New Jersey

Check out *Wiscon*, the annual feminist-oriented science fiction convention held each February. See the article "Wiscon 10" by Jorjet Harper in the July 1986 issue of *'HOT WIRE'*. For information about the 1989 gathering, contact *Wiscon* c/o SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701. ●

HOTLINE from page 19

A new bilingual newsletter for Latina lesbians, *DE AMBIENTE*, is being started by Connexus and Lesbian Central/L.A. Gay & Lesbian Community Service Center, 9054 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood, CA 90069.

Sinister Wisdom is soliciting writings and graphics submissions for: **ITALIAN-AMERICAN LESBIANS**, issue 38 (deadline: February 15, 1989) and **DISABILITY**, issue 39 (deadline: June 15, 1989). *Sinister Wisdom*, P.O. Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703.

PHOTOS OF THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON wanted for publication celebrating the event. Lesbian pix and aerial shots especially wanted. Out of the Closet Foundation, P.O. Box 20084, Cherokee Station, New York, NY 10028. (212) 288-4351.

THE DISH RAG, a newsletter for lesbians in Rockland County and the surrounding areas, debuted last summer. *Dish Rag*, P.O. Box 208, Nyack, NY 10960.

Hilda Wenner (of *Here's to the Women* song-book fame) has begun another documentary-type project. The working title is **THE SONGS & STORIES OF THE GREAT PEACE MARCH**, and Hilda is asking for original songs, stories, poems, diaries, and journals about the March. The submissions must pertain specifically to that one peace march. 967 Garcia Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93103. (805) 966-1191.

Susanna J. Sturgis, science fiction columnist for the trade journal *Feminist Bookstore News*, is looking for short stories, novelettes, novellas, and full-length novels for a **SPECULATIVE FICTION SERIES BY AND ABOUT WOMEN**, to be published by Crossing Press. Deadline for first anthology in series: January 31, 1989. *Women's SF Anthology*, P.O. Box 39, West Tisbury, MA 02575.

Womanews is looking for a **PC IN GOOD WORKING CONDITION**. Donation is tax-deductible. Diane c/o *Womanews*, P.O. Box 200, Village Station, New York, NY 10014.

A bilingual (English/French) directory of women's groups across Canada, *The Canadian Women's Directory*, has recently been published by *Les Editions Communiqu'Elles*. The 350-page publication, subdivided by province or territory, contains nearly 2,000 women's groups and organizations. Also, *COMMUNIQUE'ELLES*, the bimonthly feminist magazine from Montreal, includes women's news, info on women's groups and organizations, and resources in the community. *Les Editions Communiqu'Elles*, 3585 St-Urbain, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2N6. (514) 844-1761.

Nemesis is seeking written work and photos from **SEPARATISTS, LESBIANS, AND RADICAL FEMINISTS** which tell our tales of heteropatriarchal disruption and womyn positive reality building. SASE to Amber L. Katherine, P.O. Box 417042, Chicago IL 60641.

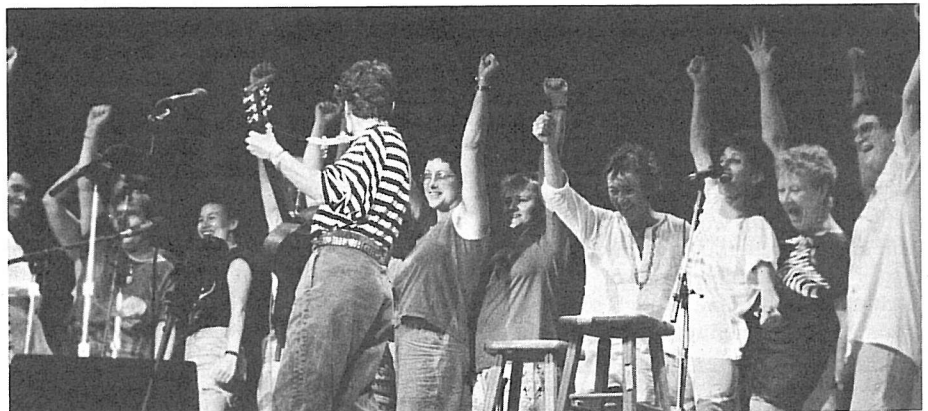
THE WOMANIST is a new feminist newspaper created "to empower and enable women and to get back to the basics, the common ground that has built the women's movement while still celebrating their differences." *The Womanist* is free, but needs donations of \$5-\$25 from those who can afford to pay. *The Womanist*, Box 76, Station B, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 6C3. (613) 230-0590.

LESBIAN BEDTIME STORIES are wanted for an upcoming book. Quality, preferably fictional stories of a pleasurable, problem-solving, forward-moving nature to help encourage and empower our sisters, and offer sweet dreams. Working class and women of color especially welcome. Send SASE to Bluejay, Tough Dove Books, P.O. Box 528, Little River, CA 95456.

Anthology of writings about **FEMALE VAMPIRES & FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON VAMPIRES IN FILM/LITERATURE**; seeking essays, articles, artwork, prose, reviews, commentary. Editor will work with non-writers who are knowledgeable. Inquiries, proposals, manuscripts to *Vampire Anthology*, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

Feminist journals from Indiana University Press: *HYPATIA: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* edited by Margaret Simons; started by the Society for Women in Philosophy in 1987; future issues include French feminist philosophy, feminist medical ethics, and history of women in philosophy...*JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S HISTORY* edited by Joan Hoff-Wilson and Christie Farnham, new historical research, to be available in 1989; plans to place great importance upon gender as a category of analysis...*DIFFERENCES: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* edited by Naomi Schor and Elizabeth Weed, available in 1989, plans to bring together cultural studies and feminism, provide forum for examination of cultural politics and discursive practices informed by feminist criticism. IU Press Journals Division, 10th and Morton, Bloomington, IN 47405.

The September-October *Hag Rag: Wisconsin's Lesbian-Feminist Press* focused on lesbian sex. Upcoming theme "The Closet," deadline for submissions: February 1. *Hag Rag*, P.O. Box 93243, Milwaukee, WI 53203.



Alix Dobkin invited women from Australia to join her set at the 1988 Michigan fest.

A new semi-slick national publication for lesbians was started October 1988 in Ames, Iowa. *NEW MOON* plans to be a "national voice for lesbians" and to include features, profiles, travel, arts & entertainment, editorials, columnists, news, short stories and poetry, classified ads, and sports. Contributors and subscribers being sought. Clair Huehoff, *New Moon*, 2 Kings Terrace, Ames, IA 50010.

An anthology of stories about **LESBIANS DISOWNED BY THEIR FAMILIES** may be published if there is enough interest. Write P.O. Box 332, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

Muriel Fortier has a collection of twenty **LESBIAN PAPERBACKS FROM THE '50s** and would like to get in touch with lesbians interested in exchanging books and information, as well as studies made at that time, published or not. 275 Woodland Ave., Verdon, Quebec, Canada H4H 1V5.

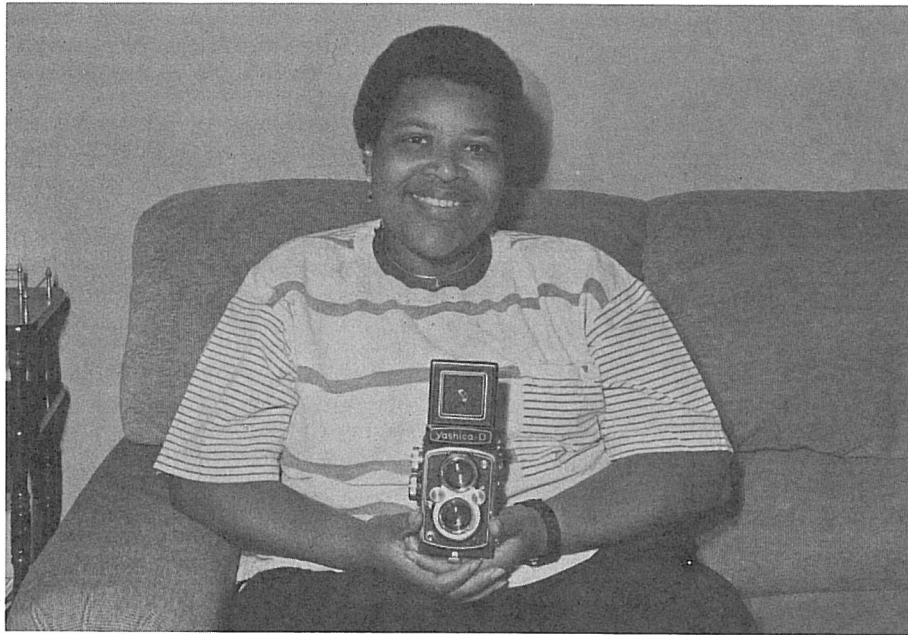
Naiad Press is offering \$100 plus a dozen copies of the new edition to whoever can supply them with a copy of *March Hastings' THREE WOMEN*. Naiad has a contract to reprint the book, but doesn't have a copy to work from. Publisher Barbara Grier says that Hastings has agreed to rewrite the ending as she might have originally preferred to write it had Beacon not had specific requirements for how lesbian novels could end then, according to *Feminist Bookstore News*.

KOMPONISTINNEN von A-Z is the first anthology of women composers in the German language (published by Tokkata Verlag für Frauenforschung in the Federal Republic of Germany). The authors Dr. Karin Weingartz-Perschel and Antje Olivier have both had long involvement with the theme women and music. The 360-page anthology has numerous illustrations as well as detailed information on more than 250 international women composers and their works, covering eight centuries. Distribution: Frauenmusik-Vertrieb, Frobenstre. 6, D-4000, Dusseldorf 30.

One of the founding members of the **JEWISH LESBIAN DAUGHTERS OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS** is seeking submissions for an anthology of writings by JLDHS. Send SASE to JLDHS Book, P.O. Box 6194, Boston, MA 02114. ●

BEHIND THE SCENES

VADA VERNÉE, KAREN HESTER, AND CARRIE BARTON



Ann Morris

Vada Vernée: capturing on film the spiritual essence of the performer and her art.

VADA VERNÉE

Vada Vernée's name is a familiar one to those *HOT WIRE* readers who tilt their heads sideways to read photo credits; her images have appeared close to thirty times in the first twelve issues of the magazine. Vada has been with the publication since its earliest days, and was the only staff photographer listed in the masthead of the premiere issue of *HOT WIRE*.

Vada was born to Georgia Taylor and Gordon Woods on November 6, 1954 in Chicago. She lived on the west and south sides of the city until the age of eleven. "At that time," she says, "we moved to the Rogers Park neighborhood and, except for two years, I've lived there ever since." (This is lucky for *HOT WIRE*, which is located in a neighborhood very near to Rogers Park.)

The paparazza-to-be was involved in sports as a young woman, especially softball and volleyball, and showed early interest in theater and singing. "I always had a very active imagination, and I found acting to be a way to be someone or somewhere else," Vada says.

At DePaul University, where she

received her B.A. in 1977, she majored in Speech and Drama in addition to English Communications. "There I was often able to combine my enjoyment of acting and theater with my singing talents," she says. "When I graduated from DePaul I wasn't sure what to do next. So I went to Columbia College in Chicago to see if I might be interested in getting into television. I also took a class in photography and fell in love with it. [She earned her B.A. in photography in 1981.] Since I'm basically a loner, I found photography much to my liking. I would say that photojournalism is now my major interest."

Vada's role models during her formative years were the women around her. "I grew up in a family of strong women," Vada says. "When I was nine years old, my mother took me and my two brothers [Gordon, Jr. and Anthony] and left my father. She moved us in with her mother. When my father called looking for us, my grandmother stood up to him, saying 'If you come near my baby or my grandbabies, I will kill you.' My father knew my grandmother was a woman of her word and didn't challenge her. For a time I

lived in an extended family with my mother, brothers, grandmother, two great aunts, and a cousin. They were the strong ones, the ones who were responsible, who went out to get the skills to start new careers, who maintained their senses of humor in the face of adversity, who did what needed to be done to keep the family together and provide for us all."

Vada, a 1973 graduate of Sullivan High School, learned well from them how to go out and acquire skills. In addition to earning her two college degrees, she has worked at several jobs—including cashier at Walgreen's and field rep for the Chicago Public Library to serve senior citizens—prior to her current employment as a darkroom technician in a commercial custom lab doing transparency duplicating.

What initially drew Vada to women's music? "Lesbians," she says. "Women's music is a focal point of the lesbian culture. Many of our major gatherings occur in conjunction with the music festivals."

In 1980, Vada joined Artemis Singers, Chicago's lesbian feminist chorus which was just starting. "Once again I was able to combine my enjoyment of singing with performing in front of an audience. I also became involved with the production-side of chorus performances. Through the other women in the chorus I was introduced to women's music," she says. "Then in 1984, my partner Ann Morris was involved in the founding of *HOT WIRE*. She and the other founding mothers encouraged me to take photos at concerts and festivals. It was an opportunity I found I enjoyed very much—to capture on film the spiritual essence of the performer and her art."

Vada says she plans to always participate in women's music at least as an appreciative audience member. She is considering perhaps becoming involved in concert productions some time down the road, and she wants to continue performing—with Artemis Singers, or as a solo performer, or with smaller ensembles such as the Women of Color collaboration she has been involved with in Chicago. She may some day branch into photographic studio work and, luckily for us,

she plans to continue her concert photography.

"To capture an unrehearsed moment in time is so gratifying to me," Vada says. "I think that's why I enjoy shooting concert photos, though it's very frustrating at times to depend on the lighting that someone else is providing. Still, it's a challenge to try to capture an artist's energy--in 1/250 of a second."

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Toni Armstrong, Jr. is a long-time admirer of the photography of Vada Vernee. As a sister photographer, she considers Vada's work to be some of the most exciting ever to appear in the pages of 'HOT WIRE.'*

KAREN HESTER

Karen Hester--currently behind the scenes at Olivia Records--grew up in West Texas, where her family attended the Presbyterian Church every Sunday and played lots of tennis together. Karen's parents owned an office supply store as she was growing up; it came as little surprise to her that they encouraged her to take typing in school. Karen had other plans on her mind, and opted for Spanish and speech classes instead. She graduated from high school in 1977.

Karen, born in 1959, grew up in the same house in Lubbock, Texas for eighteen years. She says that as a young woman she enjoyed school. She played lots of sports, and concentrated primarily on tennis in high school. She went on to attend Davidson College, a liberal arts school in Davidson, North Carolina.

In the summer of 1979, Karen saw Cris Williamson's picture on the cover of *Ms. Magazine*. She decided to buy *The Changer and the Changed*, and immediately became excited to share this wonderful music with her feminist friends in North Carolina. Her next purchase was Holly Near's *Imagine My Surprise* album. As has happened so many times over with other women, imagine her surprise when she realized about two years later that it was a coming out album.

Karen graduated from Davidson College in 1982 and decided to move to San Jose, California to do her graduate work in Women's Studies. She became the coordinator of the campus women's center, and started producing cultural and political events. Karen also expanded into the area of radio. She was instrumental in starting a campus women's radio show, which still exists today. In 1983, with a group of her friends, Karen started the non-profit women's bookstore/coffee-house Sisterspirit. It began in the basement of a San Jose campus church featur-

ing local performers and musicians from the Bay Area.

Since 1981, Karen has been involved with a number of productions, including artists such as Deidre McCalla, Cris Williamson, Tret Fure, Robin Flower, Nancy Vogl, Suzanne Shanbaum, Swingshift, and the Wallflower Dance Collective. She was able for the first time to meet with other producers from all over the country and share her production experiences in 1986 when she attended the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, Indiana.

She takes great pride in knowing that projects she helped to establish in the women's network still exist even though she has personally moved on. The San Jose Women's Center still produces cultural events; the two women's radio shows are still on the air; and Sisterspirit, which opened its own space in 1986, is currently located on Park Avenue in San Jose.

Karen has been politically-minded all her life. (She encouraged her family, for example, to actively support a Vietnamese boat family.) It was only natural, then, that she would continue to take her skills and apply them to organizations of a political nature. In 1985, she visited Nicaragua--a trip which confirmed her desire



Karen Hester: often found organizing behind the scenes.

to put effort into the cause of international solidarity. In the summer of 1986, she coordinated a concert with Holly Near, raising money for women's groups in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Karen began her career at Olivia Records in November of 1986, primarily working in booking and promotions. For

the first year, she concentrated on getting media coverage for Olivia Records, as well as working with their individual artists. Most recently she has been working part-time as the assistant to Judy Dlugacz, Olivia's president. Karen puts her other part-time energies into the Nicaragua Network as a regional organizer.

The sense of belonging to a network where the music speaks to her life has kept Karen strong. She says sometimes she feels jaded, but she becomes renewed when she experiences the enthusiasm of other women thinking about producing their first concerts. Through her experience and encouragement, she has helped many first-timers, and in turn they have helped to lift her spirits and have inspired her to go on. Above all, she says, the best inspiration has come from the vast pool of talent she sees, and the message of the music this talent has to offer this world.

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

CARRIE BARTON

The first word which comes to mind after interviewing Carrie Barton is "veteran." Being voted favorite bassist in the past two *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Surveys is just one of many accomplishments in Carrie's twenty-year musical career.

Carrie was born in the California San Fernando Valley in the mid 1950s. Growing up, she was surrounded by music. Her father played guitar and tenor banjo; her mother piano and clarinet.

Shortly after discovering the Beatles at age nine, Carrie began taking guitar lessons with Diane Whitcomb. Together they worked on many styles of music, including jazz, country, and rock. Diane recognized Carrie's talent and sought to nurture and challenge her, teaching her to read music, play by ear, and accompany other musicians. At the age of thirteen, Carrie switched from guitar to bass when a local USO-type band -- The Certain Sounds -- found themselves lacking a bass player.

Anyone who watches Carrie Barton play bass today inevitably notices her excellent technique. "Rather than thinking of chord progressions in terms of numbers, when I play I think geometrically," she says. "I can memorize songs right away. I look at the position of the key I'm in and think of a geometric pattern. Then, after

continued on next page

playing it a few times I'll think in terms of chords." Carrie credits Diane Whitcomb for teaching her proper technique, which she believes helps to keep the music clean in her head.

Carrie the bassist did her first Far East summer tour with The Certain Sounds when she was 15, during the height of the Viet Nam war. "We played everything from leper colonies to hospital wards to battle ships. It opened my eyes just a tad," Carrie says. "The next year we went to Hawaii, and that was easy."

Carrie also found playing with The Certain Sounds to be musically enriching. "It was a good group to learn in because I was working with older musicians, and Michael Amartian—who is famous now for his producing—was our director. I learned a lot of good habits," she says.

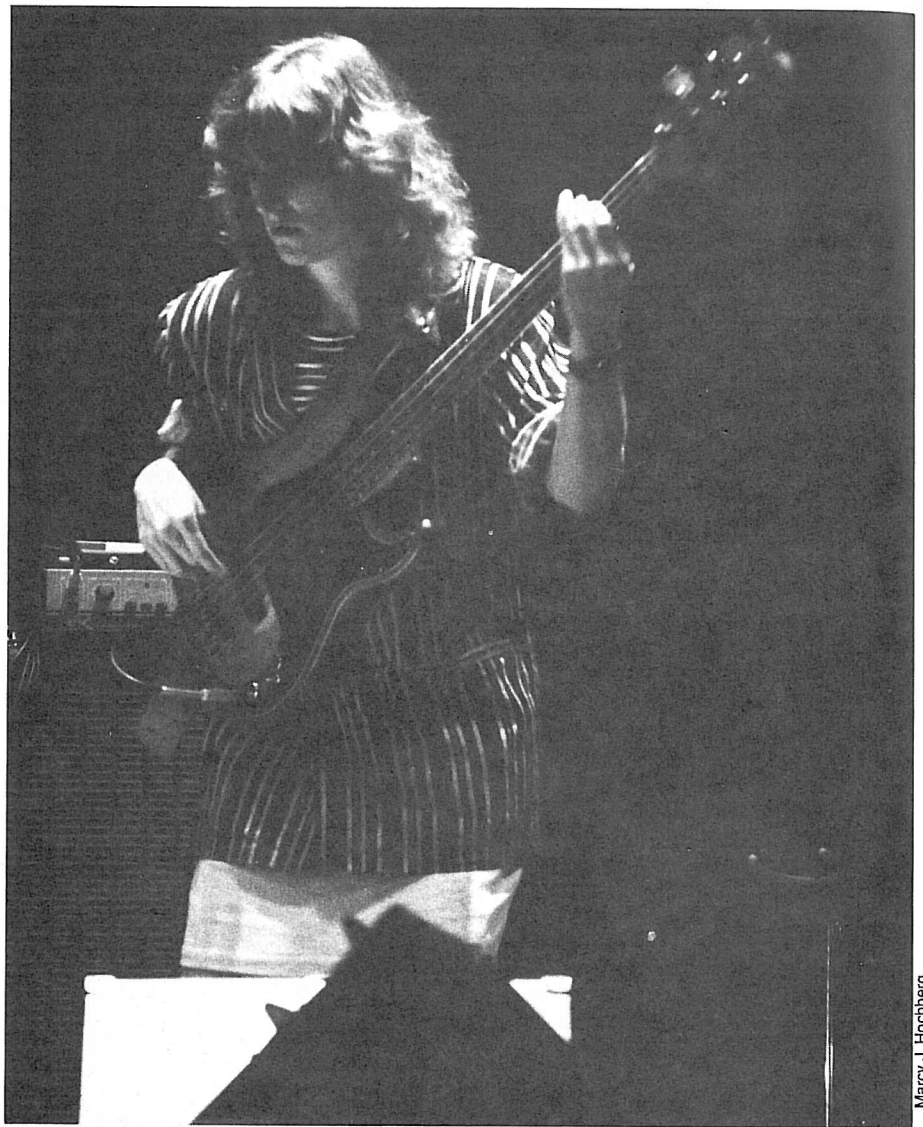
During the school year, Carrie played weekend club dates with various neighborhood bands. Her social life centered on music. "All my friends were musicians," she says. "We hung out together, played together, and learned from each other." According to Carrie, through those early years her parents were very supportive—financing her instruments, providing lessons, and driving her to gigs. Transportation was especially important, since she was playing club dates long before she was old enough to get her driver's license.

After high school, Carrie kept busy performing with Los Angeles dance bands and commercial accounts. She says she particularly enjoyed the commercial work for the diversity it provided. She played on a Lauren Wood album and with the all-women Maiden Voyage big band for many years.

Carrie says she broke into women's music "on a fluke." It was around 1979, when she was working with Miriam Cutler doing New Orleans/funk type material. June Millington was producing Holly Near's *Fire In The Rain* album at that time and needed a bass player. Tret Fure—a mutual friend of Miriam and June—convinced June to listen to Carrie.

"I went up right away, did the album, and met Holly and her entourage," recalls Carrie. "We had a blast on that album. Afterwards Holly invited me to hear one of her concerts with [piano accompanist] Adrienne Torf, and I was impressed by the way Holly and Ady worked together on stage—and the way the crowd reacted to Holly." From there, Carrie went on tour with them, and became a regular on Holly's albums, including *Speed of Light*, *Lifeline*, and *Watch Out!*

By the mid '80s, Holly was doing fewer gigs requiring bass, and Carrie began working with Cris Williamson; once



Marcey J. Hochberg

Carrie Barton: bass player par excellence.

again the connection was made through Tret. Carrie made the transition from performing with Holly to working full time with Cris and Tret. She has appeared on Cris's *Prairie Fire*, *Snow Angel*, and *Wolf Moon*, as well as Tret's *Terminal Hold* and *Edges of the Heart*. "Because both Cris and Holly have such rigorous schedules," Carrie says, "the only time we all see each other anymore is when we're all playing the same gig."

A few years ago Carrie says she was feeling ready to retire. The pressures of life on the road were getting to her. After talking with her mother, she realized she had a right to feel tired—after having played professionally for twenty years. Though Carrie has gotten her second wind career-wise, she says when she does retire she'll probably give up touring and continue doing studio work, then slowly disappear. "I've never been a workaholic," she says. "I work at it, I work really hard, and

when I am working I am completely focused. But, I'm just as happy playing at home—I'm not one of those people who needs a crowd to survive."

In her spare time Carrie enjoys working on her house. Her project last July was to paint the exterior and do some gardening—herbs in particular. She also enjoys playing golf, working out with light weights, and playing an occasional game of racquetball.

Carrie says that her favorite style of music to play is funk. "I really like grooves. I've always felt like everything was right in the world if I was in a good fat groove," she says. "It's the best place to be." ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Kathy McCue lives in Buffalo, New York. She is an engineer by day and womyn's music fanatic by night. Her hairstyle reflects this.

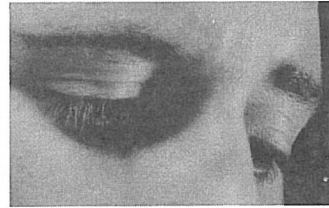
THE EYES HAVE IT CONTEST



ONE



TWO



THREE



FOUR



FIVE



SIX



SEVEN



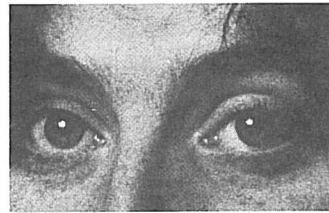
EIGHT



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TEN



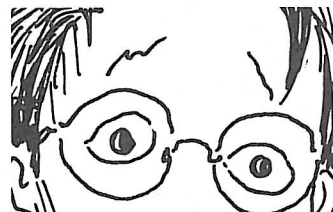
ELEVEN



TWELVE



THIRTEEN



FOURTEEN



FIFTEEN



SIXTEEN--EXTRA CREDIT

HOW MANY OF THESE WOMEN CAN YOU IDENTIFY BY THEIR EYES?

All but one of these pictures are from album covers.

The first reader to correctly identify the first fifteen sets of eyes will receive a free subscription to 'HOT WIRE' for herself or as a gift for a friend.

We thought number sixteen was as amusing as it is obscure--so we're including it for the entertainment of the true sleuths among us. The first reader to correctly identify *all sixteen women* will get a free T-shirt in addition to her free subscription.

HOT WIRE EYES CONTEST, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640

FREESTYLE

MINSTREL MEMORIES PART TWO

By Kay Gardner

In the March 1988 issue of 'HOT WIRE' I began the story of summer '74, my months as a minstrel traveling throughout the Northeast with sister musician, muse, and spiritual teacher Jeriann Hilderley.

BROOMRIDING

As a graduation gift to me—because she knew what a hardship it had been for me to be pursuing my master's degree full time and working two part-time jobs while being single parent to two pre-teen children—my mother offered to take my daughters for the summer. I was free!

Jeriann had set up a tour for us. I borrowed my brother's old Datsun truck, which we packed with instruments, costumes, and sleeping bags, and we headed for Ithaca, gratefully leaving hot and filthy New York City behind.

Somewhere near Broome County, New York, after agreeing that we felt very witchy together, we bought a can of enamel paint and decorated the doors of the truck with the red words "BROOM." It caused more stares than we had already been getting. Little kids would yell, "Broom, broom, broooooom," while their parents looked sideways at the two hippie dykes. (What did my brother think of this when his truck was returned to him? Well, he was a wizard of sorts, fortunately got a kick out of it, and never painted it over.)

I have to admit that I *was* rather off-the-wall that summer. I had grown up on an Ohio farm, so living in New York City was crazy-making—especially on minimal child support and college work-exchange doles. As a result, once we escaped the city—where I'd held myself prisoner for over a year—Nature's beauty overwhelmed me. I became ecstatic about clouds, which Jeriann called "sky animals." I waxed poetic about bees and golden wheat, Ithaca's dark rich earth, and the wind soaring across the gorges. I spent so much time lying on my back in fields staring at the sky and exclaiming over every little natural event that Jeriann

FREESTYLE: The musings and experiences of Kay Gardner.



"Mrs. Peter Smith"—Kay Gardner in housewifely incarnation, 1967.



Diana Davies

Kay Gardner with Lavender Jane, 1973.

renamed me "Cosmos Wonder-Child" (a name I've used often as a pseudonym—C.W. Child).

Our concert at Cornell went well. We

were a colorful pair presenting an unusual program of original songs, flute solos, and Jeriann's marimba compositions. After our first concert, following days of shy but affectionate embraces, we bedded on the floor of a house owned by a friend of Jeriann's. It was there that we first became tender lovers.

The next night we played in a natural foods restaurant in Trumansburg. The concert had been set up by the couple who run Crossing Press, the alternative publishing company. The audience was with us all the way. I introduced a guitar and vocal piece I'd begun to compose called "Witch's Light." The original words were, "Subtly, senses start to itch. Is she woman; is she witch?" (This work was in process through the summer and later became "Lunamuse," recorded on the *Mooncircles* album.) After taking from a funny yellow cigarette I handed her, Jeriann got wild; soon she was drumming and leading lines of people around the room until at the end of the evening we were all dancing on top of the long tables.

On to Lenox, Massachusetts where Jeriann's friend Honor Moore had just had a play produced under a big circus tent. The play was about her mother's death from cancer. There was nowhere for us to camp that night, so—long after people had left—we slept on the play's death bed. The next morning, awakened by choirs of birds, I arose early, took a nude swim in a small pond, and then tried to communicate with the birds by playing their calls on my flute. They all flew away.

The Cummington Community for the Arts was our next stop. This Berkshire Mountains retreat was a beautiful place. There were magnificent old trees, rolling vistas, and interesting people to meet, including the photographer Susan Klecker who gave us the use of her room. We performed in a big barn, and it was my first opportunity to see another side of Jeriann—a kind-of scary but powerful side. At the end of our performance we invited the audience to come up and jam with us on our instruments. Our music-making got more and more energetic until the

head of Jeriann's favorite drum was broken by a guy who was beating it violently. She was furious and began nasally chanting, "You broke my drum, you broke my drum, you broke my drum," all the while pointing her finger at him and staring him down with her flashing brown eyes. He began to shrink and curl up smaller and smaller until he was on the floor, stooped into a crouch. Still cowering, he then proceeded to crawl sideways across the floor and out the barn door, saying (sworn to me by his friend who accompanied him), "Now where did I bury that bone?"

I remember it as "The Night Jeriann Turned a Man Into a Dog."

I was just beginning to know Jeriann. She was a childlike woman, a woman who could still delight in the simplest forms of expression. Her visual art was ancient, archetypal...again very simple. Her music was chant-like, repetitious, and hypnotic.

I was also just beginning to know myself. Not Kay Gardner the mother, not Kay Gardner the musician—but Kay Gardner as Cosmos, a creative, spiritual woman. Away from a complex academic environment (and learning how from Jeriann), my work began to reflect that basic, simple approach.

Besides introducing me to simplicity and to the minstrel life, Jeriann was also introducing me to the joys of lesbian love-making. On the morning after a particularly pleasant lesson, she fed me a kiwi fruit (I'd never tasted one). That day I wrote a simple, Gertrude Steinian song called "New Fruits." The opening lines described my two new sensual experiences:

*You are you
I love you
fresh and new
today
I tasted new
I tasted new
I tasted new fruits*

We were in Cambridge, dancing on rooftops and being in love. "Jeriann has luminous eyes. We made love with eyes yesterday," I wrote in my journal, and from then on Jeriann became "Lunamus Moon-Eyes," and "Witch's Light" (now dedicated to her) became "Lunamuse."

Now when I think of all this I realize that my hippie days were delayed by marriage, children, and life in the classical music world. I never even heard a Beatles album until *Sergeant Pepper*...and only then because it had symphonic arrangements. My '60s were happening in the mid '70s.

No longer dressed in wifely and motherly polyester, I was now a baby

butch dressed in patched jeans or overalls, a feathered and beaded leather hat on my head, a pipe in my mouth. I was writing poems and singing my own songs and making love and growing into the me I was meant to be.

In New Hampshire we stopped Broom by a creek and slept until awakened by bright lights in our eyes. "You can't sleep here," the cop said, pointing his huge flashlight at us. We didn't argue. This was New Hampshire, the most reactionary New England state, and so we drove on to Vermont.

Plainfield was the home of Bread and Puppet Theater, which was to have a



Jeriann Hilderley

Diana Davies

huge pageant in a few days. While waiting, we found a forest on the campus of Goddard College and decided to sleep there. We built a lean-to, dug a cache for our food, and made a fire pit. For two days we wore nothing but loin cloths. Our breakfasts were hats-full of berries found on the periphery of the woods. Here at last I was able to converse with the birds through flute calls; the white-throated sparrows became my friends. I began to write down the bird calls and incorporate them into my flute improvisations.

My first post-childhood experience improvising was with the band Lavender Jane. When I started playing with Alix Dobkin I would add harmony to her vocals. One day she said, "Don't just harmonize with me, listen to the chords and play your own melodies above the changes. Also fill in the spaces where I don't sing." I credit Alix with being my first improvisation teacher.

Jeriann's music was very chant-like, rarely moving or modulating from key to key, and she almost always played in minor modes. Once I got used to her style, it was fun and easy to make up melodies to go above her rolling marimba

arpeggios. This wasn't jazz improvisation, not nearly so complex. It was more like free-form improv, and I began to feel more and more comfortable with it.

A thunderstorm cut short our forest idyll, and as a result of the dampness Jeriann got an ear infection. Some sympathetic students let us stay in their informal dormitory house. We gave an impromptu concert in exchange. We had a pleasant rest, getting to sleep in real beds rather than on floors, and being able to cook in a real kitchen.

The night of the full moon we and a group of women had a circle out on the grass. I played "Witch's Light" again, and for the first time women danced to it under moonlight. This was how it was meant to be! (I still consider "Lunamuse" to be my best composition.)

But the full moon brought out confusion, too, for I was torn as to what to do with my life. What would I do with my master's degree? How could I be as creative as I was feeling right now? How could I create with the worry about my children's upbringing, with the tensions of the city?

I wrote, "Is it the moon, full, sending partial light through clouds that makes me confused? Artists are moving to the country. Who the hell is it that wants to live in New York City? My daughter is a cynic at 12. My 10-year-old daughter, a budding street fighter. Is this what I want for them? Why do I stay? I must have space for all of my projects. I must have an atmosphere in which I can create. And air... and sweet country air to take into my lungs, already weakened by the city sewage, spewage, filth. Why do I stay?"

After Jeriann's earache healed, she told me that not only was she married to a man but that she had another woman lover back in the city, an exiled Argentine poet whom she loved very much. She loved me too, she said, and hoped that I'd deal with the fact that she had others in her life. This didn't do much for my state of confusion, but things began to make more sense—and I realized that what goes up (as in mood) must come down.

Broom was readied for another trip across New Hampshire, this time to Maine where we'd join our friend Laurel, who was in Rockland helping to restore an old lobster boat. ●

Stay tuned for part three.

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Kay Gardner is a composer, performer, priestess, and teacher of the healing properties of music. She has been deeply involved in women's music and culture since 1973. At present she is finishing her book, 'Music as Medicine: A Holistic Music Theory.'*

THE 1989

'HOT WIRE' READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Each year since 1986, the *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice Awards have been given to recognize outstanding achievements/contributions by women who work in the women's music & culture business. Plaques have been awarded every spring at the Music Industry/AWMAC Conference, which has traditionally been part of the National Women's Music Festival. This year the awards will be mailed in the fall rather than presented at the conference, but otherwise the procedure is the same.

The Readers' Choice Awards are determined solely on the basis of write-in nominations and votes; the *readers* do the suggesting and the selecting, not the magazine staff. We have two categories: organizations and individuals.

At this time we ask our readers to send nominations for the 1989 awards. Write the name of your nominee and explain in 50 words or less the contribution to women's music/culture that your nominee has made. Please be specific. You can send in multiple submissions, and are encouraged to send nominations in both the organizational and individual categories. (Individuals must be women; organizations must be 100% women-owned and operated.)

All nominations will appear in the May issue, at which time readers will be invited to write in their votes. We enjoy printing the names and accomplishments/contributions of as many women as possible. We believe the world gives us so little recognition for the work we all do-- we deserve all the pats on the back we can get. We need to hear from you no later than February 15, 1989.

Send your nominations to *HOT WIRE* Readers' Choice, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

FAITH NOLAN from page 39

and dynamic. Talking to the crowd in a jesting manner—which at first hides the seriousness of her purpose—by the end of a performance one feels challenged by her frankness, the freshness of her lyrics, and her exchanges with the audience. Nolan is a daring performer—she will sing lesbian songs to heterosexual crowds, leftist songs to conservative crowds, and anti-racist songs just about anywhere she pleases. She's not a game player, and she doesn't sing just to soothe, even though her voice is smooth. You can walk away from a Nolan performance highly disturbed or highly validated. "I want a world without oppression, without sexism, without homophobia, without racism, without imperialism or capitalism," she says. "I'm a working class, Black lesbian. In everything I do I have to fight for that voice to be heard and not be silent."

Nolan's second album, *Sistership*, continues with this theme. In the title cut, she sings about women loving women. "She's Sixteen" is about the isolation of coming out as a teenager. On "Celebrate," the lyricist names and sings a song in praise of some of the women who brought us here—from Bessie Smith the Blues Empress, to Arlie Robbins the Black Canadian historian, to Ruth First the ANC revolutionary. In this way the album shows the interconnectedness of the struggles against oppression, because for

Nolan the struggles *are* interconnected.

Faith Nolan sees herself as a cultural worker, a worker whose tools are her guitar, her voice, her creativity, the cultural landscape that we live in, and the will to change the world to a more equitable place. She's played at anti-apartheid demonstrations, including the Desmond Tutu visit to Toronto when she kept thousands of demonstrators chanting along the route of the march. She also played at the International Women's Day celebration with the theme *Women Say No to Racism from Toronto to South Africa*; she began the rally singing "Divide and Rule." She also led the songs against Free Trade at this year's Labour Day Parade.

Africville, Nolan's first album, is equal to *Sistership* in its commitment to struggle. It is an album about the history of Blacks in Canada. The title cut is about the Black town in Nova Scotia which was torn down by the government in 1960:

*Now I met a woman
who spent her life living there
Now that Africville is gone
she's in a highrise somewhere
out of highrise windows
I see her face
She looks so out of view there
and out of place.*

*What happened to Africville
What happened to Africville*

Nolan takes her cultural work in pri-

mary schools and high schools in Toronto. In the tradition of the fundi, Nolan has toured scores of schools since 1985. Doing workshops demonstrating Black history through music, she recovers the lost and hidden past of Blacks in Canada, and makes it into living history for her students. She also does anti-racist workshops with students, teachers, and feminist activists.

In an attempt to give exposure to the art and music of all the communities of women in Canada, Nolan founded Multi-Cultural Womyn in Concert, a production company which sponsors concerts and music workshops featuring Native, Indian, Black, Korean and Chinese women artists in Toronto. "We need to gather our resources to empower ourselves," says Faith. "MWIC is just one way of doing that; of making it possible for all the women who really make up the world to be heard."

Nolan is a whirlwind of energy. For the last two years she has played most of the major folk festivals in Canada, including the Vancouver Folk Festival, Harrison Hot Springs, the Regina Folk Festival, and the Jasper Folk Festival. In the United States she has played for the last two years at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, and has gigged in New York, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and Detroit. She played at the Lesbian and Gay March on Washington [see Pat Parker's article on page 16].

Finally, in the eye of this whirlwind is a gifted voice. Honeyed, plaintive, and clarion, whether a cappella or accompanied by her guitar, Nolan's voice is the fine instrument of her message.

[Editor's note: Hear Faith singing 'Divide and Rule' on the soundsheet in this issue of 'HOT WIRE.'] ●



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CUTTING EDGE from page 49

if I get dependent on those sources, and keep demanding the same or more, I am in an addictive pattern, expecting something outside of me to *do it*.

If what's onstage now dulls your senses, maybe what you are seeking can't be found *up there* anymore. The whole planet is shifting its relationship to power; the recent toppling of many dictatorships is just one of many signs. If we women claim to understand and live a new paradigm of sharing power, let us carry this wisdom into our cultural expectations and actions. Let us support those who we feel support us, and let go of our addiction and fixation on the highs and lows of star-worship/blame.

Let us empower ourselves to be nurturers of culture, not consumers of it. To be women filled with purpose and compassion, not empty vessels waiting for the next cultural extravaganza to fill us. Let us see what we can contribute to a creative, life-affirming, global community. ●

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BOBBI from page 25

originals, and her voice is something many listeners find themselves *oooo-ing* and *aaaah-ing* over. Bobbi—who has been compared to Joni Mitchell, James Taylor, Phoebe Snow, and Dan Fogelberg—also performs beautifully on the guitar, bass, piano, and (synth) cello parts.

Crossing the Line really gives Bobbi Carmitchell fans something to write home about. [Hear her song "Reply" on the soundsheet in this issue of *HOT WIRE*.] ●

MORNING RALLY from p. 17

of the organization.

So, where have we come since the March? Not nearly far enough. We are still fighting the same battles, because we have not studied our history enough to avoid making the same mistakes. We are still not demanding political integrity from our brothers and sisters and especially our lovers, and so we are still victims to those people who believe that "gay rights" means that they have the freedom to open businesses to exploit us just as much as their straight counterparts. We still have gay people who refuse to vote because "all politics is the same," while the neo-fascists continue to put amendments on the ballot in every election to reduce even further any rights gay people may have.

Yet, there is still hope. We have young gay people, like singer-songwriter Faith Nolan [hear her on the soundsheet in this issue of *HOT WIRE*], who came and spent a day with me because she wanted to know what it was like before. We have young people who know that their ability to go to women's music festivals and bars was won by the struggles and deaths of people who came before, and who realize that if they do not pick up the mantle, all that has been won can be lost again. ●

MICHIGAN BUG from page 35

high ambient temperatures, and the large population from different areas never before exposed to each other's bacteria, the shigella outbreak at the 1988 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival was professionally, efficiently, and effectively handled. This success is a source of great relief to those of us present at the festival this summer, and the focus of great pride at the power and abilities within our women's community to care for ourselves and each other. ●

SHOWCASE from page 27

recognition they can get."

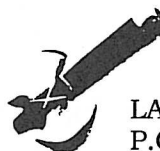
Dino says a major frustration over the years for her has been presenting talented women on Showcase and then not seeing them be given the opportunity to move on to the NWMF Mainstage. "Many of the performers who started out on Showcase have subsequently been on the Night Stages of other festivals—but not the National," she says. "I have even occasionally gone before the board of directors and lobbied, but I could not get certain people on. This has been a real problem for me."

As *HOT WIRE* was going to press, it looked likely that 1988 would be Dino's last year of producing the Bloomington Showcase. She has many plans, however, to continue her work with women's music and culture. She says a top priority is to find ways to take contacts she has made in this network and help them to achieve wider recognition. She is presently into video production, and in addition to documentaries, her pet project is a half-hour TV pilot for a children's show—starring Heather Bishop.

Women performers interested in details about the 1989 Showcase can write to the National Women's Music Festival, P.O. Box 5217, Bloomington, IN 47407-5217. ●



KEEPING OUR VOICES STRONG AND PROUD



**LABRYS
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Stage crew member
Retts Scauzillo,
concert producer
from New York (left),
with Michigan festival
producer Lisa Vogel.

Electric guitarist
Sherry Shute, who
has toured
extensively with
Heather Bishop.

Nationally
syndicated
'Dykes To
Watch Out For'
cartoonist
Alison
Bechdel.

Acoustic Stage
sound engineer
Karen Kane,
writer of the
'HOT WIRE'
Audio Angle
column.

Toronto-based
singer/songwriter Faith
Nolan (left) with Boston-
based blues singer
Marla B. Brodsky.

Political rocker
Toshi Reagon,
daughter of
Bernice Reagon
from Sweet Honey
In The Rock.

Acoustic Stage
Producer
Ginny Berson,
co-founder
of Olivia Records

Cynthia West
of Crowfeet Dance
Collective fame.

Olivia recording artist
Deidre McCalla (right)
with road manager
Theresa McCraw.

Fabulous Records
rocker June
Millington,
co-founder of the
Musical Arts and
an original member
of the pioneering
women's band
Fanny.

Day Performer
Friends Coordinator
Penny Rosenwasser,
best known for her
work with Sisterfire
and Roadwork.

Night Performer
Friends Coordinator
Barbara Edwards,
long-time women's
music industry
activist.

Olivia Records President
Judy Dlugacz (left)
with booking agent-
promotion specialist
Denise Notzon.

Lesbian sex expert
JoAnn Loulan (left)
with lesbian community
expert Alix Dobkin.

Barbara
"Boo"
Price, co-
producer
of the
Michigan
Festival.

"Voice of Michigan" emcee
Therese Edell (center) with
sound engineer Teresa Boykin
(left) and ASL interpreter
Shirley Childress Johnson.



MICHIGAN BACKSTAGE PASS

ALL PHOTOS BY TONI ARMSTRONG, JR.

WOMEN PERFORMERS

OFRA SHARON AFIR. 238 E. Walnut Park Dr., Philadelphia, PA 19120. (215) 549-3524. *Israeli peace singer, guitarist; performs in five languages, lectures, tours.*

HEATHER BISHOP. Mother of Pearl Records, Woodmore, Manitoba, Canada R0A 2M0. *Booker: Joan Miller (204) 427-2605. Contemporary, feminist-lesbian, folk, blues, children's.*

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A SCHOOLGIRL'S SECRET



DOREEN HAD BEEN CLONING HERSELF IN THE LABS AGAIN

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FINE LINES. Alison Farrell, PO Box 847, New Haven, CT 06504. *11 songs, 10 original. Hear sound-sheet recording of 'Stop Being So Nice' in July 1988 'HOT WIRE.'*

GREY SABBATH. Catherine Madsen, Wormwood Productions, PO Box 6167, East Lansing, MI 48826.

HEARTROOM. Marianne Kreitlow, Good Company Productions, PO Box 429, Newton Center, MA 02159. *Synthesizer, piano, guitar, flute, vocals, percussion, zither, Celtic harp.*

IN LOVE AND LIGHT. Judy Stock, 406 Olivier St., New Orleans, LA 70114. (504) 366-6853. *If you like your music light, yet full of life, you'll enjoy the musical offerings of Judy Stock.*

LOST & FOUND. Gayle Marie, Icebergg Records, 207 E. Buffalo #501, Milwaukee, WI 53202. *Contains songs recorded in the studio as well as some live selections.*

MESSAGES: MUSIC FOR LESBIANS. D.A. Clarke, HerBooks, PO Box 7467, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. *"If you are a lesbian, I'd like you to know that I intended 'Messages' and created it, from the beginning, with love, for you."*

READY TO MOVE. Martie van der Voort, Monady Music, PO Box 42352, Tucson, AZ 85733. *Includes "Breakin' My Addiction To You," "Mother-Lovin' Tune," "Menstrual Rag," "Street Music," "No Secret Anymore."*

SHANTA CHANNELS RASTABAN ON FEAR & SELF-LOVE. Spiraling Staircase, PO Box 199177, Chicago, IL 60619. (312) 994-3302. *Shanta, of the band Sojourner, is a channel and sitarist. Tape includes commentary, guided meditation, inspired sitar music.*

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LOOKING FOR PUBLICIST/BOOKING AGENT/MANAGER for spring '89 recording release. If you have these skills or are interested in learning, please contact me. Karen Beth, Box 371, Bearsville, NY 12409. (914) 679-8049.

STILL LOOKING FOR Shelly Dineen, Emalie Burks, maybe Rose "Bud" Adams; now more ambitious and also looking for Nancy Shermulis, Sue Holland & Ellen Jahn, Sarah Stark, Connie "Hub" Talbot & Carla Covelli. Greetings to all from Carol Briggs and Lisa Kuhn. Hope to have 15 year reunion at 1989 Michigan fest. Collecting names/addresses now. Contact Toni c/o 'HOT WIRE.'

LESBIAN-FEMINIST DEADHEADS wanted. I'm doing an article for 'HOT WIRE' and need to talk with women who are into both women's music culture and Grateful Dead culture. Contact Marcy c/o 'HOT WIRE.'

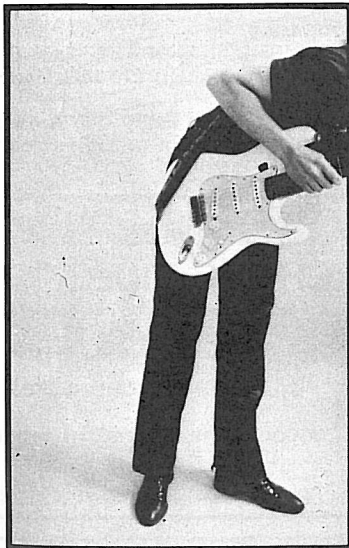
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'BUFFALO GALS AND OTHER ANIMAL PRESENCES by Ursula K. LeGuin, Plume/New American Library, 1633 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. Collection; one novella, 10 stories, 18 poems: magical, fascinating, terrifying.

MIND OVER MEDIA: Essays on Film & Television by Jennifer Stone, Cayuse Press, PO Box 9086, Berkeley, CA 94709. Jennifer Stone was a critic for *The Berkeley Monthly* and *Plexus*.

OUT HERE FLYING by Jan Hardy. Sidewalk Revo-

NAIAD PRESS P.O. Box 10543 Tallahassee, FL 32302

THE AMAZON TRAIL / columns by Lee Lynch
LESBIAN CROSSROADS / Ruth Baetz
THE FINER GRAIN / Denise Ohio
HEAVY GILT / Dolores Klaich
DOUBLE DAUGHTER / Vicki P. McConnell

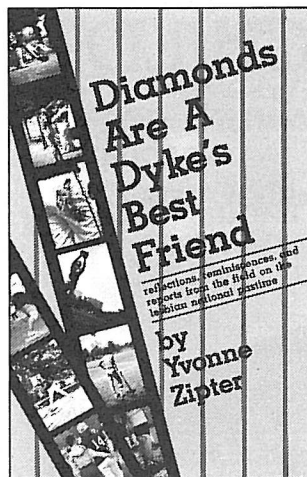
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lution Press, PO Box 9062, Pittsburgh, PA 15224. *Entertaining, softly erotic lesbian poetry even non-poetry lovers will love!*

PORNOGRAPHY & CIVIL RIGHTS: A New Day For Women's Equality by Andrea Dworkin & Catharine A. MacKinnon, from Organizing Against Pornography, 734 East Lake St. #300 West, Minneapolis, MN 55407. (612) 822-1476. \$5/U.S. "The ordinance does not take 'rights' away from anyone...it takes the power to hurt women away from pornographers."

PERIODICALS

BITCH: The Women's Rock Mag With Bite. c/o San Jose Face #164, 478 W. Hamilton, Campbell, CA 95008. Opposing, clashing viewpoints aired, from heavy metal head-bangers to New Age Wiccans. \$15/12 issues.

THE BLUE BITCH. PO Box 12412, Columbus, OH 43212. Lesbian/feminist literary, social, political commentary. \$7/yr, \$2/sample.

FEMINIST TEACHER. Ballantine Hall 447, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405. Multidisciplinary magazine committed to combatting sexism, racism, other forms of oppression in the classroom. 3x/year; \$12/year, \$4/sample.

GOLDEN THREADS. PO Box 2416, Quincy, MA 02169. A contact quarterly for lesbians over 50. Nationwide, confidential, reliable. Quarterly; \$5/sample.

HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music & Culture. 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-9009. Only publication devoted to national woman-identified music & culture scene. 3x/year; \$14/year, \$6 sample.

HURRICANE ALICE. 207 Lind Hall/207 Church St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Feminist review of literature/arts/culture featuring essay/reviews/art/fiction. Quarterly; \$9/year.

LADYSLIPPER CATALOG. PO Box 3124, Durham, NC 27705. Comprehensive annual catalog of records/tapes/CDs/videos by women; free but stamps appreciated.

LESBIAN CONTRADICTION: A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. 584 Castro St. #263, San Francisco, CA 94114. Commentary, analysis, humor, reviews, cartoons by women who agree to disagree. Quarterly; \$6/year, \$1.50/sample.

THE LESBIAN NEWS c/o Pat Sampson, 1025 Coronado, Long Beach, CA 90804. A digest of information from Southern California and beyond. Monthly; \$12/year.

OF A LIKE MIND. PO Box 6021, Madison, WI 53716. A leading international network and newspaper of women's spirituality. Quarterly; \$13-33 (sliding scale)/year, \$3/sample.

OUTLINES. Editor Tracy Baim, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 871-7610. Free in Chicago; \$25 by mail. Lesbian & gay newsmagazine; extensive women's music & culture coverage.

TRAVELTALK MAGAZINE FOR LESBIANS. Fountain Institute for Women, PO Box 222H, Carle Place, NY 11514. Free but \$7.50 suggested donation per year if you can. Quarterly; outdoor adventures, weekend getaways, traveltips, vacation ideas, more.

THE WISHING WELL. PO Box G, Santee, CA 92071. Established 1974; women who love women write/meet. Confidential, supportive. Quarterly; \$70 membership 6-9 months; \$5/sample.

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EVENTS

CAMPFEST. RR3 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322. (609) 694-2037. *The comfortable wimmin's music festival. Every Memorial Day Weekend. See ad.*
NEWMR IX. PO Box 217 Dept HT, New Haven, CT 06513. *Labor Day Weekend 1989. Write for details and registration materials.*
WIMINFEST '89. 2101 Altez N.E., Albuquerque, NM 87112. (505) 296-0949. *May 27-29 at KiMo Theater in Albuquerque. Rhiannon, Lucie Blue Tremblay, Dianne Davidson, Faith Nolan, many more.*

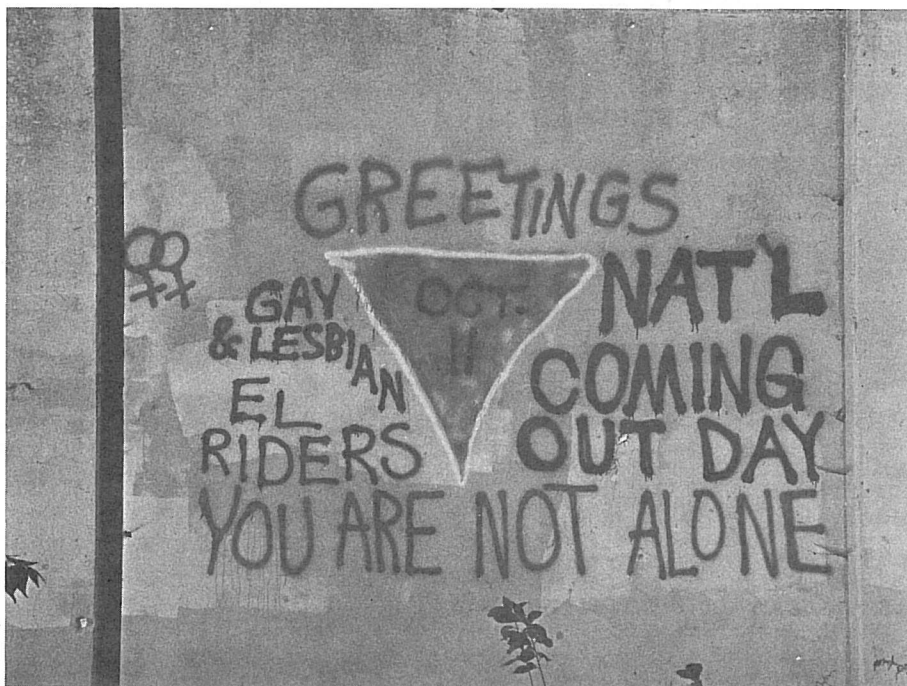
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OF WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE EVENTS

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BOOKSTORES

ANOTHER STATE OF MIND. 16608 Madison Ave., Lakewood, OH 44107. (216) 521-1460. *Gay/lesbian bookstore carrying women's music and hand-made crafts.*
BREAD & ROSES BOOKSTORE. 13812 Ventura Blvd., Sherman Oaks. CA 91423. (818) 986-5376. *Feminist/women's.*
CHOSEN BOOKS. 940 W. McNichols, Detroit, MI 48203. (313) 864-0485. *Gay/lesbian/ feminist with extensive women's music.*
CRAZY LADIES BOOKSTORE. 4112 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45223. (513) 541-4198. *Women's books, music, gifts. Feminist/lesbian/gay.*
DREAMS & SWORDS. 116 N. Grant, Bloomington, IN 47401. (812) 336-2665. *Feminist/ women's.*
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FAUBOURG MARGINY BOOKSTORE. 600 Frenchman St., New Orleans, LA 70116. (504) 943-9875. *Specializing in lesbian, gay, and feminist literature. Women's music, publications.*
FULL CIRCLE BOOKS. 2205 Silver SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. (505) 266-0022. *Feminist/lesbian.*
L'ANDROGYNE LIBRARIE (BOOKSTORE). 3636, boul. St-Laurent, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2V4. (514) 842-4765. *Feminist/ gay/lesbian.*
NEW WORDS BOOKSTORE. 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 876-5310. *Boston's women's bookstore features extensive selection of multicultural music, books, and journals.*
OLD WIVES TALES. 1009 Valencia St., San Francisco, CA 94110. (415) 821-4675. *Feminist/ women's.*
PANDORA WOMYN'S BOOKSTORE. 226 W. Lovell, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. (616) 388-5656. *Women's books/crafts/community info.*
RED & BLACK BOOKS. 430 15th Ave. E., Seattle, WA 98112. (206) 322-7323. *Feminist/ alternative.*
RUBYFRUIT BOOKS. 666-4 W. Tennessee St., Tallahassee, FL 32304. (904) 222-2627. *Feminist/ lesbian/progressive.*
SISTERWRITE BOOKSHOP. 190 Upper Street, London, England N1. (01) 226-9782. *Feminist/ lesbian.*
WOMEN & CHILDREN FIRST. 1967 N. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60614. (312) 440-8824. *Feminist/lesbian/children's.*



Marcy J. Hochberg

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

An estimated 100,000 people converged on Washington, D.C. October 8-11 for the NAMES PROJECT Quilt and other related activities. Thousands more participated in local communities for National Coming Out Day (Tuesday, October 11)--such as this artwork (one of four wall panels done by Chicago lesbians) which greeted train-riding commuters on their way to work. The *Oprah Winfrey* show held a live coming-out program that day.

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SOUNDSHEETS

By Joy Rosenblatt

CONVERSATION

Written by: Therese Edell

Performed by: Therese Edell with Betsy Lip-pitt

Recorded by: Teresa Boykin

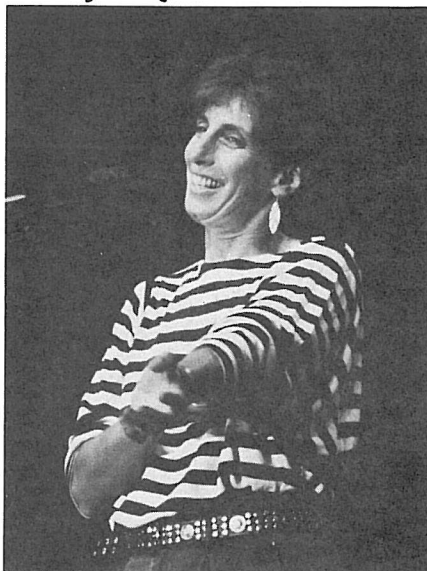
Transmusic
1641 Rockford Place
Cincinnati, Ohio 45223

Therese and Betsy recorded "Conversation" in a friendly basement after performing it in many concerts through the years. Therese regrets that the lyrics aren't 100 percent accurate, but art prevailed: all her attempts to change them didn't work at all. "Conversation" has always been one of Therese's favorites and is the second in this series of nonvinyl-presented, casually recorded songs. Please copy it for your own use, check out the ad for Transmusic in this issue, and expect more music in future issues.



Irene Young

THERESE EDELL



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

ALIX DOBKIN

SOME BOYS

Written and performed by: Alix Dobkin

Arranged by: Carol MacDonald

From: *These Women/Never Been Better*

Ladyslipper Music
P.O. Box 3130
Durham, N.C. 27705
1-800-634-6044

Women's (Lesbians') anger and/or indifference to men is instantly and inevitably called "man hating" by the unenlightened. But what is the nature of "hatred"? How does it express itself and who *really* hates who? This song is about that which is universally known but hardly ever named.



FAITH NOLAN

REPLY

Written by: Bobbi Carmitchell

Performed by: Bobbi Carmitchell (guitar, vocals), Robin Chambers (violin)

From: *Crossing the Line*

Locust Lane Music
P.O. Box 2412
York, PA 17405
(717) 848-1969

"Reply" was written for Bobbi's friend Ann Billmyer, who passed away three years ago. They played music together for five years in the Wind and Wood trio.



BOBBI CARMITCHELL

DIVIDE AND RULE

Written by: Faith Nolan

Performed by: Faith Nolan (vocals and guitar), Diana Braithwaite (back-ups)

From: *Africville*

MultiCultural Womyn in Concert
MWIC Records
P.O. Box 690 Station P
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M45 2Y4

Africville was written for all who believe in freedom. The cut "Divide and Rule" is done in reggae style and has virtually become the anthem for progressive groups in Toronto, where Faith lives and creates.

for you. We were going to start this feature in this issue, but ran out of room--and some of the questions required a little more research than usual.

FAIRY GODMOTHERS NEEDED

With this issue, *HOT WIRE* is beginning its fifth year of publication. We have shown who we are and what we do--and have never missed an issue. Costs have continued to rise and revenue hasn't. It's the same old story you've heard from many other small press publications: we absolutely *must* develop a bigger revenue base in order to keep going. We have a strong commitment to maintaining the size, quality, and frequency of *HOT WIRE*. We just are being drained of our personal money at an alarming rate--one that we are less willing and able to sustain.

We are ineligible for most grants--like state and federal arts grants--and so far have always been rejected for "alternative grant money." The latest example is being passed over for receiving *any* of the \$70,000 that was awarded to various groups by the March on Washington Committee. Women's music and culture amazingly enough is really *not* viewed as "political" enough or "important" enough to qualify for most grants. (The fact that men are usually the grantors is, I suspect, a significant factor.) The cold truth is that we are the only ones who can see the value in what we're creating for women, especially lesbians.

So we need to be our own "grantors"--which our staff members have done for more than four years. *HOT WIRE* isn't looking for short-term financial bailouts or loans. We need to find women like ourselves who are willing to commit money on an ongoing basis--perhaps \$5 or \$10 per month. (And of course more if you can.) We think of our work here as an *investment* in women's music and culture. If you would like to make the journal a personal project of *yours*, please write to us for more details. We will explain what we do to raise money now, why it's not enough, and suggest ways we can work with you on this.

\$\$\$ 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.

GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

People are always happy to receive gift subscriptions; it's a free year of entertainment and inspiration that they often don't think to do for themselves. Don't you know at least one person who would be delighted to receive *HOT WIRE* for the next year, courtesy of you?

Christmas, Hanukkah? Anniversaries? Solstices, equinoxes? How about all those playful Sagittarians, hard-working Capricorns, and creative, introspective Aquarians who have birthdays this time of year? 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!



What does the well-dressed woman wear when all around her others are shirtless?

DON'T GO SHIRTLESS

Except at festivals and on hot dates, of course. We are maintaining our inventory of *HOT WIRE* T-shirts (with exclusive design by Alison Bechdel) but phasing out our heavy-weight hooded sweatshirts. We do want to be sure loyal readers have first crack at buying out what's left of the stock; send SASE to *HOT WIRE SHIRTS* for list of what sizes and colors are left.

BUT HERE'S ONE THING WE DON'T SELL

From time to time we receive inquiries from people wanting to purchase, rent, or otherwise use our mailing list. We have a policy of confidentiality regarding our readership; under no circumstances do we allow others access to the subscription list. If you want to reach our readers, either take out an ad, send information to Joy's "Hotline" column, or write a letter to the editor. Occasionally we include flyers in the magazine; write for details regarding cost.

ON VACATION

"Live From Canada," by Connie Kuhns, will return in the May issue....as will Jorjet Harper's Sappho column "The Tenth Muse"...as will "Re:Inking," the column about women's writing and publishing.

A DAY LATE AND A DOLLAR SHORT? NO NEED TO REMAIN DISAPPOINTED

Now is your chance to read those impossible-to-find early articles! Since we have several back issues sold out, we now offer 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.

WE'VE MOVED--HAVE YOU?

Please note our address: 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640, and phone number: (312) 769-9009. We are no longer on Thome or Rose-dale. 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..."

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" and "creativity." 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. We are committed to community building through the arts.

IT'S SUCH A LESBIAN-FEMINIST THING TO DO

Seems like lesbian-feminists have a penchant for renaming themselves, so I'll finally get in step. Rather than take on a new moniker like oh, say, "Christine Crystalcrotch" for example, I will be using the less radical--but no less meaningful--"Toni Armstrong, Jr." from now on. My prime motivation is that I am *very* proud of my mother as a courageous pioneering woman, and it pleases me to be reminded of her on a daily basis. A minor motivation is that it will be helpful for people to distinguish between the two of us since we are both visible and active and in women's music and culture. My only regret is that I always hate to see the "L" deleted from anything.

Toni Armstrong, Jr.
publisher/managing editor



Vada Vernée



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

TO HOLD YOU THROUGH THE WINTER UNTIL THE FESTIVAL SEASON STARTS UP AGAIN

This issue of 'HOT WIRE' includes almost 20 pages of coverage of festivals and other women's gatherings. 1988 festival season performers included (clockwise): Teresa Trull; Linda Tillery; The Washington Sisters and Heather Bishop; and MUSE Women's Choir from Cincinnati, directed by Catherine Roma.



Vada Vernée



Marcy J. Hochberg