

HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

TERESA TRULL

PERCUSSIONISTS

EDWINA LEE TYLER
CAROLYN BRANDY
NYDIA "LIBERTY" MATA
NURUDAFINA PILI ABENA

EUROPEAN WOMEN'S MUSIC

OLIVIA AT CARNEGIE
MARGE PIERCY
KAREN BETH

BERNICE & TOSHI REAGON

ALIX DOBKIN & ADRIAN HOOD

LESBIAN MUSICAL THEATER

THE BASICS OF MIDI

SOR JUANA

KAY GARDNER

MOVIE 'SHAME'

MIMI BACZEWSKA

DYKES & SOFTBALL

CANADIAN MUSIC FESTS

ALISON BECHDEL CARTOONS

STEREO RECORDING INSIDE

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2 MAY 1989

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Lynn Siniscalchi

Inspirational graffiti--created by local lesbians--greeted train-riding commuters on the morning of Valentine's Day in Chicago, where a gay rights ordinance was recently passed.

THE 'HOT WIRE' EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

HOT WIRE specializes in woman-identified music and culture, primarily the performing arts, literature, and film. We strongly believe in the power of the arts to affect social change, and enjoy documenting the combination of "politics/philosophy" and "creativity." 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.

"SAFE DISK" POLICY

We are concerned about infecting our now-healthy computer systems with viruses. (We use Macintosh computers with Microsoft Word and Quark Express, for those of you who care about such details.) If you know anything about anti-virus programs that we might use, please write Lynn c/o *HOT WIRE*. Meanwhile, we are leery about accepting articles on disk. However, if writers are using Macs, we can send you a disk with our word processing program on it (and pray that your system is uninfected). If you have ever had any trouble with what may be a virus, please send us hard copy only.

INDEXING

Speaking of computers, anybody out there know of good indexing software that we can use on the Mac? This is the fourteenth issue we've put out and it's insane to try to manually index five years' worth of volumes.

SPECIAL THANKS...

To *Outlines*, the lesbian/gay monthly newsjournal from Chicago, for allowing us to use their desktop publishing software, computer equipment, and laser printer. Without their generous cooperation, *HOT WIRE* would still be typed on a typewriter like it was in its earlier days. Thanks also to the Mountain Moving Coffeehouse collective for their ongoing support of *HOT WIRE*, for jointly sponsoring events with us, and for volunteering labor when needed. This type of cooperation between groups--which benefits all concerned--is what makes Chicago a "community" rather than just a city.

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Please be sure to check out the Readers' Choice Awards page. Photocopy the page or write your responses onto a regular piece of paper (rather than ripping the page out of the magazine). We carefully tabulate the results of both the Readers' Choice and the Survey sections. It helps us decide what to include in the next year's issues of *HOT WIRE*. This year--in a break with tradition--the Readers' Choice Awards will *not* be pre-

ON THE COVER

Teresa Trull, long-time women's music performer, songwriter, and record producer. Teresa has released five albums on Olivia and Redwood, her newest being an album entitled *Country Blessed* which she did with Cris Williamson.

sented at the Music Industry/AWMAC Conference. The results will be published in the September 1989 issue and the Readers' Choice 1988 plaques will be mailed directly to the recipients (in the Individual and Group categories).

HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY

See our feature on Moms & Daughters, which includes articles about Bernice & Toshi Reagon and Alix Dobkin & Adrian Hood. In the March 1988 issue we also had a Mothers & Daughters feature, including a booklist and articles about Henia Goodman & Dovidia Ishatova, Margaret & Kathleen Sloan-Hunter, and The Four Allens.

'WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS'

Don't despair. Our *Directory of Resources in Women's Music & Culture* is moving along, and at this point we hope to have it back from the printer in time for the National Women's Music Festival. If you ordered a copy, please be sure to drop us a line and let us know your present address.

SUBSCRIPTION COMPLICATIONS

If you have any questions about or problems with your subscription, our "complaint department" consists of two *very* helpful, *very* cheerful gals. Address all such letters to Shona and Sylvia. Writing to us will get you better results than calling and leaving a message--irate or otherwise--on our answering machine.

HOT WIRE

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The Best of Both Worlds

TERESA TRULL

interviewed by Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Teresa Trull has been a dominant force in women's music since its early days, both as a performer and as a record producer. Her own album credits include 'The Ways A Woman Can Be' (Olivia, 1977), 'Let It Be Known' (Olivia, 1980), 'Unexpected' with Barbara Higbie (Olivia, 1983), and 'A Step Away' (Redwood, 1986). She toured in 1987 with Huey Lewis & The News as part of the Bonnie Hayes Band, and has recently completed an album with Cris Williamson.

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HOT WIRE: HOW DID YOU GET THE IDEA TO DO COUNTRY BLESSED WITH CRIS?

TERESA: It started when I was producing Hunter Davis's record *Torn*. I knew I was taking it slightly country. Also, as a record producer I know that having duets—or guests—on albums helps get artists known better. It gives new artists opportunities that they might not otherwise have to perform with people of that calibre. Plus, it interests radio people. If they get a record and see a well-known artist on it—especially someone who's gotten a lot of radio play—they say, "Well, let me listen to *that* cut." Radio people, particularly in AOR [Album Oriented Radio] and public radio, tend to look at the covers and at who's playing on cuts. There's so much new material out that people can't possibly be expected to listen to everything—so you have to perk their interest in other ways.

SO YOU WERE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO DO A COUNTRY DUET WITH HUNTER DAVIS?

Right—and in a record that's marketed in the women's community, you certainly couldn't ask for someone more visible than Cris—who has always been really good at country. Also, I looked forward to the chance to work with Cris in the role as producer. Even though she and I have been friends for ten years—and she knows my production work and likes it—being the producer is sort of being in a role. I wouldn't put it so hard as to say the "authority" role, but definitely someone who is in charge, and sometimes it's hard to imagine how you would work with your friends. It's almost easier to think of a stranger being in that kind of a role with you. So, I thought this would give me a chance to put some tracks down for Cris—which is something I had always wanted to do—and also it would have Cris get an idea of what it would be like to work with me. And it would be an opportunity also to just hang out. So I brought her in to do *Torn*, and afterward she pulled me aside and said, "You know, I think you and I ought to do a country record together."

HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT THIS PROJECT BEING A COUNTRY MUSIC ALBUM?

I have always been really strongly encouraged by just about every musician friend of mine to do a country record. Everybody always thinks that's what I really sing the best, although I never sing it. Actually, I would always rear away from it—you know, running away a little from my early upbringing—sort of like, I run away from church and from country music because I was always so identified as kind of a hick growing up. Like when I first went to New York, you know: "Southerner, you have an accent, you're retarded." So, somehow I associated singing country music with a self-esteem thing.

Country Blessed has some very traditional country-sounding things on it, but it is not an entirely country record. It was one of the best things I have ever done, one of the most fun things I've ever done. Cris and I—other than just being great friends, and loving each other dearly—there's a spirit that comes from both of us because we have the similarity of being born into rural, agricultural environments. Cris was raised the daughter of a ranger, and spent so much of her time alone in the outdoors with an overactive imagination. My father grew up in the mountains of Tennessee and didn't come down, and the family that I grew up around is all really country family. I grew up in Hillsborough, North Carolina with tons of time alone in the woods with a really overactive imagination. It was a very powerful combination. If it's not country music, almost all of the material is about women's connection to the country. It really is blessed by the country, whether you want to call it country music or blessed by country influence.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE, CREATING THE ALBUM TOGETHER?

We mostly wrote lyrics together, but we're two very different kinds of lyricists. I think Cris is a real poet. She writes in a lot of images, beautiful images, and I am more of a literal writer. It was wonderful that we editorialized each other beautifully. She made me a little more lofty and I made her a little more accessible—it was just so complimentary. We had the best time. As a matter of fact, we ended up writing some of our own press material because we got into such a writing groove that it was so easy. It's one of those partnerships that doesn't happen very often. We really sparked each other. And, to be quite honest, it was a lot better than I expected. This album has a lot of the elements that makes not only women's music but *music* what it's supposed to be. It's an incredible celebration. There's just so much spirit on this record—not to mention the incredibly high technicianship. I

am happy—*really* happy—and proud of this record. You know, it could not sell one record and I would *still* be so proud of it. But I can say if I have ever been sure of a record doing well, it's going to be this one. The record satisfies everything from the most rocking to the most tender. I feel like we're satisfying everybody rather than compromising—and you know sometimes partnership can be a compromise. Well, this is definitely like the best of marriages. Also, I think this record is coming at a very important mark in both my career and Cris's. Career-wise it meant a lot to me and to Cris.

YOU PRODUCED COUNTRY BLESSED AS WELL AS PERFORMING ON IT. HOW DID THAT WORK OUT?

It was great that we shared the record straight across the board—there were lead vocals by both of us as well as duets. I picked songs for Cris to do, some of which challenged her. If you have talent, the tendency is to really control your environment—you kind of end up creating

records down to the basement and play them over and over again until I could tell you every nuance. That's the closest thing I can think of to how I feel about *Country Blessed*. It's been a long time since I've felt this way—and for the record to be like that in the women's music industry, I'd say it's *really* been a long time. It might sound silly but that's the way I feel about it. It's just that important, just that emotional to me.

PRODUCING THIS RECORD MUST HAVE BEEN A SPECIAL CHALLENGE.

I've never produced someone who has been at one point or another as successful as Cris—*The Changer and the Changed* was just phenomenally successful. I had the added pressure of that, plus working with someone I adore and never want to let down. I never want to let anybody down, of course, but if you have an artist who's newer—Hunter or Deidre, for instance—there's not as much pressure. I don't want to underplay the fact that I do my absolute best, that I kill myself for

friends, I really care about her; I didn't know how it would be to work together since we'd never been in that situation together; she's someone I consider to be one of the best singers I've ever heard, and I had to *sing with her*...

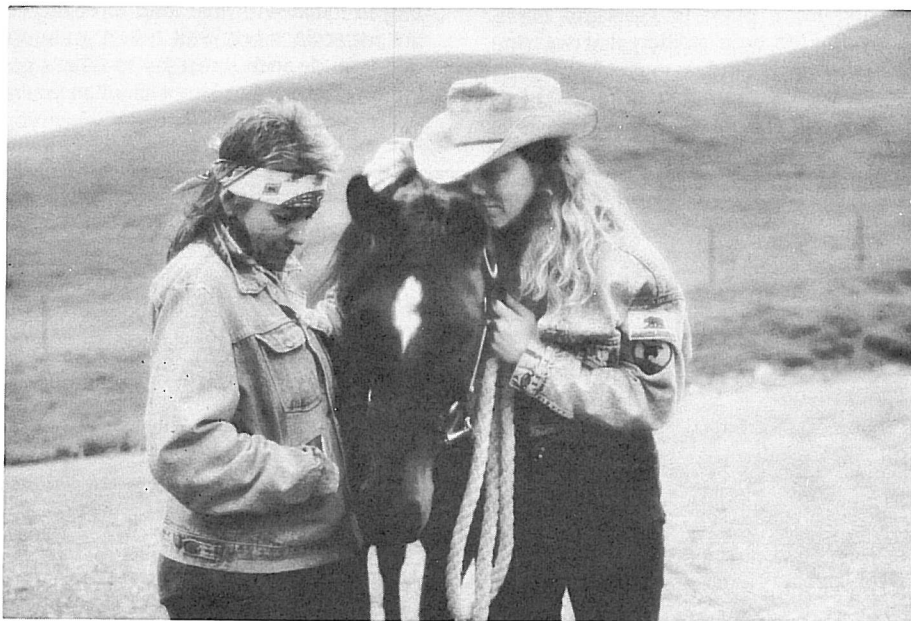
A SITUATION GUARANTEED TO STIMULATE JUST A LITTLE INSECURITY?

Right. There was a phenomenal pressure on me to make it work. I just kept thinking, "This has *got to be good*." And I really studied and spent an enormous amount of time working up to this and trying to find just the right people—I was practically hysterical. I have never felt under the gun so much, though I was putting that on myself. I honestly thought the record was horrible until two days after we finished it. Probably twice in the whole process I had moments—sometimes when Cris would sing, or some great solo or something would go down on the record I would love it—but all my time was clouded by just push, push, push. I wanted to be good—you know, worrying that I wasn't doing a good job because I *wanted* so badly to do a good one. So it was a new and difficult thing for me.

YOU TOURED WITH BONNIE HAYES AND HUEY LEWIS IN 1987. WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THAT?

It was interesting and very educational. I've gone through a real life change between now and then, and I am doing some stuff now that is not musical. A lot of this came about as a result of going out on tour with Bonnie. What happened was, I spent a great deal of my life trying to be famous—not so much in a shallow sense, but trying to be a successful artist. "Successful" to me was not just successful in the women's community, or successful in terms of the music industry. For me, success meant not having to worry about paying my rent, and not having to worry about whether or not people would show up if I gave a show. All along I've had a career; I've made a living, which is more than a lot of people do, and I can be thankful for that.

At the time of our tour, Huey Lewis & the News were at the greatest heights of their popularity. I really wanted to do it, because I thought it would be a chance to really see—even if not from the driving seat—what this kind of success was like. I just have to say that it was startling, because I discovered, "Hey, this is not what's going to make me happy." I saw a lot of behavior I wasn't completely thrilled with, and I came to the conclusion that if



Moya

Cris & Teresa. "It's one of those partnerships that doesn't happen very often. We really sparked each other."

your own little space that you are musically in and there is not a real reason to travel outside that. For example, one of the most incredible music experiences I've ever had in my life was singing the national anthem at a Golden State Warriors game last December 4th. Being challenged to stretch can be a good thing. Anyway, I really went for the emotion on this album, and I feel like we captured so much of it. I don't know if anyone else did this, but I used to take my Joni Mitchell records and my Laura Nyro

those people; it's not a matter of not doing my best...it's a different *kind* of pressure. Newer artists hire you because of your ability and even if they have already put out a record or something, their successes are ahead of them rather than behind them. So you figure whatever you do, if you do a good job, it's going to be for the better. But working with Cris Williamson, you have someone who is very visible, whose biggest successes were early on in her career (although she's still really successful); she's one of my best

you get famous enough, it doesn't matter how good a person you are, it will still make you into a jerk. You just can't have that kind of idolatry, and that many people wanting to do things for you, and not have it corrupt you. I also saw these guys making a record not because they really wanted to say something but because they had accountants and lawyers and record company executives breathing down their necks to recreate a formula that had worked successfully for them. When that much money is involved, even if you are as famous like someone like Huey Lewis, there is an enormous amount of pressure that restricts you.

DECISIONS GET MADE ON THE BASIS OF BUSINESS.

Any time you're dealing in a business, you have to make money. And every business has a safe category or a safe formula that they equate with success. But when people are being "safe," a lot falls in the cracks. And I should know, because I've seen a lot of cracks. I'm too much of a feminist or too eccentric for the pop industry, but for the women's music industry I am not safely grassroots enough. Anyway, I discovered that after twelve years of touring I'm tired of it. You know, there's got to be more for me. So, my solution to all this is, rather than get all caught

I decided that I have to find a way that I can be really happy in music, a way to always project sincerity and a happiness and a *realness*. And, I have to continue to live life. If you let music become entirely your life in the music business--for everyone I've seen that ever does that, the music dies. And then at some point you become a business statistic, and your music becomes just not as alive. What makes me the happiest is when I'm generating stuff that does something for me emotionally.

SO AT THE END OF THE YEAR OF TOURING...?

It's funny the way these things work. I had gotten in touch with some people that were fans of Bonnie's and mine who managed this huge Arabian horse farm [where *Dynasty* is filmed]. The manager of this ranch down in Los Angeles gave me a horse because I taught her child--who was having a really hard time learning--to sing. It was just one of the greatest gifts I've ever had. And that, as a result, got me up here in the Bay area looking for a place to keep my horse, Zodyak. He's by a stallion that was imported from Poland, a racing horse who won really big champion stakes, and he's a performance horse. I took this little

HORSES HAVE BECOME A FULL-TIME CAREER FOR YOU NOW?

I own two more horses now. I'm the ranch manager, and I train the horses for her. I have been apprenticing all along while I've been doing music and touring. I've been working at least full-time hours here on the ranch. I also apprenticed with a vet for six months to learn diagnostically things about horses, and I apprenticed with several trainers. I had a lot of horse knowledge already; I have been riding horses since I was three. I worked, worked, and worked to get this going, and now I am full-time in the horse business, making a living at it. So I am really happy.

THIS HAD AN INFLUENCE ON COUNTRY BLESSED.

This had a *huge* influence on the record with me and Cris. You know, horses were one of the things that we both just get so excited about that we can't stand it. It's not like a whole record of horse songs, though. You have to understand that getting in touch with that kind of beauty--it got me so in touch with how I grew up, and it lends such a real joy to what's going on. That's what happens when you're really excited about life; that's when you



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

"What makes me happiest is when I'm generating stuff that does something for me emotionally."

up in criticizing businesses or criticizing people, it's just like a relationship: I have to take care of myself. I can't try and control all my outside influences in order to try to make or create a sanctuary for me to be happy.

HOW DID YOU RESOLVE THIS?



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Teresa Trull, Toshi Reagon, Lorraine Segato, J.Casselberry, 1988 Michgian Night Stage.

baby and went everywhere in the Bay area looking for a place. After three weeks, the very last ranch I came onto was this woman's small breeding ranch, and we instantly became friends. I've had him here now for two years. I had always wanted to get back involved but I could never afford to buy a horse.

write your most exciting tunes. Whether that excitement is because you're in love, or because you're happy or vibrant, it just really transfers. And it's funny: music is what got me my horse, and now horses really gave me this record.

SO YOU HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH

WORLDS.

I feel like my happiness has to come first, and out of that there's bound to be the best music. You know, *A Step Away* might not have sold a million copies, but I did what I wanted to do and I did what was in my heart, and I will always be proud of that record. I will never have any regrets. That's important to me. Music is obviously one of the things I do best, but I'm a hard worker and I'm really good in the horse business. The worst thing that can happen to me is that I live a simple life and work outside. That gives me a real sense of self esteem. It takes me back to what I grew up doing, which makes me feel good about myself—and in that way I don't feel artificially supported by music or by an audience. You can get a really out-of-perspective view of yourself, but when you're shoveling shit, it brings you back to earth in a big reality check, you know? You look at life in a much more *awake* fashion. And that gives me a perspective. That lets me go out there and be real—never take myself too seriously.

HOW DID YOU GET ENOUGH EXPERIENCE TO MAKE A CAREER OUT OF YOUR LOVE FOR ANIMALS?

Back before I went on tour with Bonnie, and before I did *A Step Away*, I apprenticed. I've learned if you can just get enough money to survive on, you can learn so much by apprenticing for people. So, basically, if I want knowledge in an area, I'll work for you for next to nothing—and I work like the devil. People appreciate that kind of enthusiasm, so they teach you. I went to work at a bird store for a year, working three days a week from seven in the morning to three in the afternoon. I first started out just cleaning bird cages. There were some days when I cleaned 300 to 400 bird cages—but to learn about breeding birds because I love birds. I've had birds since I was a kid, too. Birds are real similar to horses in a lot of ways.

HOW SO?

They're both animals who have been on the earth for a really long time, and they have very highly evolved systems. They are both animals that are preyed on. So, their instincts and their intellects are very similar. They both have photographic memories. They both are extremely intelligent but their intelligence is very different because they are not bold animals. Getting into their minds is very similar when you are training them. Just for fun I train my birds to do a lot of things. One of my budgies has a vocabulary of about 120

words, sings, and plays ball and fetches. I've got birds that roll over and play dead and do things like that. Macaws have a life expectancy of a hundred years, and scientists say they have the intelligence of a five-year-old child. And Pia, my pionus parrot, is absolutely my very best companion. They live way up, and they are very shy, reserved birds—but when you do win them over, they're dedicated.

HOW DO YOU SEE MUSIC FITTING INTO YOUR LIFE IN THE LONG RUN, GIVEN THAT YOU HAVE THIS WHOLE OTHER CAREER?

I'm doing them both. I'm really touring behind this new record, and this will be fun because I'm going to just basically tour in my ranch garb. The music really helps the horse business, too—it's all interconnected. Here I am, I've written this song about a horse on the ranch, I'm sending the record to people in the horse business. I'm now finding people who can do my work for me when I'm gone. Nancy is the woman who owns the ranch, and in a sense we've become partners. I'm her manager, but she's totally supportive of my music career. I also have thirty-five birds; I'm breeding them at the same time. I have a parrot and I'm breeding and showing English budgies. I'm doing things for myself, things that I haven't allowed myself. When the time comes that I have to go on tour, I just find a way to deal with it. The whole philosophy is that I am not going to deprive myself of

experiencing—because if you don't have a life, you don't have music. It's just that simple.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO FIND TIME TO DO WHAT SEEMS LIKE TWO OR THREE FULL-TIME OBLIGATIONS?

I don't have a relationship now. I just make the time. I work really hard, and sometimes I feel like I need a massive vacation. For instance, during a recent freeze here we had thirty-two pipe breaks. We have thirty-four horses; if they don't drink, they don't eat, and they get real sick. A horse drinks twenty gallons a day. For three really cold, wet days we had to hand-water thirty-four horses. Nancy is in her late fifties, and Nancy and I did it all. Now, twenty gallons per horse per day, for thirty-four horses -- you just add it up and think about my triceps. Plus, we're knee-high in mud, it's freezing-ass cold, and we had to fix all the pipes. It's just really, really hard work, but when you come in at night and you take your bath, you feel really gratified that you did something really good. Plus, it keeps me in shape, so...I'm just trying to balance it out. Hopefully I won't have a nervous breakdown from too much work. I come in at night and just lay down. But I know how to play, too. I'm doing things that revitalize me. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni Jr. is crazy about movies, especially comedies and horror flicks, as well as women's culture.

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Solo Flute Meditations

Just before Autumn Equinox '88, I visited Glastonbury, England as co-leader of a women's mysteries tour sponsored by Venus Adventures (Washington, DC). Taking an Aiwa cassette tape recorder and my concert flute to the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey and to Chalice Hill, I let the melodies in those legendary places flow through me. The results are on this tape.

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SOAPBOX

From the 'HOT WIRE' staff member who is the most visible hawker of the magazine in the crafts areas at festivals.

HOT WIRE, the product, as well as the promotional T-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, pens, buttons, and herstoric sets of *Paid My Dues* lived in a cartop carrier and cardboard boxes from Memorial Day through Labor Day 1988. The red dust of Georgia, the Midwestern drought, and the fifteen hour steady rains of Connecticut assaulted us as we protected stock. I've learned some things—how to get my work shift in as soon as I get on "the land" in whatever state that is, and how important good neighbor skills are—with Ladyslipper, stained glass, T-shirts, yarn labrys sweaters, and "Free Sharon Kowalski" as neighbors, it's very easy to enjoy this "hood."

Many women have told me they read someone else's copy of HOT WIRE, or hear the soundsheet recordings on the radio, or check us out at their college university library. Many others pick us up at bookstores from Maine to San Diego, and lots are already subscribers. Thousands of women have heard me ask if they have seen HOT WIRE, and many have then picked up their first copy or subscription.

Late one exhausting evening, as I was unable to verbally explain why this is an essential magazine to subscribe to, I directed a woman to our editorial policy printed on the inside of the front cover. That sold her.

Many read from cover to cover and say they want us to publish monthly rather than three times per year. As I explained how the staff publishes HOT WIRE, some seemed surprised to learn that a journal of this quality is produced completely by volunteers in someone's basement. Those who have worked in women's organizations all over this continent wished us the will to continue—and continue we will.

Finally, many performers have supported HOT WIRE. Your words onstage and at the booth have increased sales and uplifted our spirits.

See you at the 1989 festivals.

Jean Durkin, Chicago

From a reader in Champaign, Illinois, written in response to the Reader Survey.

The current state of wimmin's music and culture is a bit frightening to me. It seems that just as I discover how wonderful it feels to have our own space and lesbian energy, the trend is towards humanism and "mainstreaming" the music and performers. I am more than well aware of the sacrifices wimmin make to earn a living, and am truly envious of those who can work at what they love and make it economically. I also realize that being separate from the boys is not what all wimmin or lesbians need or want for themselves. But I will absolutely puke the day boys are on stage at the National Women's Music Festival or (goddess forbid) Michigan, and somehow it doesn't feel

INQUIRING WIMMINDS WANT TO KNOW

Deidre McCalla said in the July 1988 HOT WIRE interview that she wants to do 100 shows per year; how many does she do in a typical year now?

Bev Czenzik, Markham, Illinois

Karen Hester, formerly of Olivia Records, responds: Deidre does about fifty to sixty per year, as does Cris Williamson. Lucie Blue Tremblay has been doing around forty.

Linda Tillery's act was the best one at Michigan last summer. What has she been doing? Why doesn't she tour?

Denise Bellstedt, Ft. Wayne, Indiana
Linda Tillery spent Christmas 1988 in Taiwan and played two concerts in the city of Taipei. In February she was in Lake Tahoe, doing six nights at Harrah's Hotel/Casino. Since December 1987 she's been singing with the Zasu Pitts Memorial Orchestra, a fourteen-piece R&B band which plays lots of Motown, stax, Philadelphia Soul music. There are four lead singers, five horn players, and five in the rhythm section. "It seems that the success of The Big Chill has created new and renewed interest in '60s soul music," says Linda. "The yuppies can't seem to get enough of that funky stuff. We work constantly, and I couldn't afford to tour if I wanted to. I do take some gigs when I have vacations. It's nice being a side person for awhile, and extra nice having a steady income."

How did Firebrand Press get started and what was the first book it published? How many books have they published so far?

Felice Baxter, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Nancy K. Bereano replies: I started Firebrand Books in November 1984 after I was fired from my job as editor of the Feminist Series for Crossing Press. I had been responsible for more than twenty books at Crossing and wanted to continue publishing feminist and lesbian titles. The Spring 1985 season was Firebrand's first. The books published were 'Jonestown & Other Madness' (poetry by Pat Parker), 'Mohawk Trail' (Beth Brant), and 'Moll Cutpurse' (a novel by Ellen Galjard). There are currently twenty-nine Firebrand titles.

Where can I write to Holly Near?

Rhonda H., Colorado Springs, Colorado

Holly's label Redwood Records has relocated from their Oakland address to 6400 Hollis St. #8, Emeryville, CA 94608. For more addresses, see listing of women performers in the classified ad section of 'HOT WIRE.'

all that impossible to me with the changes that seem to be happening. Perhaps I am just misinformed about what is happening. Perhaps we have all gotten a little complacent and taken groups like Olivia and Redwood for granted. But nevertheless it feels very scary to me.

I was quite excited to hear Adrienne Torf, Lucie Blue, and Kay Gardner speak out the L word on stage at NWMF [in 1988]. It was heartwarming and energizing to hear them give credit to the importance of lesbian energy and strength in their careers, and acknowledge how important that was to them. I will never ever again tape anything any of them produce, even if I spend my last dime buying the album for my house and the cassette for my car.

I must confess I am thrilled to hear Tracy Chapman on Top 40 and feel like someone who is "one of us" is making the big bucks. I also get a kick at thinking about those redneck C&W boys at a k.d. lang concert. But I still crave a culture and music that speaks to lesbians openly, strongly, without hesitation or disguise, and celebrates who we are and that we are wimmin loving wimmin and it is wonderful.

In Audre Lorde's interview (January 1989 issue), she says it's such a struggle for people to say what they really think and feel "because the pretended stakes they offer us are so high for being silent. And they're not real. Silence... never bought us anything. It doesn't make us happy, it doesn't make us safe, it doesn't make us beautiful." I couldn't agree more. Even before the Karen Thompson/Sharon Kowalski fiasco—what good did their being in the closet do when the going got really rough?—I have had experiences that make me agree with Lorde totally. I was an extreme closet case years ago, assuming that if I was "nice" and didn't "flaunt it" that all those straight people would accept me. I wouldn't be categorized like "them" (those bad gays, the militants). Well, my family found out about me anyway, and disowned me—like-wise most of my (Christian) friends. I've had to begin a new life, and this time I've decided not to be so silent. If I'm going to have to live with the consequences, I may as well reap the benefits of being honest about *who I am*. Because I am really a nice person. If others can't handle this one aspect of my personality and life, then I don't need them. It was a hard thing to change my viewpoint but it has really helped. It's easier for me every time I listen to a Meg Christian tape or read an issue of HOT WIRE or—most especially—attend a music festival. These things reinforce the idea that *lots of us* live without lies, or at least without *most* lies in many situations. (Even women's music probably doesn't give most lesbians the courage to be out at work—though I'd be interested in anecdotes.) But women's music and spokeswomyn like Audre Lorde give me and others the gift of courage and validation. Wow.

Petra Solomon, Houston, Texas

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HOTLINE

by Joy Rosenblatt

EVENTS

The Los Angeles Commission on Assaults Against Women held its fifth annual Comedy Night fundraiser last winter, reported *Lesbian News*. Some of the stars donating their time at Hollywood's Comedy Store were KATE CLINTON, Rita Moreno, Carrie Snow, Jenny O'Hara, Shelly Fabares, and Renee Hicks.

MERLIN STONE, author of *When God Was a Woman* and NENA THURMAN, director of the New York Open Center, produced the FIRST GODDESS FESTIVAL in New York City March 10-12. For info on future fests: Goddess Festival, N.Y. Open Center, 83 Spring St., New York, NY 10012. (212) 219-2527.

The Reformed Congregation of the Goddess will be sponsoring a WOMEN'S WELLNESS/ WOMEN'S HEALING CONFERENCE July 21-23 in southeast Wisconsin. SASE to RCG, P.O. Box 6021, Madison, WI 53716. (608) 838-8629.

The Second Annual LESBIAN SEPARATIST CONFERENCE and Gathering will take place June 15-18 near Milwaukee. Burning Bush, P.O. Box 3065, Madison, WI 53704-0065. (608) 256-7587.

The 6th Annual FLIGHT OF THE MIND SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOP for Women will be held August 14-21. Flight of the Mind, 622 SE 29th Ave., Portland, OR 97214. (503) 236-9862.

For information about the PUBLISHERS' PROMOTION AREA or the WOMEN WRITERS CONFERENCE held at the 15th annual National Women's Music Festival June 1-4 in Bloomington, Indiana: Midge Stocker/Lorraine Edwalds, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625-1802. (312) 271-3029.

Mark your calendar: WOMONGATHERING, May 19-21; WIMINFEST, CAMPFEST, and SOUTHERN WOMEN'S MUSIC & COMEDY FESTIVAL--Memorial Day weekend; NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL--June 1-4; MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL--August 8-13; WEST COAST WOMEN'S MUSIC & COMEDY FESTIVAL--Labor Day Weekend.

The Boston-based Revolutionary Acts! women's production company produced a series of concerts this year; performers included KATE CLINTON; RONNIE GILBERT; CASSELBERRY-DUPREÉ with TOSHI REAGON and ANNETTE AGUILAR; DIANNE DAVIDSON; and HEATHER BISHOP with ANN REED. Revolutionary Acts! P.O. Box 606, Cambridge, MA 02238. (617) 661-1252.

For info regarding this year's WOMEN'S MOTORCYCLE FESTIVAL: WMF, 7 Lent Ave., LeRoy, NY 14482. (716) 768-6054.

SISTERFIRE/Washington D.C. will not be held this year due to lack of funds; as we go to press, NEWMR does not yet have space for their traditional Labor Day weekend festival. At the previous site owned by the Boy Scouts, the reason given was nudity was not acceptable on the land. The nudity issue was also the reason that the Rhode Island site was not rented again.

The 1989 GREAT LABOR ARTS EXCHANGE is scheduled for June 24-27 at the George Meany Labor Center in Washington, D.C.

The National Women's Studies Association's eleventh annual conference, FEMINIST TRANSFORMATIONS, is scheduled for June 14-18 on the Towson State University campus in Maryland. NWSA '89, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742-1325. (301) 454-3757.

ALIX DOBKIN and LINDA SHEAR gave "a concert for all women" together in Northampton, Massachusetts on March 18. Co-sponsored by The Buds and New Moon Productions as a benefit for The Support Group for Dykes with Disabilities and Illness, the event was emceed by TRYNA HOPE and sign language interpreted by ARIEL HALL. Also, at press time there was reportedly an "excellent possibility" of a LAVENDER JANE REUNION (16 years) in New York City for Lesbian Pride '89. Kay Gardner and Alix Dobkin with Barbara Cobb on bass may open Alix's June 24 concert.

The 1989 AWMAC CONFERENCE will be held in Albuquerque October 4-8. Chairpeople are: Coordinator--Brynna Fish; Programming--Sharon Washington; PR and Program Book--Jill Davey; AREA--Joan Miller; Ad Sales--Joan Miller/Davita Shanklin; Registration--Davita Shanklin. Future conferences will be held each fall in different geographical regions. Contact Brynna Fish, 2489 Lee Rd., Cleveland Heights, OH 44118. (216) 371-9714.

HONORS

ILSA KOKULA, prominent German scholar and open lesbian, has been honored by the Netherland's Queen Beatrix, reported *off our backs*, with an appointment as a tenured professor in lesbian studies at the University of Utrecht. She was honored in recognition for her semester-long series of lectures at the university on "Living as a Lesbian in Germany."

Pozzuoli, the hometown of SOPHIA LOREN located near Naples, has voted "overwhelmingly" to erect a statue to its famous native daughter, according to *Time*.

CAITLIN RYAN received the National Social Worker of the Year Award by the National Association of Social Workers. In her acceptance speech she revealed that she was rejected from two schools of social work for applying as an open lesbian, reported *Atlanta*. She traced the roots of homophobia from denial of the lesbian identity of the profession's founder--Jane Addams--100 years ago, to placing clients at risk through secrecy and denial for infection with HIV today.

The LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES has to match a \$10,000 grant from the Chicago Resource Center for a video project on the Daughters of Bilitis, founded in 1955, reported *Hag Rag*. They're asking you to send \$19.95 (checks payable to LHEF Inc.) to LHA, P.O. Box 1258, New York NY.

Lambda Rising Book Report is sponsoring a new annual awards program to recognize EXCELLENCE IN LESBIAN AND GAY WRITING AND PUBLISHING. The public is invited to participate by nominating their favorite gay/lesbian books. A gala awards banquet will be held June 2 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill to coincide with the American Booksellers Association Convention. Book Report Awards Program, 1625 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009-1013. (202) 462-6965.

New York City Human Rights Commissioner MARILYN ROUSSO, founder and director of the Networking Project for Disabled Women and Girls of the New York City YWCA, was awarded the first annual Women of Valor Award by Educational Equity Concepts last December, according to Chicken Lady.

The recipient of the The Southern California Women for Understanding's Lesbian Rights Award was VIRGINIA URIBE, founder of L.A. Unified School District's Project 10, a counseling and support program for gay and lesbian students and students who are confused about their sexual orientation.

continued on next page

ABOUT THE WRITER: Long-time women's music activist Joy Rosenblatt is one of the concert producers at *Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago*; producer of the stereo soundtracks in *'HOT WIRE'*; and has an extensive collection of women's music recordings.

HOT LINE from previous page

GABRIELA SABATINI won the \$125,000 Virginia Slims tennis championship in December, her first major tournament title. *Time* predicts that as MARTINA, PAM SHRIVER, and CHRIS EVERT get older, women's professional tennis will shape up as a contest between Sabatini, 18, and STEFFI GRAF, 19.

CALYX received the 1989 Stanley H. Holbrook Award for significant contributions to Oregon literature, stated *off our backs*. Calyx was founded in 1976 by four woman editors to provide a West Coast forum for women writers and artists.

ANNA KAINEN of New York City received \$500 and MAUREEN BRADY of West Hurley, New York received \$750 from the Money for Women/Barbara Deming Memorial Fund to work on novels.

The non-profit Boston-based STUDIO RED TOP, a group dedicated to promoting appreciation of jazz music and the women who make it, was named a "Cultural Leader of the Commonwealth" by the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, according to a report in *Sojourner*.

JILL DAVEY won the logo contest for the Association of Women's Music and Culture (AWMAC). Jill's AWMAC logo was chosen as part of a display at the 1988 conference. AWMAC thanks other artists who submitted potential logos, including LINDA HERBST of Chicago and MARY SHAFER of Milwaukee.

Jamie Michaels, in charge of music at the Bodhi Tree (Shirley MacLaine's favorite New Age bookstore in L.A.) recently selected several albums as classics in the increasingly popular New Age genre. The list included Kay Gardner's A RAINBOW PATH.

The Manhattan Association of Cabarets nominated LYNN LAVNER's *You Are What You Wear* as Best Album of the Year.

At the Golden Globe Awards...*Working Girl* won four film awards; SIGOURNEY WEAVER won Best Supporting Actress (for *Working Girl*) and tied for Best Dramatic Actress (*Gorillas in the Mist*) with SHIRLEY MACLAINE (*Madame Sousatzka*) and JODIE FOSTER (*The Accused*).

PUBLICATIONS

The quarterly lesbian travel magazine TRAVEL TALK will no longer be published due to a fire that destroyed their office. For further details or to make donations: Fountain Institute for Women, P.O. Box 222, Carle Place, NY 11514.

Articles, essays, bibliographies, and resource lists sought by *Feminist Teacher* for special issue on TEACHING ABOUT AIDS in the classroom. *Feminist Teacher*, Ballantine 442, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

OUR RIGHT TO LOVE: A Lesbian Resource Book seeks photos for the revised edition. Black & white photos with releases to Ginny Vida, 45 Plaza St. #1-G, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

THE WHOLE MEGILLAH PRESS is a new publishing house committed to publishing books by women "whose voices are still rarely heard in the feminist movement and even more rarely outside the community." Non-fiction originals and non-fiction/fiction reprints by Jewish women, working class women, and old/older women—as well as biographies and out of print books—being solicited. The Whole Megillah Press, P.O. Box 460895, San Francisco, CA 94146.

Bubbe Meisers by Shayna Maidelehs, an anthology of WRITINGS BY JEWISH WOMEN ABOUT THEIR GRANDMOTHERS, is seeking submissions in all forms, including recipes. SASE to Leslea Newman, 50 Hawley St., Northampton, MA 01060.

Narratives, essays, short stories, letters, journal entries, poems, cartoons, graphics, black & white photos wanted for anthology entitled IN OUR OWN VOICES: FAT DYKES..., BREAK THE SILENCE. SASE to Toni L. Casista, P.O. Box 2968, Santa Cruz, CA 95063.

The Lonesome Node is a fascinating newsletter written (in English) by novelist/linguist SUZETTE HADEN ELGIN, mother of the Láadan language. Its varied topics include Women & Language; Linguistics/Music Interface; Linguistics/SF Interface; Religious Language; Language and the Brain; Verbal Self Defense; Ozark English; and Laadan. P.O. Box 1137, Huntsville, AR 72740.

Short stories, novelettes, novellas, and novels sought for a SF SERIES BY AND ABOUT WOMEN to be published by Crossing Press. Susanna J. Sturgis, P.O. Box 39, West Tisbury, MA 02575.

Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies seeks articles, reviews, essays, short fiction, poetry, photos for its second special issue on LAS CHICANAS. 1990 issue theme will be "Chicanas in an International Context." *Frontiers* aims to bridge the gap between university and community women. Cordelia Candelaria and Mary Romero/*Frontiers*, Women's Studies Program CB246, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309-0246.

Anthology of EROTIC LESBIAN POETRY seeks submissions; no S/M; five poems maximum; send with SASE to Sidewalk Revolution Press, P.O. Box 9062, Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

DISABLED WIMMIN'S NEWSLETTER wants drawings, stories, articles, poetry, ideas by disabled women. SASE to DWN, 2 Sun Lane, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. Also, contributions sought for new networking newsletter DYKES, DISABILITY, AND STUFF. SASE to DDS, P.O. Box 6194, Boston, MA 02114.

Anthology with a working title of BODY & SOUL: VISIONS OF LESBIAN SEXUALITY, is seeking prose, fiction, poetry; especially interested in the connections between sexuality, spirituality, creativity, and community. Judith Barrington, 622 SE 29th Ave., Portland, OR 97214.

The December 1988 issue of *off our backs* had interviews with four Greek feminists from the ATHENS WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE and with lesbian author/publisher ANNA LIVIA from Britain's Onlywomen Press, as well as coverage of JEB'S FOR LOVE AND FOR LIFE slideshow. The February 1989 issue included extensive commentary on the separatist anthology FOR LESBIANS ONLY and Sarah Hoagland's LESBIAN ETHICS; the same issue reported on DEFINING OURSELVES: A BLACK LESBIAN GATHERING held November 18-20 in Sausalito, California. The conference was organized by the Nia Collective, a black lesbian organization created from the black caucus of the 1987 Lesbians of Color Conference. Nia Collective, P.O. Box 40134, Berkeley, CA 94704. *off our backs*, 2423 18th St. NW 2nd floor, Washington, DC 20009.

Louise Rafkin, editor of *Different Daughters: A Book by Mothers of Lesbians*, is currently collecting writings and interviews with CHILDREN OF LESBIANS. Louise Rafkin, Cleis Press, P.O. Box 14684, San Francisco CA 94114. (415) 420-0592.

Shocking Pink II is a BRITISH FEMINIST PUBLICATION by and for young women. *Shocking Pink II*, c/o S. London Women's Center, 55 Acre Lane, London SW2.

A new lesbian separatist publication, SEPS DOWN UNDER, has been started in Australia and seeks contributions. *Seps Down Under* c/o Solanis Unlimited, P.O. Box 262, Wauchope NSW 2446 Australia.

Stories wanted for multicultural creative writing anthology by women on WOMEN AND THEIR SISTERS. SASE to Paula Martinac, P.O. Box 6625, Yorkville Finance Station, New York, NY 10128.

Five writers at *Bitch* magazine (Lori Twersky, Danise Rodriguez, Cheryl Cline, S.J. McCarthy, Sarah Wada) have contracted with Harmony Books to do an ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN IN MUSIC, including rock, pop, metal, blues, punk, calypso, reggae, disco, funk, rockabilly, folk, new wave, jazz, world beat, alternative music, New Age, and women's music. Seeking press packets, photos, all possible info. *Bitch Book*, San Jose Face Suite 164, 478 W. Hamilton Ave., Campbell, CA 95008.

South Asian lesbians and gay men are asked to submit COMING OUT STORIES, 5-10 pages in length, for an anthology. Ravi V., 5300 Santa Monica Blvd. #304, Los Angeles, CA 90021.

Rising Tide Press, publisher of LESBIAN NOVELS, is seeking manuscripts. Send one page bio, one page synopsis, first five chapters, and envelope with return postage. Rising Tide Press, 5 Kivy St., Huntington Station NY 11746. (516) 427-1289.

Silverleaf Press seeks writings for anthology of LESBIAN HUMOR. SASE to Ann Larson and Carole Carr, Silverleaf Press, P.O. Box 70189, Seattle WA 98107.

According to Chicken Lady in *off our backs*, **WELFARE MOTHERS VOICE**, a newspaper by, for, and about AFDC moms, is looking for contributions of personal stories, news, art/graphics, childrearing tips, home remedies, letters, poetry, bragging or bitching by current/former AFDC moms who agree to write from personal experience. *Welfare Mothers Voice*, 4504 N. 47th, Milwaukee, WI 53218.

Poetry submissions sought for a book on **FEMINIST SOCIAL WORK** practice in clinical settings. Original and previously published works will be considered. Mary Bricker-Jenkins, Wit's End Farm, Dowelltown, TN 37059.

Upcoming book on lesbians who have **CEREMONIES OF COMMITMENT** seeks submissions. Conant, P.O. Box 744, Buffalo, NY 14209.

Severed Ties: Lesbians Losing Friends, Losing Families anthology on **DISOWNED LESBIANS** seeks stories about effects/fear of being disowned. *Severed Ties*, P.O. Box 332, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

Firebrand Press has recently assumed publishing responsibility for **A GATHERING OF SPIRIT: A collection by North American Indian Women** edited by Beth Brant, and **YOURS IN STRUGGLE: Three feminist perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism** by Elly Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Barbara Smith. Firebrand Press, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, NY 14850. (607) 272-0000.

The 1989 *Calendar of Trips* is available from **WOODSWOMEN**, the "most extensive adventure travel organization for women in the world." Programs include international trekking, climbing, excursions, trips across America, and local programs in the Midwest and the Northwest. Woodswomen, 25 West Diamond Lake Rd., Minneapolis, MN 55419. (612) 822-3809.

NEWS

By order of a Minnesota district judge, **SHARON KOWALSKI** was moved on January 17 from the Leisure Hills Nursing Home to the Miller-Dwan Medical Center in Duluth, where she is now receiving intensive communication rehabilitation, according to *Outlines*. A formal evaluation carried out last September determined that Sharon can clearly and consistently communicate her needs and wishes and that she understands the communication of others. Sharon was severely injured in an auto accident in 1983. Her lover **KAREN THOMPSON** has been pursuing legal action since 1984 for proper medical care for Sharon as well as for the right to visit and help care for her—both of which Sharon's father has fought fiercely to prevent. Karen and Sharon have at last been allowed to visit with each other.

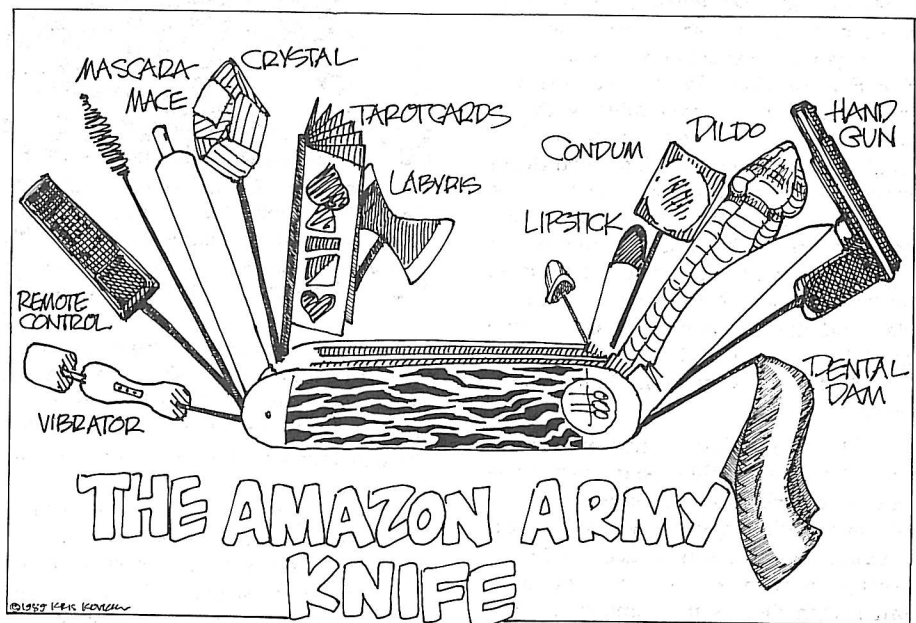
DAS BIERHAUS is the first lesbian bar in Tijuana in the Mexican state of Baja, according to *Outlines*. It is located next to the Pink Panther near the Palacio Azteca Hotel and is run by a lesbian businesswoman who is a prominent member of LaComision Lesbica Internacional en Tijuana.

GRANTS UP TO \$1000 to individual feminists active in the arts [writers, playwrights, musicians, dancers, artists] whose work speaks for peace and social justice are available. There are two grant cycles each year; deadlines are February 1 and July 1. Barbara Deming Memorial Fund, Money for Women, P.O. Box 40-1043, Brooklyn, NY 11240-1043.

According to *Lesbian News*, a new kibbutz is forming in Galilee which is accepting gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as members. **KIBBUTZ RAVID** is located in the Galilee mountains between Tiverias and Rosh Pina. The principles of the kibbutz are based on Arab-Jewish relations, feminism, Jewish Spirituality and pluralism, and freedom of sexual preference. The kibbutz will be based on agriculture as well as an automated cinder block factory. Garin Gal Chadash, **TAKAM**, 27 W. 20th St. #9, New York NY 10011.

Melissa Etheridge, Michelle Shocked, Toni Childs, Shona Laing, and others...the social concerns and political views of Chapman and Shocked were often mentioned in the press, but this pair succeeded in spite of their politics rather than because of them. Chapman writes powerfully about the poor and oppressed. Her second single, 'Talkin' Bout a Revolution,' scared so many radio stations that many of them stopped playing her altogether. What did they think 'Fast Car' was about, a pit crew at the Indy 500?"

AT THE GRAMMY AWARDS: Three Grammys went to **TRACY CHAPMAN** (out of six nominations), including Best New Artist; Best Female Pop Vocal for "Fast Car"; Best Contemporary Folk Recording; **ANITA BAKER**, Best Female R&B Vocal; **LINDA RONSTADT**, Best Female Mexican-American Performance; **BETTY CARTER**, Best Female Jazz Vocal; k.d.



Kris Kovick

ANNIVERSARIES

DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS/Boston, the oldest social/support organization for lesbians in the U.S., celebrated its twentieth anniversary with a community-wide reception last April at Club Cabaret in Boston.

WOMEN OF POWER journal celebrated its fifth anniversary with the fall '88 issue.

NOW THEY LOVE HER AS MUCH AS WE ALWAYS HAVE

The WXRT [Chicago] 1988 Listener Poll included **TRACY CHAPMAN's** debut record as #2 favorite album, as well as **MICHELLE SHOCKED's** *Short Sharp Shocked* (#11) and **PATTI SMITH's** *Dream of Life* (#15). From *Inside*, the radio station newsletter: "One powerful musical trend in 1988 did not go unnoticed at WXRT: An unusually large number of women singer-songwriters. WXRT introduced listeners to Tracy Chapman, Edie Brickell,

LANG, Best Country Collaboration for "Crying" with Roy Orbison; **K.T. OSLIN**, Best Female Country Vocal; **AMY GRANT**, Best Female Gospel Performance; **ARETHA FRANKLIN**, Best Female Soul/Gospel Performance; and **TINA TURNER**, Best Female Rock Performance.

Billboard magazine nominated **TRACY CHAPMAN** for six Billboard Video Music Awards; "Fast Car" was named in *Esquire* as Song of the Year; *Rolling Stone* named her Best New Artist of the Year; and she was nominated for six Grammy awards.

At the American Music Awards...**WHITNEY HOUSTON** won Favorite Female R&B Vocalist and was chosen over **TRACY CHAPMAN** as Favorite Female Pop-Rock Vocalist.

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PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS
INVEST IN WOMEN'S MUSIC
AND CULTURE

THE AUDIO ANGLE

MIDI: THE BASICS

By Edie Herrold

The lights go down and a lone performer steps onto a stage filled with keyboards, racks of high-tech equipment, and a maze of wires. She pushes a button and the room fills with sound—drums, bass, percussion, strings, piano. To this technoband she adds her guitar or a live keyboard part, and then she begins to sing.

If you have experienced a concert by Sue Fink or Kitty Barber over the last couple of years, you are familiar with this scene. You've met their computers (the "brains" behind the operation), their drum machines, their synthesizers, and you've heard the jokes about rehearsals where everyone in the band is on time, in the right mood, and efficient. But how does all this stuff work? How does it know to start and stop together? How can a mere mortal keep track of all those wires?

And *who* is playing those instruments?

This is the first of two articles intended to answer these and other questions in an effort to de-mystify the aspect of music technology known as **Musical Instrument Digital Interface**, or **MIDI**. We'll start with a brief background of MIDI, then discuss the components and function of a MIDI system, as well as various applications of MIDI on stage, at home, and in the studio. In the next article, we'll get a bit more technical and specific.

MIDI is the result of a cooperative effort by the manufacturers of synthesizers and other electronic music equipment. It is a standardized language by which musical instruments designed by independent companies can interface (communicate) with each other. This communication is achieved by the use of digital (computer-based) language which is transmitted along MIDI cables.

MIDI was the solution to problems which surfaced when people began linking synthesizers made by different companies. It has also facilitated accurate

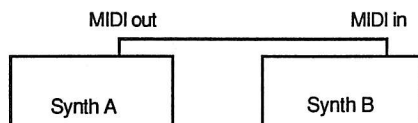
THE AUDIO ANGLE discusses information about recording, live sound engineering, and the mysteries of the recording studio.



Edie Herrold: "A MIDI set-up is a wonderful tool, not only for live performance, but also for experimenting with compositional ideas, for practicing 'alone with a band,' and for recording."

synchronization between drum machines and sequencers (more about sequencers later), and it has eliminated the need for multiple keyboard set-ups by allowing for the development of synthesizers without keyboards.

Before getting into any more details, let's take a look at a very simple use of MIDI. Let's say you have access to two keyboard synthesizers with MIDI capabilities. Each one sounds good alone, but if you were able to combine the two of them, you could come up with really interesting sounds. So, you chose SYNTH A to be what is called the "controller"—the synth whose keyboard you actually play—and SYNTH B becomes the "slave." A MIDI cable is plugged into the "MIDI out" port on SYNTH A and into the "MIDI in" port on SYNTH B.



SYNTH A is set to transmit MIDI data (information) on any one of sixteen MIDI channels, and SYNTH B is set to receive MIDI data on the same channel. Now, when you play a note on SYNTH A, you should hear both synthesizers at the same time. You might select a string sound on SYNTH A and a bell sound on SYNTH B to add little sparkle to a

melodic string line. Or, you might combine string sounds from the two synthesizers, resulting in a richer sound than either could produce alone. The possibilities are endless. At this point, if you play the keyboard of SYNTH B, you will hear only SYNTH B, whereas playing SYNTH A will produce sound from both synths—unless, of course, you turn down the volume on one or the other.

At the heart of every MIDI system is a "controller" of some kind, although it does not have to be a keyboard, nor does it have to produce sound on its own. MIDI keyboard controllers, guitars, and wind controllers are being made by various companies and can be connected by MIDI cables to rack-mountable synthesizers (synths without keyboards of their own, which *must* be played via MIDI) or samplers (units which can produce and play back digital recordings of the sounds of acoustic instruments, combinations of synthesizers, sound effects, the human voice, etc.).

Personal computers running music composing software can also be used as MIDI controllers, with note information being entered from the computer keyboard and transmitted to MIDI instruments via an interface which translates the information coming from the computer into MIDI language.

MIDI instruments are equipped with MIDI ports, or jacks, labeled "MIDI in," "MIDI out," and "MIDI thru." Instruments are linked by means of MIDI cables, which have five-pin connectors at each end. Information is *received* in a synthesizer or other piece of MIDI equipment through the "MIDI in" port, and *transmitted* via a "MIDI out" port. The "MIDI thru" port enables several MIDI instruments to be chained together, by *echoing* the information which has entered an instrument at a "MIDI in" port and sending it on to another instrument.

Information can be sent on a MIDI cable simultaneously on sixteen independent MIDI channels. For example, this would allow a MIDI set-up to have sixteen separate MIDI instruments, each set to receive on a different MIDI channel. All

though all sixteen channels of MIDI data travel to all of the instruments involved, each individual instrument will only respond to the information on the channel it is set to receive.

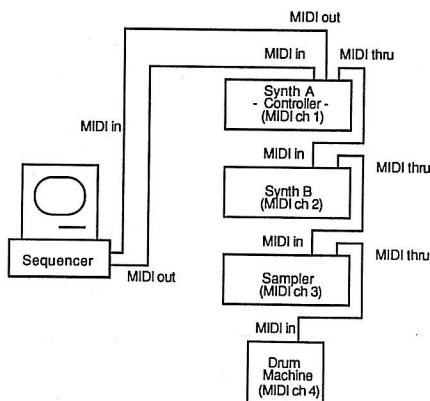
Okay, so we have a master of some kind, some MIDI cables, and a few synthesizers, all hooked up and ready to go. Now, what is really happening here? How does the *music* that is played on the controller become MIDI data?

The basic concept is that music can be expressed in terms of numbers. Obvious examples include tempo (which can be described in terms of beats per minute), and pitch (which can be stated in terms of frequency, such as A440). For the purpose of translating music into MIDI data, each note is described numerically in a variety of categories, such as which key on a synth produces the desired pitch, how hard the key is struck, how long the note is held. Information about the use of sustain pedals, pitch-bend wheels, modulation wheels (most commonly used to add vibrato to a sound), etc. can also be transmitted in terms of numbers. All this numerical information travels along the MIDI cables at incredibly fast speeds.

USING MIDI IN PERFORMANCE

Let's take a look now at how a solo musician such as Adrienne Torf, Sue Fink, or Kitty Barber arrives at the point of using a MIDI set-up on stage. In concert, all the artist does is push a button, and the music plays--usually--but a whole lot has gone into the preparation. Back home, surrounded by her MIDI system (and stacks of manuals), is where the artist begins to use technology for her personal artistic expression.

A typical MIDI system includes a sequencer, a drum machine, any number of synthesizers and samplers, and perhaps a MIDI-programmable effects unit. [See diagram two below.] A "sequencer" is very much like a tape recorder, in that it is



used to record "tracks" of musical information. Some MIDI synthesizers and samplers have "on-board" (built-in) sequencers; other sequencers are stand-alone units which are essentially computers dedicated to a single function.

The most powerful sequencers are in the form of software programs which run on personal computers. Some computers have self-contained "MIDI patch bays" (a group of "MIDI ins" and "outs"); others must be connected to an external interface which translates between the computer and the MIDI instruments, and which has at least one "MIDI in" and usually several "MIDI outs."

A MIDI instrument or controller is connected to the sequencer ("MIDI out" on the controller to "MIDI in" on the sequencer or interface, and "MIDI out" on the sequencer or interface to "MIDI in" on the controller). Music is then recorded by putting the sequencer in "record mode" and playing the controller. In "play mode," the information which has been recorded is sent from the sequencer to the MIDI instrument, causing the music to be played on the instrument.

A track of music which has been recorded in a sequencer can be edited in a variety of ways. The whole track can be rhythm-corrected, or "quantized," so that every note occurs exactly on the beat or on a specified division of the beat (eighth note, sixteenth note, etc.). Tracks can be transposed, volume can be adjusted, wrong notes can be corrected. In addition, when recording a particularly difficult passage, the tempo can be slowed down to a manageable pace during the recording, and then returned to actual speed, without affecting pitch.

It's all pretty amazing!

When a performer prepares a song for stage performance with a MIDI band, she records each part into her sequencer, generally putting bass, piano, strings, horns, and so forth, on separate tracks, each assigned to its own MIDI channel. The various synthesizers and samplers are set to receive specific tracks, and choices are made regarding which synth "patches" or samples sound best in the arrangement. The drums may be recorded on several tracks, one each for bass drum, snare, hi-hat, toms, etc. These drum tracks would then all be assigned to the same MIDI channel, and the drum machine would be set to receive on that channel. All the MIDI data which has been recorded in the sequencer is "saved," usually to a floppy disk, which can then be used to reproduce the musical arrangement in an on-stage MIDI set-up.

A MIDI set-up is a wonderful tool, not only for live performance (in a solo or

group setting), but also for experimenting with compositional ideas, for practicing "alone with a band," for home recording, and for studio recording. Preproduction for Kitty Barber's *Over the Line* album was done in my own MIDI studio, using a MacPlus computer running Mark of the Unicorn "Performer" software, a Yamaha DX7II-FD synthesizer, a Roland MKS70 rack-mount synth, an Emulator II sampler, and an Emu SP-12 sampling drum machine. Kitty and I were then able to rehearse with the MIDI drums and synth parts, and refine the arrangements before going into the studio. When it came time to put the songs on tape, we moved the equipment into a full-service recording studio, and used the MIDI instruments to augment the live guitars, bass, and Kitty's vocals.

Simple MIDI equipment is now available--often quite affordably--in the electronics departments of discount department stores. Music stores are the obvious source of professional quality equipment, and can also be a great source of information, particularly if you have done a little reading and have some understanding of how MIDI technology works so you can ask informed questions. Musicians who are currently using MIDI in their home studios are often willing to share what they know. Actually, it's sometimes hard to get a "MIDI maniac" to stop talking about MIDI.

So, dig in, have fun, and who knows--someday when the lights go down and a lone performer steps onto a stage filled with MIDI equipment, that performer may be you!

An excellent source for further information on "the evolution toward MIDI" (and on MIDI in general) is Craig Anderson's book, 'MIDI for Musicians,' available through 'Mix' magazine (P.O. Box 3714, Escondido, CA 92025-3714). There are also a number of periodicals containing information on MIDI, such as 'Electronic Musician,' 'Keyboard,' and 'Music, Computers, and Software (MCS)'.

ABOUT THE WRITER: Edie Herrold is a composer/producer/bassist involved in commercial music production in the Ann Arbor/Detroit area. She can be reached with questions or comments at P.O. Box 3546, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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NOTEWORTHY WOMEN

"HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU" AND OTHER WELL-KNOWN SONGS BY WOMEN

By Janna MacAuslan & Kristan Aspen

Yes. That's right. "Happy Birthday To You"—acknowledged to be the most often-sung song in the English language—was written by two sisters from Louisville, Kentucky. They were Mildred Hill (1859-1916), who wrote the melody, and her sister Patti Smith Hill (1868-1946). Mildred was a church organist, concert pianist, and a published authority on "Negro and Cajun" spirituals. Patti Smith was first school principal of the Louisville Experimental Kindergarten, and later became head of the Columbia Teachers College Department of Kindergarten Education. Both women were honored at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 as progressive educators.

"Happy Birthday To You"—originally entitled "Good Morning To You"—was a children's song used by the Hill sisters to welcome the students into the classroom when they first arrived in the morning. It was first copyrighted in this form in a collection of children's songs in 1893.

Later it was used *without authorization* in a songbook edited by a Robert Coleman in 1924, this time with the words "Happy Birthday To You." It is not totally clear whether Patti Smith or Coleman wrote the birthday words.

By 1933, "Happy Birthday" lyrics were used exclusively, and a year later the song was used in a Broadway play, *As Thousands Cheer*. By this time, a third Hill sister—Jessica—grew tired of everyone ripping off her sisters' composition and took the case to court. The court decided that the Hill family did in fact own the melody and was entitled to royalties every time the song was performed commercially. This court ruling caused Western Union to cease offering the song as one of their singing telegram/telephone messenger selections. It was also dropped from *As Thousands Cheer*. A second Broadway show, *Angel On The Wings*—which was originally using the tune—had the show's

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

SEE JANE COMPOSE, SEE JANE MARRY THE RIGHT GUY

"Oh, what a difference a word makes"...Every writer could paraphrase the song.

In the January 1989 article, entitled "Our Musical Foremothers on Disc," I wrote that Jane Pickering, English Renaissance lute player and composer, might have been married to a tutor of Henry, Prince of Wales (i.e., she married the teacher of the Prince).

Somehow it came out in *HOT WIRE* that Jane married the Prince himself. All because of the little word "of."

So, to set the record straight: Jane may have married the teacher of the Prince, but she certainly did not marry the Prince; if she had, she would have been called Princess Jane.

In that case, we probably wouldn't be speculating as to whether or not she wrote the lute songs in question, because her works would have been preserved in the royal library and had great significance attached to them (having been written by royalty), and musicologists would have had nothing to argue about.

Is this clear?

We don't want to start any unsubstantiated rumors about tutors and Tudors here!

Sorry, Jane.

composer write a new melody to avoid paying the Hill family royalties. Yet another hit play, *Happy Birthday* starring Helen Hayes, avoided the royalties by having Ms. Hayes recite the words instead of singing them. (It's amazing the great lengths people will go to in order to avoid paying women their due!)

The saga of ownership and royalties concerning "Happy Birthday" continues today. There have been several other legal disputes, including one in which Frederick's of Hollywood used "Happy Birthday" in an underwear ad (perhaps Frederick's called it "lingerie"), and the current copyright holders objected. Casio also had to agree to pay the publisher a penny per watch for their programmable model—which plays the tune every hour on the hour during the day of the wearer's birthday.

Royalties have been paid by the producers of the movies *10*; *The Great Santini*; *Oh, God*; and *Fame*. The Broadway show *The Gin Game* did not originally credit the song; the publishers informed the producers of the show of the copyright and eventually an agreement of \$25 per show was reached.

What monies do the heirs of the now long-deceased Hill sisters receive from the royalties of "Happy Birthday"? The Hill foundation gets the composer's share of gross revenues from the song, and since "Happy Birthday" brings in an estimated \$1 million per year, this is no small potatoes! (So, girls, the importance of copyrighting your songs is clear, right?) In the case of "Happy Birthday," fees are collected for broadcasts of the song by ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers). If the song is recorded or used in TV or films, the Harry Fox agency collects the fee. If it is sung on Broadway, the publisher collects directly.

The traditional bring-in-the-birthday-cake song is protected by copyright until the year 2010, when it will pass into public domain. The copyright has been held by the Birch Tree Group music-publishing company of Princeton, New Jersey, owner of approximately 50,000 copy-

righted songs. The company's long-time owners—the Sengstack family—put the classic song up for sale last October with an asking price of \$12 million. It was sold in December to Warner Communications (along with all other assets) for an estimated \$25 million. According to *Time* magazine, "Happy Birthday To You" is followed in popularity by "Auld Lang Syne" and "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow."

What other famous songs, common songs that most people are familiar with, were written by women composers? Songwriting is one of the few creative activities in which women actually have, for the most part, been encouraged to participate. Historically, women could write music for the home, and often this meant they wrote keyboard and vocal pieces.

According to Jeannie Pool, founder of the International Congress on Women in Music, one of the first "hits" by a woman songwriter was "Rose Bush" by Fautina Hasse Hodges (1823-1895). While probably unknown to most of us today, it sold 150,000 copies!

It should also be mentioned that women often were writers of hymns in Protestant America, with more than fifty women hymnodists being included in a recent book about the subject.

In the popular vein, several women made ample money on pieces like "Shine On, Harvest Moon" (Nora Bayes with Jack Norworth); "Sweet Rosie O'Grady" (Maude Nugent); and "The Sunshine of Your Smile" (Lillian Ray). Not to mention "Rock-a-Bye Baby" (Effie I. Canning), which was first published under a pseudonym because the author was afraid her father wouldn't approve. (He presumably approved after the song netted his daughter \$20,000 from sheet music sales.)

Carrie Jacobs Bond, who wrote Edith (*All In The Family*) Bunker's favorite song "I Will Love You Truly," was a very successful songwriter in late 19th and early 20th century America. She lived in Chicago, where she turned to music as a singer/songwriter when she became widowed and had a small son to support. She opened her own music publishing house on Michigan Avenue, where she wrote songs and lyrics as well as designing her own sheet music covers.

Often the work of women lyricists gets credited to male co-authors only. Who knows that Dorothy Donnelly wrote the words to "The Student Prince" with Sigmund Romberg writing only the music? Or that Rida Johnson Young was lyricist for Victor Herbert's "Naughty Marietta"? Or that Jerome Kern worked with several women lyricists, among them Dorothy Fields and Anne Caldwell (O'Dea)?

And women arrangers—how many of us know that Bing Crosby's hit "White Christmas" was arranged by jazz great Mary Lou Williams?

Are women composers, lyricists, and arrangers receiving more credit today? A few years ago the song "Like A Mountain" (sometimes referred to as "You Can't Kill The Spirit") appeared in a newsletter from the women at The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp in England as an anonymous "American spiritual." In fact, it was written in 1973 by Naomi Littlebear Morena and was made popular by the Izquierda Ensemble, a group that toured nationally in the lesbian-feminist music circuit between 1977-1980. "Like A Mountain" was copyrighted, published, recorded, and performed.

Singer/songwriter Paula Walowitz has had similar experiences. She recounts that a friend of hers had to argue with a woman in the Bay Area who was singing one of Paula's songs; the singer kept insisting that the song was "folk tradition." Paula's songs, particularly chants, are quickly passing into the common musical vocabulary of neopagan groups, especially with the help of Starhawk and Alison Harlow. "I originally named the tune in question 'Neopaganomics' for fun, but 'folk tradition' has renamed it 'Goddesses' Rage'—which is, admittedly, a much better name for it," said Paula in "The Politics of Positive Singing" (*HOT WIRE*, November 1984).

If such popular current songs can pass into the "anonymous folk tradition" within a few years—with the writers alive and still performing and recording the material themselves—imagine how much of our rich musical herstory has been obscured and lost over the centuries. Let's make every effort to claim and preserve our creativity for future generations!

To copyright material: You can order the most updated circulars and forms available by contacting the U.S. Copyright Office. To order forms only, call 202-287-9100 (orders are recorded and filled as soon as possible). If you wish to talk to someone, the music department phone number is 202-287-8700, and the general copyright phone number is 202-287-5000. You can write to Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559. See also "Copyrighting Your Songs" by Katherine Kay ('HOT WIRE,' November 1985). ●

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.

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THE TENTH MUSE

SOR JUANA: THE OTHER TENTH MUSE

By Jorjet Harper

In Greek mythology there were nine Muses, all female, each of whom provided inspiration in a different art. When Plato called Sappho the Tenth Muse, it was a form of high praise, meaning that Sappho was more than mortal, and was a great influence and inspiration to the poets who followed her.

About a year ago some friends took me to a Mexican restaurant here in Chicago that I'd heard about for some time. It's called Decima Musa. "Decima Musa" is Spanish for "Tenth Muse." I thought that it must be a reference to Sappho. But much to my surprise, at the restaurant, the placemats had long printed biographical notes about a woman named Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz, a seventeenth century nun who was also a poet. She was called "La Decima Musa," and it was she for whom the restaurant was named.

Curious, I began to find out more about Sor Juana ("Sor" is Spanish for "Sister"). It turns out that she is indeed a bright literary light from colonial Mexico, whose reputation suffered eclipse for many years, but who has in recent years been 'rediscovered' and reappraised. Famed Mexican author Carlos Fuentes has called Sor Juana "the first great Latin American poet." High praise indeed.

I discovered that like Sappho, Sor Juana was acclaimed in her own day as a great poet of genius. Like Sappho, she was known as the Tenth Muse. Like Sappho, her poems reveal an emotional core that revolves around loving women.

And like Sappho, people have gone to great lengths to deny that Sor Juana was a lesbian.

Two books about Sor Juana were published in 1988. One is *A Sor Juana Anthology*, containing selections from her writings, translated by Alan S. Trueblood. The other is a biography of her life, called *Sor Juana, Or: The Traps of Faith*, written by



Octavio Paz, translated into English by Margaret Sayers Peden.

Readers of this column may recall some of the absurd ways in which Sappho's obvious lesbian focus has been denied through history. One critic in the 1920s argued that she couldn't be a lesbian because in her poems it's clear that she loved wildflowers (which presumably only the heterosexually inclined had the sensibility to appreciate). Before many of her poems were rediscovered it was argued that confused medieval scribes had accidentally written the wrong pronoun when transcribing her love poems. And for many years it was argued that though she may have loved women, she ended her life by jumping off a cliff out of unrequited love for a mythical ferryman (thus somehow "converting" to heterosexuality in later life).

We can look back on this and laugh, and say, "Who would possibly believe that kind of nonsense? Just look at

Sappho's poems themselves and it's clear that she's a lesbian." Nevertheless, as we all know, some people can resist seeing what's right in front of their noses simply because they don't want to see it.

So it seems to be the case with Octavio Paz's biography of Sor Juana. And history, in a strange way, repeats itself.

The details of Sor Juana's life that are known paint a picture of an amazing woman. Sor Juana was born in San Miguel Nepantla, Mexico, during the age of colonialism, in the society called "New Spain." She's believed to have been born on December 2, 1648, into a large *criollo* family. Her mother was a strong woman who (like most women then, barred from formal education) never learned to read, yet she was the manager of a hacienda. Her father is unknown. But by the time Juana Inez was six or seven, she could read and write, and spent her time studying in her grandfather's library. She even schemed to attend the university by dressing as a man.

But at the age of fifteen, Juana Inez was taken into the court at Mexico City as a protégée of the Vicereine. She lived at court for five years, until she entered a convent at the age of 20. She said, "Given the total antipathy I felt toward marriage, I deemed convent life the least unsuitable and the most honorable I could elect..." As a nun she amassed an impressive library, read insatiably, composed her poems and other works, and corresponded with intellectuals in Spain. Through performances of her plays and the published volumes of her poetry, Sor Juana became recognized during her lifetime as a genius throughout the Hispanic world. At age 44, despite eloquent arguments defending the right of women to be learned, Sor Juana was pressured by the Church to renounce her literary pursuits as an unsuitable activity for women. Two years later, at 46, she was dead.

Reading Sor Juana's poetry is most

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jorjet Harper is arts and entertainment editor for 'Out-ines', the Chicago gay and lesbian newsjournal. She writes fiction and non-fiction.

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

revealing: women are clearly her center of focus, not only emotionally but physically as well. In a poem written for the Countess de Parede, for example, Sor Juana says her eyes "flash sudden beams of brilliance/ gunpowder turning every soul they strike into a flaming Torrid Zone." Sor Juana's description doesn't stop with the Countess's eyes, either. Her fingers are "alabaster dates/ springing in abundance from your palms/ frigid if the eye beholds them/ torrid if the soul should touch them." Her mouth, her chin, her cheeks, her nose, her feet, all get a verse. Her arms are "tendrils of crystal and of snow" and her waist is "ambitiously concealing muscles."

The language she uses to express her emotions even makes explicit the metaphor of a lover. To a woman she calls Phyllis she writes:

*I, my dearest Phyllis,
who revere you as divine,
who idolize your disdain,
and venerate your rigor;
I, like the hapless lover
who, blindly circling and circling,
on reaching the glowing core,
falls victim to the flame...
That you're a woman far away
is no hindrance to my love:*

*for the soul, as you well know,
distance and sex don't count...
Can you wonder my love sought you out?
Why need I stress that I'm true,
when every one of your features
betokens my enslavement?...
Meanwhile my tender care
bears witness I only love
to gaze at you spellbound and sigh,
to prove that for you I die.*

And to the Marquise de la Laguna, Sor Juana writes, "...when I call you mine/ it's not that I expect/ you'll be considered such--/ only that I hope I may be yours/...I must admit/ to the crime of adoring you;/ should you wish to punish me,/ the very punishment will be reward."

In another poem to the Marquise, she writes, "Oh, how mad I became/ in my blissful love of you..."

You get the drift.

Yet Octavio Paz, who is one of the most influential writers in Mexico today, bends over backwards in his biography of Sor Juana to deny that she's a lesbian (he can't even bring himself to use the word). He admits that the men in Sor Juana's poems are "ghosts, disembodied shadows" and that only the women are "real presences." But that doesn't matter because, he says, "the undeniable attraction

she felt for a few women could have been a sublimation of an impossible passion for a man, forbidden to her as a nun."

Sublimation???

"Comparing the poems that describe the female body with those mentioning the male body," says Paz, "one finds that there are more of the former and they are more explicit. We can see Sor Juana's women; her men are 'ghostly shadows.' Nevertheless, I reiterate that it is not possible to extract any conclusions about her personal erotic tendencies from an examination of the poems."

How is it that critics seem to be able to "extract conclusions" about any author's "erotic tendencies" from their work, unless one comes to the conclusion that those tendencies are lesbian?

At the same time Paz argues that Sor Juana couldn't possibly have been involved with a woman, he suggests that perhaps she did get involved with a man during her years at court. He has no evidence for this, but he'd rather think that Sor Juana's pronounced woman focus is "sublimation" than admit that the first great poet of Latin America could be a lesbian.

Paz tries to explain away Sor Juana's very physical poetic description of the Countess de Parede by saying that it was

continued on page 59

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LÁADAN

LÁADAN LESSON #4

"ENABLING" AND "VISUALIZING"

By Suzette Haden Elgin

NEWS ABOUT LÁADAN

There is a new coordinator for the Láadan Network: Sharla Hardy, at 769 M Street, Davis, CA 95616. If you want to join, dues for 1989 (\$5) should go directly to Sharla; she is also the source for information about ordering the 1988 *Láadan Network Directory* and its update bulletin, which are sold only to members. (They contain members' names and addresses, and particular interests and projects; new words constructed after the publication of the dictionary; some Láadan poems; some Láadan feminist theology/theology; some new grammar items; and miscellaneous news.)

Recently women have been sending me things that they've written, crafted, etc., to be traded for copies of the Láadan grammar and dictionary. I want to let you know that I *can't* oblige, because the book is not published by me and I have only my file copy and the working copy I enter new information in. I'm sorry to turn you down--the things you've been sending (which I've been returning with a letter of thanks and an explanation) have been beautiful. I appreciate the intention, and admire your handiwork.

Suzette Haden Elgin

NEW VOCABULARY

to "enable"	shóoban (see note below)
principle	dolelith
to "visualize"	umelolóad (see note below)
et cetera	minidibi
vividly	lishenal (metaphor, "lightningly")
to spray (as water)	aála
hose (for liquids)	ilu
to fall	háda
with regard to	shé (loan word, from French "chez")

NOTES

Both of the words in quotes represent lexical gaps in English--that is, ideas for which no convenient English word-shape exists. "Enabling" means: removing barriers that keep something from happening, so that it *can* happen, and providing encouragement along the way. Obviously the closest English word, "enable," is not equivalent. The problems with "visualize" is that it is *sightist*--that is, it is a reflection of the dominance that mainstream Anglo culture gives to the eye; this is true also of "imagine." The Láadan "umelolóad" combines "lolóad" (to perceive internally) and "ume" (full, abundant); it refers to an inner perception with all the senses... seeing, hearing, smelling tasting, feeling, etc.

The word for "to spray" is made from the word for "wave"--aálaan--which is itself an attempt to make the melody of the voice follow the shape of the wave; "aála" just does not let the water fall back down again. Finally, the word for "et cetera"--minidibi--takes the word "menedebe," (many) and substitutes the vowel "i" which is also the word for "and."

READING

Bídi shóoban hal withetho wa. Bóo, shé shóoban, dom ne dolelith-eth shin: (1) Thad umelolóad ra ne beyeth--thad shóoban ra ne beyeth wáa; (2) Dená umelolóadewan--shun, daleshun, onabel, budeshun, dalehale, amedara, minidibi--dená shóobanewan wáa. Bóodi, bre thad umelolóad ra ne lalith lishenal, ébre sháad ne i aála ne yáanineth ilinan, ilunan. Bóodi láadehul ne-il...ma...shu...náril ne--woháda wohilith. Id aril thad umeloláad ne lalith wa. I aril sháad, rolóoloná, lali nedim wa.

LINGUIST'S TRANSLATION

1. Bíidi shóoban hal withetho wa.
I-SAY-TO-YOU BE "ENABLING" WOMAN-OF KNOWN-
AS-TEACHING WORK BECAUSE-I-PERCEIVE-IT.

2. Bóo shé shóoban dom ne
I-REQUEST-OF-YOU CHEZ "ENABLING" REMEMBER

dolelitheth shin:
PRINCIPLE+OBJ TWO

3. thad umeloláad ra ne beyeth --
BE-ABLE "VISUALIZE" NEG YOU SOMETHING+OBJ

4. thad shóoban ra ne beyeth wáa.
"ENABLE" KNOWN-BECAUSE-I-TRUST-SOURCE.

5. dená umeloláadewan -- shun daleshun
HELPER "VISUALIZE"+FOR RITUAL/CEREMONY CEREMONY-
THING

onabel budeshun dalehale
MASK CEREMONIAL-CLOTHING MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

amedara
DANCE

minidibi -- dená shóobanewan wáa.
ET CETERA "ENABLE"+FOR KNOWN-BECAUSE-TRUST-SOURCE.

6. Bre thad umeloláad ra ne lalith lishenal
IF RAIN+OBJ LIGHTNINGLY

ébre sháad ne i aálá ne yáanineth ilnan
THEN GO AND SPRAY TREE+OBJ WATER+WITH

ilnan.
HOSE+WITH

7. Bóodi láadehul ne -- il... ma...
PAY-VERY-CLOSE-ATTENTION-TO WATCH... LISTEN

shu... náril ne -- woháda wohilith.
SMELL... FOCUS-UPON REL+FALL REL+WATER+OBJ

8. I aril sháad rolólonal lali nedim wa.
FUTURE COME QUICKLY RAIN YOU-TO

("OBJ" indicates "object marker"; "REL" indicates "relativizer.")

FREE TRANSLATION WITH REGARD TO "ENABLING"

"Enabling" is women's work. With regard to "enabling," please remember two principles: (1) what you cannot "visualize," you cannot "enable"; (2) whatever helps for "visualization"--rituals and ceremonies, ceremonial objects, masks, ceremonial clothing, musical instruments, dances, et cetera--helps for "enabling." If you cannot "visualize" rain vividly, go and spray water up into a tree with a hose. Pay very close attention--watch...listen...smell...focus upon...the falling water. Then, you will be able to "visualize" rain; and the rain will come quickly to you. ●

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/fantasy novels.*

Teaching materials--grammar, dictionary, tapes, videos, etc.--are available through SF3, P.B. 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.

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.

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FEEL THE BEAT

FOUR PERCUSSIONISTS

By Jennifer Trowbridge

Percussionists have a special place in the women's music scene. Anyone who has seen Edwina Lee Tyler, Carolyn Brandy, Nydia "Liberty" Mata, Nurudafina Pili Abena—or any of the other talented women percussionists—perform knows that there's a special kind of "woman energy" that these musicians give and help to create. We hear them on many of our women's music albums and at the festivals. We are very lucky to have such wonderful women percussionists today up on the stages and also available as teachers. There are many more women percussionists today than there were when the women profiled in this issue of 'HOT WIRE' started out. These four in particular have broken new paths—in and out of the women's music scene—for other women percussionists to follow.

NURUDAFINA PILI ABENA

"Nuru means enlightenment, Dafina means hidden treasure, Pili means I was the second child born from my mother, and Abena means I was born on Tuesday," says Nuru.

When Nuru took on her new name in 1980, she says, it was part of her spiritual journey and cultural growth as a New Age African American woman. It was also a type of rebirth for her.

A native of Cambridge, Massachusetts, Nuru performs Afro-Cuban folkloric, traditional Senegalese, West African spiritual and festive music, West Indian Calypso, jazz and pop music. Her involvement with the traditional African and Afro-Cuban musics has been more than just musical—it has been spiritual as well. She has extensively studied the Yoruba religion, which is closely tied to the traditional music that she plays, and has incorporated many of those beliefs. When she teaches drumming, she also teaches the accompanying religious beliefs and practices. To her, they are inseparable.

Nuru began playing drums when she was five years old. Her first drum was bought by her mother. When she was eleven, she began her formal studies with the renowned master drummer Babatunde Olatundi, with whom she studied for two and a half years. Later, she studied off and on with other Boston-area drummers at the Berklee School of Music and at the New England Conservatory of Music.

"It was enough to really get a feel for it and then I'd go off into the world," Nuru says. "I used to sit out in front of my house and go down to the Boston Com-



Nurudafina Pili Abena: "I love watching the birth of a drummer."

mons and just drum and sing, make up poetry and sing songs, and make songs about people walking by. When I was in high school, everyone was talking about boys, and I'm, like, *drums*." When she was seventeen, she began playing with two of the first women bands in Boston, Carol and the Burgundies and Witch. "I was just immediately jumping into these bands and sitting in," she recalls.

Nuru first played at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival in 1978 with a jazz singer named Rashidashah. She returned to Michigan in 1985, performing with Debbie Fier and Kay Gardner, and has been there every summer since. She has also played at NEWMR, the National Women's Music Festival and the Women's Gathering in Pennsylvania. Nuru's recording credits include *Mystic Soul* (Wheeler and Carol), *In Your Hands* (Deb-

bie Fier), and *A Rainbow Path* (Kay Gardner). She expects to be recording on Kay's next album as well, and continues to perform with Kay as a duo and also with her Sunwomyn Ensemble.

In 1977, she started La Triba, a fourteen piece, multi-cultural women's percussion ensemble made up of her students. The group—composed of black, white, Latin and Asian/Pacific Islander women—performed at the Framingham State Prison, in front of the state house, at nursing homes, for children, and at a few of the local women's bars. Nuru directed La Triba for about five years, and turned the leadership over to the group when she left.

"Basically, what the group did was open them up," says Nuru. "It really hit on issues around culture and race and fe-

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CAROLYN BRANDY

"It's in our tradition that women are not supposed to play drums, and it's just not true," says Carolyn Brandy. "Yes, women do play drums; yes, women do get down playing drums. It's something akin to women's spirits to play drums."

Carolyn Brandy—first known to early women's music audiences as the percussionist of the jazz trio Alive!—has been playing congas for over twenty years, ever since she first fell in love with them at the age of twenty-one in the parks of Seattle. Over the years, she has studied many different styles of traditional Cuban folkloric music, but it wasn't until last summer when she traveled to Cuba that she was able to study the roots of the Cuban system of conga drumming. She and another Michigan performer—Milena De Olga from Los Angeles—went to Cuba to study the complex and sophisticated religious system of drumming called Bata, which women are traditionally forbidden to play. Carolyn and Milena are among the first—if not *the* first women—in the U.S. to learn Bata, but they will not be the last.

Carolyn's mother started her out in music at the age of six by sending her to piano lessons. She only stayed with the piano for one or two years. When she reached fourth grade, she chose to play the violin in the school orchestra, and continued playing classical music for ten years. Carolyn recalls being very involved with music all during high school and in her first years of college, but she did not major in music because she had grown tired of it.

In 1966, she quit the violin and went to France to study French. When she returned to Seattle a year later, she became exposed to drumming and started what she describes as "a romance that is still going on." Instead of returning to college and finishing her liberal arts degree in French, she started playing the drums.

Carolyn and some friends built their own house—sans electricity or running water—on one of the San Juan islands of Washington state. She says she just played the drums, fished, and grew vegetables for a couple of years. In 1972, however, she returned to Seattle and began studying the Cuban drumming tradition. Eventually, she started her own group, the Sundance Rhythm Band, and later joined Gwinyai, an all-women's ensemble which sang/danced/played music of the Shona



Irene Young

Carolyn Brandy: "A romance that is still going on."

people of Zimbabwe. Gwinyai performed at festivals—including the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival and the National Women's Music Festival—in the early '80s.

Carolyn decided to move to California to continue her studies of the drum after taking lessons with a master drummer who lived there. Shortly thereafter—in 1975—she co-founded the group Alive! with Rhiannon and Suzanne Vincenza. She began playing jazz and composing music with the trio, which became known to women's music audiences through performances at early festivals. Alive! later became a quintet—including drummer Barbara Borden and pianist Janet Small—which continued performing at Michigan annually and stayed together until 1982.

Carolyn Brandy has been a large part of the emerging women's music and cul-

ture community. She attended all of the Michigan festivals from the second one through the eighth. She missed three, but returned for the twelfth and thirteenth. She has also performed at the National Women's Music Festival, New England Women's Musical Retreat, the West Coast Women's Music & Comedy Festival, and the Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival. She has recorded on numerous women's music albums, including *Alive!*, *Call It Jazz*, and *City Life* (Alive!); *Imagine My Surprise* (Holly Near); *Here Is A Love Song* (Margie Adam); *More Than Friends* and *First Dibs* (Robin Flower); *Something To Go On* (Nancy Vogel); *Silvia Kohan* (Silvia

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Jennifer Trowbridge is a multi-instrumentalist and a sprouting musicologist.

NYDIA "LIBERTY" MATA



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Nydia Mata: "There is a real need for more Latin and black women to get out there and play instruments."

"I get a real kick out of having the straight society see me as a female percussionist," says Nydia. "I can play as well as any guy, and that says a lot. That is making a very feminist-political statement. Another woman and I were the only percussionists at a school concert for nine, ten, eleven and twelve year old kids. They were blown away. When they see women playing drums they have a whole different perspective. When they see women on TV putting on all that slinky stuff, hopefully they will remember the conga player and the timbale player that they saw this morning. A very important part of what I do is breaking that mold of what people think about women. It's important not to keep us in that box."

Nydia "Liberty" Mata, born in Havana in 1952, moved from Cuba to the United States when she was four years old. She learned how to speak English in the Bronx, and has lived in New York City most of her life.

Cuban music, according to Nydia, has been one of her biggest influences. "It was just around all my life—it was normal," she says. "It was like brushing your teeth." Other influences and inspirations—personally and musically speaking—include her favorite singer, Laura Nyro; her partner, Latin harpist Ellen Uryevick; and most recently, Canadian dub poet Lillian Allen. Nydia says she especially appreciates the inspiration she has gotten from her mother, Nydia "Nina" Maza.

She got her first set of toy drums when she was eight years old, and her first set of professional Ludwig drums at twelve. She says she did not own a set of congas until later, though she would get up on stage and play them at parties and

at all the Cuban affairs she attended. In her early years, she did not study drumming much, but she played a lot. She was in several bands which played at school talent shows and parties. "Whenever there was a set of drums," she recalls, "I would make sure I got behind them."

When Nydia was sixteen, she says she dropped out of high school and pursued her dream in life—to meet her idol Laura Nyro and play drums for her. "She was my favorite singer, and she still is. All I cared about was going to Laura Nyro concerts," she says now. Nydia and her friends would buy tickets to every show, and then they would travel to other cities to attend them.

Nydia and Laura finally met when she was nineteen in the backstage of the Fillmore East in New York City. She continued to follow Laura—even as far as California—and eventually they became friends. One day Laura phoned Nydia and invited her to go see the movie *Black Orpheus*. Afterwards, Patti Labelle, Nona Hendryx, and Sarah Dash came over to rehearse the back-up vocals they would be doing on Laura's then-upcoming album, *Gonna Take A Miracle*. As the women began to sing, Nydia picked up a drum and started playing along—resulting in her playing congas on the album. Nydia continued to record and tour with Laura off and on through 1976, and in the summer of 1988 they recorded and toured together again. She has appeared on six Laura Nyro albums. "It really started with Laura," says Nydia. "*Gonna Take A Miracle* was my first professional gig. The rest is history."

Meanwhile, she has played in many other bands. Nydia says she really got her playing together from 1971 to 1976 in the rock band Isis, an all-women ensemble which also included Jean Fineberg and Ellen Seeling (performing these days as DEUCE) and rocker Carol MacDonald. She says she took on the stage name "Liberty" when she began playing with Isis, because many people mispronounced "Nydia."

When Nydia started playing with Laura in the spring of 1971, she switched from trap set drums over to congas, and did not return to the trap set until 1983. Over the years, she has studied Afro-Cuban, Puerto Rican, Caribbean, and other African-influenced music, and she plays all the Latin percussion instruments: congas, timbales, bongos, cowbell, maracas, and quiro. Performance credits include playing in the Latin Fever salsa band in 1977 and '78, as well as being an original member of DEUCE and recording on their 1986 album. She has

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EDWINA LEE TYLER

"The Cool Side features Edwina's meditative, dramatic percussion work on marimba, tambourine, cymbals, and European piano strings played with mallets. Then we hear the djimbé drum's stately vibration, caressing Edwina's haunting vocals. The Hot Side presents the full magnificence of Edwina's drumming. She sounds like a djimbé drum ensemble, this petite woman with small, shapely untaped hands. Leaving us with no doubt that the drum is indeed a woman," say the liner notes from 'Drum Drama!'

One look at Edwina Lee Tyler and you know that she is serious about playing percussion. Her powerful glances and muscular build reveal the strength that she has gained from forty years of drumming and more than twenty years of African dancing. She steps off the stage while playing her djimbé drum—which is strapped over her shoulders—and she moves into the audience. She stops in front of a woman who begins to dance to her rhythms and moves on to another. Near the end of her extended solo, she repeatedly shouts "I love you" to the screaming, applauding audience. This musical exchange is a moving and memorable one for those who have experienced



Edwina Lee Tyler: "I do women's festivals because I like the energy."

Marcy J. Hochberg

Edwina's performances at Michigan and other festivals.

Edwina Lee Tyler, born in 1944, grew up in New York City with music all around her. Both parents, Ruth Gibbs and Edward Lee Tyler, were professional concert singers and choral directors. Her father was also a composer and a professor of music at Columbia University. According to Edwina, students from all over the world would come to their house to study with him. In addition to introducing her to classical music, Edwina's father taught her about her musical heritage as a black American, providing her with jazz, blues, gospel and spiritual recordings and telling her about different black composers.

Edwina began playing and studying music at a very young age. In addition to studying piano as a child, she had been drumming on boxes, pots and pans since she was three years old. When Edwina was nine, she received her first drum—from her fourth grade teacher, Cynthia Blanchard. When Edwina was around ten, she began studying African drum rhythms and techniques from two young friends, Jimmy and Junior Border, who lived near her home. Another part of her inspiration to play the drums came from listening to her brother Melvyn Louis, a percussionist, and other African and Afro-Cuban drummers who performed in the streets and parks of her neighborhood in Harlem.

With much encouragement, she played drums with her parents, with the Gospel choirs at church, and in shows at local churches and schools. Many male drummers tried to discourage her, however, by telling her that traditional African customs forbid women to play drums—especially the djimbé drum. Edwina continued despite the resistance that male drummers gave her, and became one of the first well-established female African drummers in this country.

"When I was very young, there were no women percussionists—as far as the African drum—that I could look up to," she says. "They just were not around." But thanks to Edwina and others, the situation is much different for women today. "Women have seen more women percussionists now, and it is giving them inspiration and strength to say 'this is what I want to do.'"

In her twenties, Edwina worked with her mother in the theatrical field before branching out professionally on her own. She has continued to work in the theater in a variety of capacities: playing the drums and other percussion, singing, acting, dancing, and composing music. She

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CAROLYN from page 19

Kohan); *Night Rainbow* (Gayle Marie); Debbie Saunders (Debbie Saunders & Band); *Skies Ablaze* and *Linda Hirschhorn* (Linda Hirschhorn); and *One World, One Heart* (June Millington).

Now forty-two years old, Carolyn says she has seen a lot of development in women's music and culture, especially in the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. "From having been there for so many years, I can really see how much the artists, the technicians, and the level of artistry have grown," she says. "One change that I especially feel good about is more Third World women participating. The producers of Michigan have made it—and are in the process of making it—truly multi-cultural and representative of the talent that we have as women in this country. It has been able to become what it is because of the fact that they [the producers] allow participation—they have not owned it. As a result, you have a certain amount of freedom. A lot of credit has to be given to Lisa Vogel and the others because of the way that they have involved other people in the work aspect. It creates a feeling that the festival belongs to everybody instead of to the producers. Everybody has a stake in the festival—from the backstage workers to the performers to the shuttle bus drivers and so on. I feel like I am there as another worker," she says. "I have a stake in it, to create the festival in some kind of way. Everyone who goes there is part of building this phenomenon."

The idea to have a parade at the festival came from something that Carolyn helped to initiate in the early years. Alive! had brought along a dancer, and they had a percussion-and-dance workshop. At the end of the workshop, the enthusiasm was so high that they said, "Hey, why don't we

get together another day and do a parade?" The next day, more than 400 women gathered together for the parade. "We had no idea it was going to be so big," says Carolyn now. "We just said 'let's parade!' and started marching off—we did not even know where we were going. I do not know what was in our minds. By the time we were finished there were hundreds and hundreds of women parading and dancing along." The Saturday night pre-concert parade has since established itself as a tradition at Michigan.

In the future, Carolyn says she would like to write about her experiences as a woman drummer and to research other women drummers, possibly in Cuba or Africa. She thinks that the women's community needs to know more about traditions of women drummers to testify that women do in fact play the drums. She has gone back to college to get her B.A. in music so that she can possibly go on to get a masters in ethnomusicology. The degrees will also help her in her teaching career.

Carolyn says that she enjoys teaching just as much as she enjoys performing. She has taught adults for twelve years and children for six, including teaching kindergarten through eighth grade at the Berkeley Arts Magnet School and leading a forty piece percussion band of children. She has led many workshops on percussion including several at Michigan. During the summer of 1988 she taught a workshop on Brazilian Samba, one of her favorite musics to teach, and led the participants in the Saturday evening parade as they all performed what they had learned.

Carolyn Brandy has been a leader in many ways—as a woman percussionist venturing into new traditions of music, as a teacher, and as a band leader. In 1980 she started *Sistah Boom*, a large, all-wom-

en percussion ensemble based in Oakland, which performs at rallies and other events as a political, activist group. She led it for five years and then turned it over to the participants. During her last year, there were an estimated 120 women in the group.

Currently, she leads The Carolyn Brandy Band, seen in 1988 on the Michigan Night Stage. She and her lively band performed a mixture of jazz and Latin music which had many women dancing. In addition, she sat in on sets with Lichi Fuentes, Debbie Fier, and June & Jean Millington.

Every festival, according to Carolyn, has done something for her. At one festival, for example, she says she gained a strong sense that women must have had their own drumming societies. "The other women's festivals—are the only places where you can get a feeling of what women's culture, unspoiled and untouched, is about," says Carolyn. "It's a testimony to the power and magnificence of women's culture in this country, which is far better than most of the artistry that we have in the mainstream. Some of the best drummers in the country go to Michigan. It's the only gathering of that many women drummers who are at that level of drumming. There's a real openness among them and there's a lot of jamming. It's really an inspiration to me to keep going. There's a feeling of camaraderie that has grown over the years, a sense of mutual respect and joy amongst the women drummers and a gladness to be together. It's like coming home. And you get that juice to go on. I really have to thank all the women who work on the festival because that venue, that support, and that coming together gives me a strength to really work hard and do well. It's very important in my life as an artist," she says. "I am so proud to be part of that herstory." ●

EDWINA from page 21

has won awards for both her music and dancing. In 1980, she received a citation for Musical Excellence from *New York Music Week*; in 1985, she was a nominee in the Ethnic Music Category for the New York Music Awards; and in 1987, she won the Dance Music Composition Award in *The Bessies*. In 1987 and 1988, she performed in the highly-acclaimed, all-woman Off-Broadway production *Song of Lawino*. She received grants in 1987 and in 1988, from an organization in New York City called Meet the Composer, in order to compose the music for *Song of Lawino*. [Note: it is rare for a composer to receive this grant twice]. She also received one from the New York State Council for

the Arts for the same piece. In 1986-87, she worked with Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's Urban Bush Women, a theatrical dance group, in the dance/theater production *Anarchy, Wild Women and Dinah*, which played in New York, Kansas City, and Los Angeles. Other recent theater performances include Nobel Prize Winner Wole Soyinka's *Death of The King's Horseman* (1987); Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's *Life Dance Trilogy*, for which she received a Bessie (1986); and Joseph Chaiken's *Solo Voyages*, written by Adrienne Kennedy (1986). After a year of evaluation, she was accepted as a member of Affiliate Artists, an organization for artists who are then able to do residencies all over the country where they conduct two-week long workshops and produce pieces.

Edwina also composes for her own group A Piece of the World, best-known to women's music audiences through festival performances, including Sisterfire, New England Women's Musical Retreat, the West Coast Women's Music & Comedy Music Festival, the Southern Women's Music & Comedy Festival, and the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Started in 1979, A Piece of the World has gone through many personnel transformations, resulting in an ever-changing performance. It has gone from being a nine-woman ensemble, four of which were percussionists, to the current four-to-six woman ensemble with Edwina as the only percussionist. Her manager, Roberta J. Stokes, has been a dancer in the group

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since its beginning. Over the last five or six years, Edwina Lee Tyler and A Piece of the World have performed at many large outdoor festivals and conferences. They toured Europe in 1981-83 and she recently traveled to England in October 1988 with Jawole Willa Jo Zollar's Urban Bush Women. In July 1985, Edwina visited Africa to participate in the NGO Women's International Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, where she and her drumming were warmly welcomed by the conference delegates and traditional peoples.

Over the years, Edwina has taught African dance and percussion, though she is not currently teaching--except for occasional workshops--because she is so busy freelancing and working with her own group. She has released a cassette of original music, *Drum Drama!* (1987, Percussion Piquant/distributed by Ladyslipper), on which she plays marimba, djimbé drum, and the inside of the piano. Now

she says she is in the process of writing the music for an album.

Although Edwina enjoys many festivals, she says that Michigan does more for her than any other--largely because she stays there longer, she participates in workshops as well as performs, and she spends time talking to other women. Edwina has performed at the festival every year since 1981. For the past two years, she has arrived a day early and stayed a day late. She camps on the land part of the time.

"Being on the land is letting your mind be free, because you are not in the city," she says. "I do women's festivals because I like the energy--it's nice energy. We can communicate, we have the same things in common, and we are suffering all together as women. I like to share my energy, and I get energy from them to go on to do what I have to do."

Edwina says she especially enjoys meeting different people from all over the

world and getting to know what their lives are about and how they live. She meets other percussionists and musicians as well as women who do things that she has never seen or heard of. She cites as an example meeting Chicagoan Vikki Dodd last summer, who gave her a vocal body massage with sound produced from her mouth.

"At Michigan, you have the music going on, but it is more than that," says Edwina. "Michigan is about getting yourself together. They have everything for you there. It is a therapy place for most. It is a temple where women can meditate. It is mostly talking about yourself, getting to know who you are. You are meeting other people who have the same problems as you and you discuss them, no matter what they are, whether it is about kids or about your job or about different things that you have gotten involved in that you do not need to," she says. "It is just getting yourself together." ●

NYDIA from page 20

also been involved in a merengue band.

Nydia explains that her all-women Latin bands have had many white musicians in them because female Latin instrumentalists are rare. "I'd like to see more Latin women get out there and play," she says. "I certainly have no prejudice against white American women playing Latin music--the more women playing instruments the better. But there is a real need for more Latin and black women to get out there and play instruments. Hopefully, in the next generation we will have more."

In 1979, she and her partner Ellen--along with Nancy Friedman and Vivian Stoll--formed The Harp Band, which was originally a women's collective. Over the years, Nydia says her main focus has been on The Harp Band, and they hope to record an album soon.

In 1981, Nydia was a co-founder (and eventually became the musical director) of the all-women, Afro-Caribbean dance and percussion ensemble *Re-tumba Con Pie*. She left the group in 1986, and Nancy Friedman became the musical director.

One of Nydia's most recent musical endeavors has been working with Lillian Allen, whom she met at Michigan in 1987 when Nydia was hired to play on her set. In 1988, she played with Lillian again at both the Michigan Womyn's Festival and at Sisterfire, and she recorded on Lillian's latest album *Conditions Critical* [see "Dub Poet Lillian Allen," July 1988 *HOT WIRE*].

Nydia enjoys teaching and says she would like to do more of it. In the early

1980s, she taught at the East Harlem School of Music. She was the first woman percussion teacher at this neighborhood program whose students consisted mainly of Latin men. She also has taught at a couple of afterschool programs, as well as giving private lessons over the years. Nydia says that she is especially inspired by one of her private students who has cerebral palsy.

Nydia and her partner Ellen work as a duo, earning most of their living by doing club dates, weddings, and parties. They also perform for an organization called Hospital Audiences, where they play gigs at nursing homes and rehabilitation centers, mainly for elderly and severely handicapped audiences. Nydia says that playing for Hospital Audiences is probably the most rewarding work that she does.

Although Nydia works through a major club date agency in New York, she says her mother is her biggest agent. "She gets me so much work it's unbelievable. She is a top manicurist in New York, with clients such as Dustin Hoffman, Sigourney Weaver and Liv Ullman, and she gets me the greatest gigs." Nydia's mom also attends most of her daughter's gigs, and has been to the Michigan festival for the past two years. Nydia says, "For her to get the gift of Michigan and for me to be able to give her spirit to the women there is really pretty cool."

Last summer, the two of them stayed on the land and camped behind the night stage. "My mother is a party animal. All her girlfriends from Michigan know so," says Nydia. "And," she adds, "she knows more people than I do. She's really the

star; I am just trying to imitate her."

Nydia began playing at Michigan in 1980 after meeting Michigan producer Lisa Vogel, who had hired her to play on an album she was producing for singer Sirani Avedis. Since 1980, Nydia has performed at Michigan every summer, except in 1984. "I loved Michigan from the jump. Right from the beginning I thought it was outrageous," she says now. "I think that every woman on the planet should experience it because there is nothing like it. I don't think that there is anyone who couldn't benefit from it at least once." Last summer, she even left the Laura Nyro tour in order to play on sets at Michigan with musical friends new and old, including Lillian Allen, Lorraine Segato, and Jean and Ellen in the DEUCE ensemble.

"It would have broken my heart not to go to Michigan. I look forward to going to there because it's a time of seeing my old friends, some of my best friends that I never get to see, and making new friends. You never know who you are going to meet there. And it is amazing how the whole thing works," says Nydia. "The fact that women do it all is fantastic." ●

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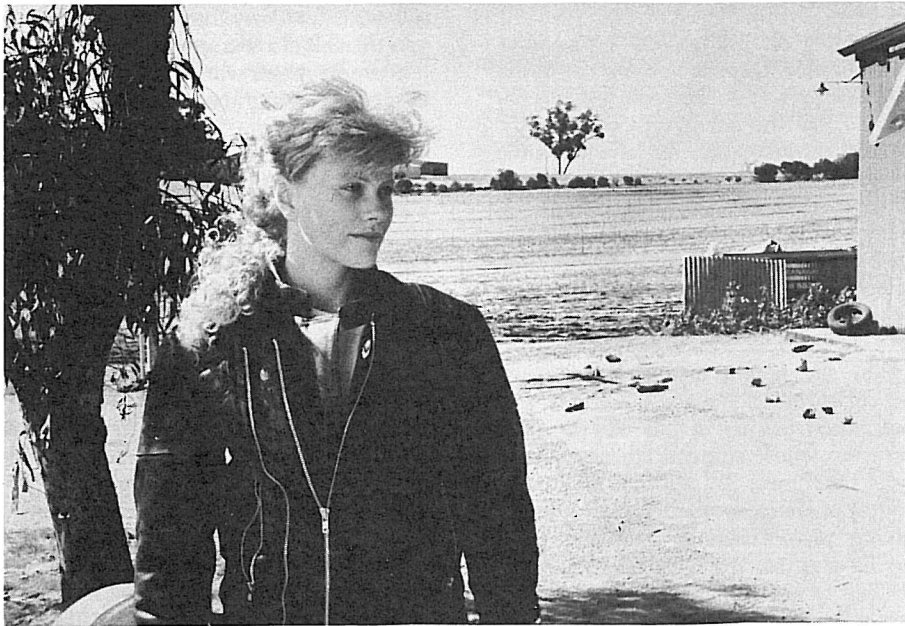
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the women's action/adventure film **SHAME**

by Jorjet Harper



Asta, the female hero of the Australian action/adventure film *Shame*, played with convincing determination by Deborra-Lee Furness.

Three-quarters of the way through the movie, and you could hear a pin drop: everyone's attention is riveted to the screen. As the suspense mounts, one woman in my row, unable to contain her apprehension, begins banging her fist on the empty seat in front of her. Some others are gasping; during one harrowing scene a few begin shouting. And at the movie's end, the audience appears to be stunned; I look around and see that many are crying. When we come out of the theatre into the lobby, all around are glazed looks, as if the viewers are in some kind of shock. It takes a few minutes to adjust to being back in our regular lives again, to shake off the images from the drama that we've been through in the darkened theatre.

The movie is *Shame*, an action film from Australia. I've seen it before, but still it packs the same wallop of emotional impact on me it did the first time around. Of course, an adventure-suspense movie that can evoke such strong audience reactions surely qualifies as a success. What makes *Shame* especially unusual, however, is that this film's audience is not made up of teenaged boys rooting noisily for their favorite machine-gun wielding macho

"good guy." Instead, most of this audience consists of women, and they are rooting for a female hero (played with convincing determination by Deborra-Lee Furness) in a story that taps into women's concerns in a way never before treated in this genre.

While there are plenty of action/adventure movies being made, how many are there in which a woman can totally identify with the mission of the main character? Sure, we cheer when "good guys" save the water from pollution, save dolphins from the net, save people's homes from the bank and the bulldozer, save people's lives. But there's a subtle dividing line in sex roles for heroes that not many films—even ones with strong women characters—have yet dared to cross.

And the few films made so far in which women *are* the heroes, like Sigourney Weaver in *Aliens*, have tended to be ones in which the science fiction or fantasy element has been the core reality. While it's great to see the brave woman space pilot battling a monster from another planet, it doesn't exactly hit us right where we live. *Shame*, however, does. Why? Because it does face, in a most

realistic, familiar way, the central injustice of women's lives: here, the female hero is fighting squarely and directly against the threat of rape.

THE STORY

Asta Cadell is a lawyer who's motorcycling through the countryside of Western Australia on vacation. Riding at night, she has to swerve to miss a flock of sheep on the road, and her bike is damaged. She makes it into the small, run down, isolated town of Ginborak. Her reception by the town locals, including the sheriff, is less than warm—except for the sleazy sexist remarks. The young men hanging around the pub with nothing to do are obviously intrigued by the unusual sight of a self-assured leather-jacketed woman on a (big?!) Suzuki.

Asta finds the help she needs from Tim Curtis (Tony Barry), the owner of a small garage, who lets her borrow his tools to work on the bike, and agrees to order the new parts she'll need to repair it. Curtis is a decent fellow, a middle-aged man who lives with his teenaged daughter Lizzie (Simone Buchanan) and his aging mother Norma (Margaret Ford). He also agrees to let Asta sleep in a side room in the garage till her bike is fixed; his mother reluctantly brings Asta out some bedclothes.

Asta discovers that the Curtises are in the midst of a family crisis. Daughter Lizzie comes home shakily on the arm of her grandmother and a sympathetic neighbor (Gillian Jones). She has been gang raped the night before. Curtis at first has a hard time believing that his daughter didn't do something to provoke the attack.

Yet Ginborak has been the scene of a number of gang rapes—though the townspeople don't want to acknowledge it. A group of young men and teenaged boys roam the streets at night harassing and attacking women. The boys are filled with their own importance and with the knowledge that no one will stop them—their own parents defend them, and the onus of any attack falls on the victim, who "asked for it." What's all the fuss, says one boy's father, grinning, "just be-

cause a few lads act like nature intended."

Asta gets a lift from Ross, a man whose wife Penny was also raped. When some of the boys pass Ross's truck, jeering at him about his wife, he leaps out at them, but he's outnumbered and they beat him up. Asta takes the injured man to his wife, who works at a nearby slaughterhouse, the town's main source of employment, and begins to get a picture of what's really going on in Ginborak. That evening, when Asta goes to the train station to pick up the parts ordered for her bike, she gets attacked, too, by a group of younger boys emulating their elders. She successfully defends herself. But when she complains to the local sheriff, he shrugs off the incident.

Lizzie is fascinated by the visitor at her house, who seems to be the most interesting, fearless woman she's ever met. Because of Asta, Lizzie's father begins to believe his daughter's version of what happened, and Lizzie gets up the courage to press charges against her attackers.

Asta sees to it that the boys who raped Lizzie are arrested, but they're soon out on bail. The rich mother of one of them tries to buy Lizzie off but she sticks to her guns. Asta gives Lizzie advice on how to defend herself if need be: You kick him in the balls, she says, or go for the windpipe and the eyes. "I didn't raise my daughter for this," protests Tim, as Lizzie's grandmother and the neighbor-women watch. "Do you think I like it?" counters Asta, "Having to watch every shadow when I go out at night?" As her words sink in, the infinitely sad looks of recognition on the women's faces tell volumes about the captive lives they are forced to lead.

As the boys become more worried that they will be prosecuted, the men of the town bond more tightly to defend them. Not only do they view Asta and Lizzie as the "troublemakers," but they also turn against Curtis when he refuses to dissuade his daughter from pressing her case. That night, a drunken mob of young men set out to attack the Curtis home. Asta spirits Lizzie away on her motorcycle, and takes her to the police station for her safety, not realizing it is deserted. By the time Asta gets back to Curtis's, the mob has beaten him senseless and kidnapped Lizzie's grandmother. This is the final straw for the women of the town, who mobilize search parties to rescue the old woman, and who begin to think of fighting for themselves at last.

DISPELLING THE SHAME

How *Shame* managed to emerge as such a strong women's film in light of the

fact that the director, producers, and majority of the film crew were men, I don't know (the principal co-writer, however, was a woman, Beverly Blankenship). *Shame* does bring to mind other movies, especially Westerns, in which a (male) hero stands up for the rights of people who are afraid to fight for themselves, and his example gives them the courage to fight, too, and shows them the path to their own integrity. This theme is played out in many movies, from *High Noon* to *The Seven Samurai* to *Billy Jack* to even more inflammatory fare like *Rambo*. *Shame*, however, is unique in taking the "hero who comes in and cleans up the town" idea and utilizing it for the sake of a woman's cause.

In *Shame*, aspects of rape—including blaming the victim, casting her as a 'seductress', the victim's own feeling of shame, the Catch-22 of women's vulnerability—are laid out in a clearcut, understandable, unambiguous way. The unfairness toward Lizzie is all too familiar for many women. Her father doesn't believe her; some women neighbors call her a "little slut"; and after being raped, she's considered fair game by other men in town who weren't in on the initial crime.

In one scene, Asta takes Lizzie swimming in a brook. Lizzie, while inching her way down a sloped rock toward the water, instinctively tries to cover up the bruises on her legs—all part of her shame.

In another scene, Asta is walking Curtis's neighbor Tina home. A car full of boys, barely old enough to drive, follows them, and Asta confronts them. "You wanna give it to us, baby?" one of them mouths smugly at her. With smooth aplomb, Asta answers, "You couldn't cope with me, boys." It is these boys who attack her later. The reality that women must be suspicious even of young boys—because they are learning from the older ones—is clearly shown. Also clear is how even older women are demeaned by the assumed sexual privileges of all males.

The writers were careful not to make *Shame* a "man-hating movie"; Ginborak is an isolated town (and these gang rapes therefore an isolated aberration), and there are two good men characters, Ross and Curtis, who stick by their wife and daughter, respectively. Nevertheless, the portrayal of the assault-minded young men and the fathers who get vicarious pride from their sons' actions is absolutely on the mark. Anyone who has ever been so much as yelled at by a bunch of drunken college boys from a car can feel the authenticity of these swaggering bullies' sexual power trip.

Judging from Asta's clothing, demeanor, and motorcycle, the question

naturally arises as to whether or not she's a lesbian. Lesbianism is, alas, a topic that is tiptoed around in *Shame*, but still you'd have to be pretty dense to miss it. When Asta first gets to town and encounters the local young men they call her "Butch." One asks her, goadingly, if she owns a dress. "Not in your size," she quips. When Asta beats up one of the instigators of the gang in an effort to find out where Lizzie has been taken, he calls Asta a "mad dyke" to discredit her, but it doesn't work. Curtis's assistant tries some gay-baiting, too, in an attempt to get Curtis to believe that Asta is sexually interested in Lizzie, to cover up for his own attempted seduction.

The movie goes out of its way, however, to explicitly say that Asta is straight (and therefore, these accusations about her being a lesbian are false). When Lizzie asks Asta if she has a boyfriend, she says yes, a "long-suffering" one. (Why he is long-suffering, one can only wonder.) It is Asta's bold, independent, self-confident image more than anything else that implies she is a dyke, no matter what she says about a boyfriend back in the big city.

Shame's ending is charged with suspense but it's not a happy one. Nevertheless it, too, feels real, and it sets the women of Ginborak off in the direction of integrity and justice. Judging from the way the audience members were absorbed into the plot of this film, women are hungry for images on the screen that speak to our real life struggles—even if they are set in faraway towns on the other side of the world, we understand their relevance to our lives. We need more of these new kind of heroes in the cinema—heroes we can truly claim for our own. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER *Jorjet Harper* is arts and entertainment editor for 'Outlines,' the Chicago gay and lesbian news journal. She writes fiction and non-fiction.



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REPORT FROM THE FRONT LINES

WOMEN'S MUSIC IN EUROPE

By Rosemary Schonfeld



Sheila Burnett

Jana Runnal & Rosemary Schonfeld/OVA: "It's probably hard for American women to realize that there is no cohesive women's music network in Britain."

It's probably hard for American women to realize that there is no cohesive women's music network in Britain. We have one women's music distributor—Women's Revolutions Per Minute (WRPM), and no women's festivals or network of women producers. Production of women's music usually depends on one woman being prepared to take on the responsibility of organizing a concert or tour, either at a loss or at best for no financial gain. A few American women artists have come to Britain, and as far as we know, we [OVA] are the only British women's band that have toured *as such* in Britain. The Guest Stars toured as a jazz band both when they were all women and when they added a man to their line-up, and they were able to utilize the existing network and circuit of jazz producers, venues, and sources of funding. A few other women jazz musicians have been able to utilize this resource as well.

It is a struggle here for any musician to make a living, and most professional musicians rely on touring abroad to survive financially. There are a number of women musicians from all areas of music



here, but without any proper network there often is not much communication. We're all busy simply surviving in a basically anti-art society. There was, for several years, an organization called Women in Entertainment, which existed mainly as an information resource for women in the arts; it issued regular newsletters. Sadly, their funding has been completely cut, so even that resource will no longer be available to women.

We toured the Continent extensively in the 1980s. The only reason we have been able to survive is because of the tremendous support we have received from women there, particularly in Germany. We have toured Germany nine times, and the strength and radical nature of the lesbian movement there is inspiring. [See also "Berlin's Lesbenwoche: Notes of a Jewish Lesbian from the U.S. Playing in Germany" by Debbie Fier, November 1986.]

But even so, there are hardly ever two years running where we have dealt with the same producers, both for the tours and for the individual concerts. The producers usually are women who are prepared to do it for no money, simply be-

cause they believe in the importance of promoting women's culture. One year we undertook a workshop tour, which was very successful. There have been quite a few women's festivals, and several lesbian festivals, in different European countries, in many of which we have participated.

OVA has been to the States three times now, and we are touring in the spring of 1989. Last year we appeared at NEWMR. It's hard to describe just how excited we are at being surrounded by such a rich variety of women's music. We really feel pretty starved sometimes here as there is an appalling lack of support and respect for women's culture in Britain. It has definitely deteriorated under the reign of Margaret Thatcher, as more and more women struggle simply to survive. Women's culture takes a back seat to issues such as unemployment, racism, classism, low wages, etc.

We have been fortunate in receiving government funding to run our music resource project for women and girls—the Ova Music Studio—which includes an eight-track recording facility. We are jointly funded by our local Council, which is Labour controlled, and by

Greater London Arts, which had a policy of positive discrimination towards women. All the arts are suffering terribly under Thatcherism, and we received a substantial cut in our funding this year. Many arts organizations are being axed completely, and we are by no means sure of our survival.

Our first visit to the States was in 1980, when we played at the Michigan Festival, and the contrast to what was happening in this country was immense. Sometimes we found the insularity of the Americans difficult to deal with. It's hard for Americans to imagine other cultures unless they have travelled abroad, as the media [in the U.S.] is not at all generous with information about any other country. But we have generally found a lot of support and encouragement from the women's music network there, which we very much appreciate.

Having toured Europe extensively—encountering many different languages, currencies, and cultures — we became aware how crucial it is for women to cross these barriers in order to develop our own culture. We feel greatly enriched by our touring experiences in Europe and the States, both politically and musically. Women's culture is often very different from country to country. The type of musical forms and styles from which women draw are bound to be different depending on factors too numerous to elaborate on here.

We cannot ourselves feel we represent "British" women's music. For one thing, Britain is made up of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, and each country has its own musical tradition.

Irish musical heritage is one of the richest in Europe, and many women musicians there are part of that culture. Unfortunately it is not generally financially viable for most of them to travel to England. There are traditional Scottish women's bands as well. These, like Sprangeen, also draw their music from the Celtic tradition. There is also an invaluable cultural input from Africa, the West Indies, and the East, which we couldn't begin to describe in such a small space. This article only skims the surface of trying to describe what goes on this side of the Atlantic.

We are very much looking forward to touring the States again in spring/summer 1989, and to continuing our cultural exchange. One of the main reasons for setting up our recording studio for women is that we have watched so many women's bands and individual women musicians virtually disappear because of the lack of financial support and decent venues, and we hoped to encourage more women to at least get their music down on tape. We have been quite successful in this respect, but very few women can afford to have albums pressed. We ourselves have learned the art of producing high quality recordings on a budget of between 2000-4000 pounds. More women, at least, are releasing their own cassettes. Unfortunately very little of all this filters through to the States.

More of you will just have to come over here and hear for yourselves! ●

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Rosemary Schonfeld is half of the duo OVA. They can be reached at Highgate Newton Community Centre, 25 Bertram St., London, N19 5DQ, England. (01) 281-2528.*

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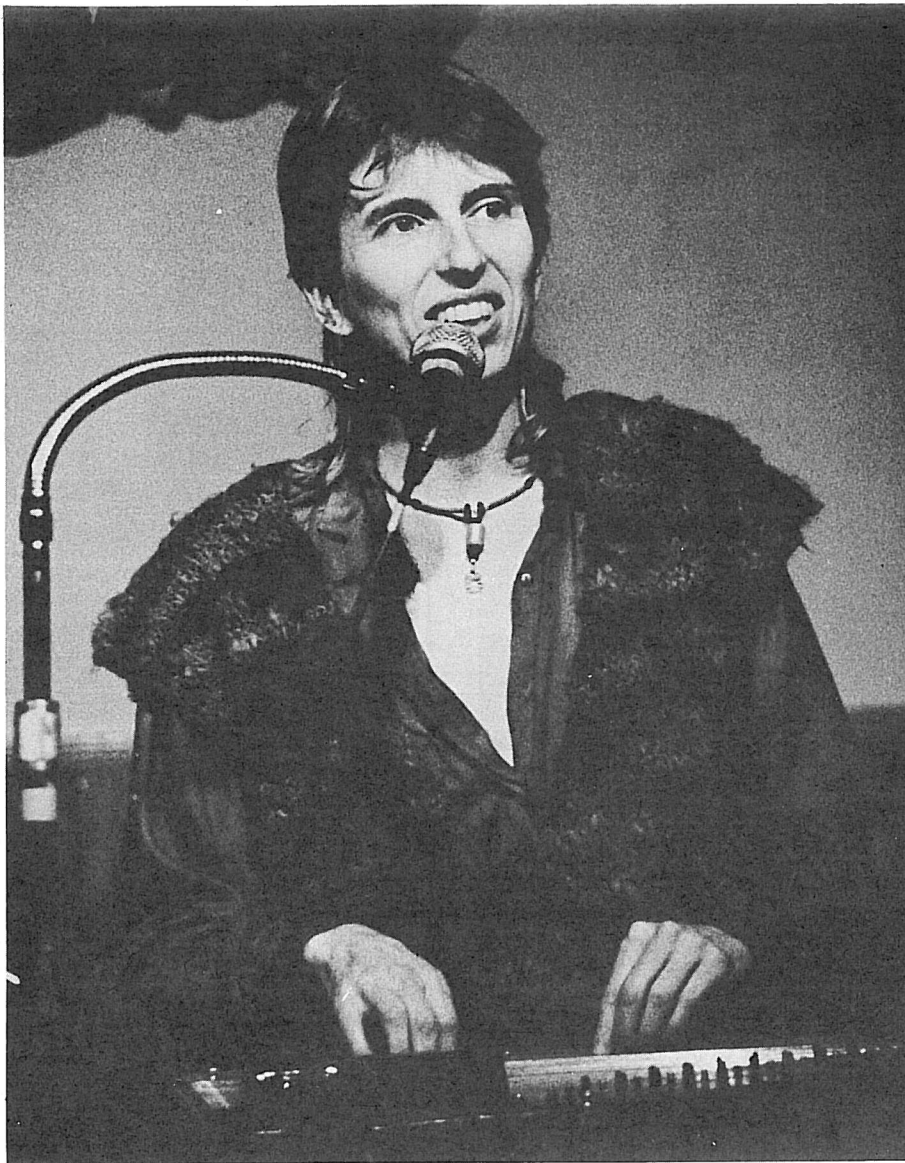
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Jul Dunn

A GENTLE SPIRIT, A GREAT STRENGTH

KAREN BETH

By BarBara Ann Harris

Karen Beth has always been a singer; she says singing means everything to her. "It's who I am. It comes through me like energy coming through the earth up into a tree. Singing is freedom, expression, emotion, communication, joy, love, passion, and power."

Early on, at the start of her musical journey, Karen made the conscious decision to use her music to bring comfort and joy to people, rather than adding to their sorrow and pain. Through the many

turns of her recording/performing journey, she has remained true to her vision. Now with the release of her fifth recording, *To Each One of Us*, Karen has the opportunity to share her vision with a growing audience. [Hear Karen on the stereo soundsheet in this issue of *HOT WIRE*.]

Karen's first instruments were those of voice and toy piano. At age seven she moved onto a real piano, and then to the guitar by the time she was twelve. The guitar was borrowed from her father who

was taking lessons at the time. After the guitar came the banjo, and she's also played bass on and off for years. The accordion was to follow, inspired by The Band's Garth Hudson and Roxy Dawn, a Woodstock-based musician whom Karen heard play one night. "She knocked my socks off," says Karen, "and I immediately decided that I wanted to play one too!"

Next came the zither, which she describes as "a mutated autoharp." She removed the traditional chord bars, enabling her to play however she wanted. The kalimba, an African instrument, entered her life as a gift from her parents. Karen says that anything she likes the sound of, she wants to play. "I'm only limited by the hauling capacity of my car. I'm considering getting a harp next—not to mention all sorts of hand percussion instruments. Guess I'll have to get a U-Haul."

When pressed to define her music, Karen smiles and replies, "Let's call it 'through the cracks' music. It's not pure folk music, it's not rock & roll, it's definitely not opera, and it's certainly not jazz."

Karen's music is both woman-identified and spiritual. "Woman-identified," she says, is about "becoming aware of our strengths as women. It's an awakening within ourselves that says we can do anything we desire to do. It's learning about our foremothers. It's creating women's culture. It's women loving women and avowing our right to do so." The lyrics of the song "Womanspirit Rising" speak of the strength of being woman:

*i am woman
i know the power of my spirit
my spirit will guide me
i am guided
i trust in my journey
my journey leads me onward
i am woman*

This song was written during a period of low-female-energy in Karen's life. Being separated from the strength and power of women made her turn inward to seek, find, and bring forth her own female energy. Like an earlier song which proclaimed "I am woman" [recorded by Helen Reddy] it serves as a powerful reminder that there is great strength within and among all women. While singing of womanstrength and womanspirit, Karen also sings of the joy found in women loving women.

Many women have felt inspired and renewed by reading *Patience and Sarah*, Isabel Miller's tender tale of two women loving each other in the early 19th century. Karen wrote the first verse of a song

and then put it aside, but after reading *Patience and Sarah*, the rest of the song flowed along, inspired by the characters and story.

*they left behind families
where they'd been beaten and scorned
for their love so beautiful
they knew they'd done no wrong
with proud hearts and steady hands
they set out on their own
into the wild world they went
to find themselves a home*

Karen's music is also spiritual. "Spirituality is honoring the Self," she says. "It's listening to the voice that answers our questions and guides us on our journeys. Spirituality is behaving in ways that honor ourselves, each other, the planet and her inhabitants. When we feel and give joy; when we help another being; when we wash our dishes in a conscious way we are being spiritual. Spirituality is life-affirming, nourishing. It is taking in and giving back. It spirals; it weaves."

"To Each One of Us," the title song of her new recording, summarizes much that Karen wishes to say about life. It holds her philosophy, her belief that each one of us has a purpose. "We're alive for a reason," she says. "Any one of us would be missed if she wasn't here at this particular moment."

*to each one of us a purpose
and I say turn turn turn
to each one a guiding spirit
open and turn turn turn
to each one a point of power
feel it and turn turn turn
to each one a darkest hour
know it will turn turn turn*

This song, as many of her others, is filled with nature images. When asked what nature is, Karen replied, "Nature is everything. Nature is it. It's all around us...it is us. It's the pulsing power of life on this planet."

Her connection to nature has been nurtured by living in the heart of New York's Catskill Mountains. It is a place filled with legends and lore, magic and mystery. There is an old Native American legend that says once you've come to the Catskills, you'll always return. Karen moved away for a few years, and true to the legend, returned. "The mountains kept calling me. I kept feeling them, I kept seeing them." She says she's been deeply influenced by those mountains, by the turning of the seasons, the waxing and waning of the moon.

*the wheel it moves, the seasons change
round and round and round again
each time it is different
and never the same
and the moon waxes, the moon she wanes
the moon waxes, the moon she wanes*

The moon appears time and again in the songs of Karen Beth. "Full Moonlight Dance" is a four-line chant that has found its way into women's communities around the country. This song has been recorded by Libana, the Boston-based women's choral group, and the British duo Ova [see article on page 26]. Karen says she is "honored and thrilled" when someone sings one of her songs—"I love the subtle changes that occur as the singer makes it her own." Whether sung by many at a festival, by some in a ritual, or by one to the sky, it is joyous celebration of life and living:

*under the full moonlight we dance
spirits dance we dance
joining hands we dance
joining souls rejoice!*

While Karen's vision is to "bring comfort and joy to people," she acknowledges that some songs on *To Each One of Us* were strongly influenced by having some "serious hurts" in her life. "Taking You With Me" rose from the remains of such a hurt. At first Karen hesitated to include the song, wondering if it fit with the overall tone of the recording. Time and a friend caused her to change her

mind. "After writing many sad, angry, hurt songs, I finally came to a place of letting go and healing...there's a lot of love in this song."

There is a tapestry of gentle spirit and great strength woven throughout Karen Beth's living and performing. She says, "I appreciate my audiences so much. I am honored that people want to come and share my life with me, share my thoughts. It's very special, very tender."

I've been to several of Karen's concerts and each time she said farewell with a gentle goodbye song, "Into the Glory."

*know your uniqueness
love what you've been given
and you'll give it back tenfold
in your loving and living
may your hearts be open
may your hands be healing
may your feet step to the music
of the planets reeling*

Spending time with Karen is like taking a long walk in the country. One experiences such strength and spirit that one returns renewed, wanting to share that joy. May her musical journey continue—weaving together the threads of womanstrength, womanlove, and those of the spiritual into the voice that is uniquely Karen Beth. ●

ABOUT THE WRITER BarBara Harris is a writer of fanciful stories and a pre-med student. She lives with her dog Chyna in northern New York State.

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THE RETURN OF THE HAMMER AND ITS SEQUEL LESBIAN MUSICAL THEATER

By Friends of the Hammer

In Search of the Hammer and *The Return of the Hammer*, two rollicking lesbian musicals written by Cappy Kotz and Phrin Prickett, were developed and performed by Front Room Theatre Guild, a lesbian feminist theatre group that flourished in Seattle in the 1980s under the inspiration and general direction of Patricia Van Kirk.

In Search of the Hammer, directed by Van Kirk with musical direction by Yolande Adams, was performed with a cast of twenty-nine as an epic comic book—with a twelve foot, eight page, wheel mounted "comic book" by Artemis Bona Dea serving as the scenic backdrop. *The Return of the Hammer*, with a cast of fifteen, was given a mystical fantasy rendition by director Patty Contaxis, with the bridge between worlds played by a refrigerator. Both plays featured choreography by Carla Corrado and Kathie McCarthy.

The musicals played to packed audiences in the fall of 1983 and spring of 1985. In January of 1988 members of the original casts began the nine month process of recording the music to these two shows in a sixteen track sound studio. Now the tape which captures all the spirit of the original performances is available.

Five years ago in Seattle, Front Room Theatre was a small company that performed in various living rooms around town. In seeking new material, the director, Patricia Van Kirk, put out a plea for scripts. Cappy Kotz was one of those who responded, and in collaboration for the first time with composer Phrin Prickett, a full scale lesbian musical—*In Search of the Hammer*—came about. Front Room, to accommodate the cast of thousands, moved out of the front room and onto the full scale stage.

In Search of the Hammer is an adventure story, with the Three Mustbequeers—Thunder, Butchina, and Toughie—deciding they will go to Washington D.C. and rescue The Hammer, an important archeological artifact dating from the ancient matriarchies discovered by Mary Femrite and crew. When President Reagan hears of its ancient values, he immediately appropriates it and claims it for all Mankind as a symbol of male power.

The Trio is set on getting The Ham-

mer back—and on being heroes; Constance Diehard, on the other hand, insists that the mission must be a collective matter, that committees should be formed to plan the best approach. The Trio take off on their motorcycles undeterred, and the play chronicles their adventures on the way, including helping LesbeAnne come out to her parents; meeting up with some more political types and Toughie's infatuation with one of them; then meeting Mary Femrite and the final blow to their Butch sense of glory: in order to rescue The Hammer from the People's Ball where it will be presented by the president, they must don evening gowns. It takes Mary Femrite singing "Pants Don't Make the Amazon" [the soundsheet cut in this issue of *HOT WIRE*] to convince the Trio that it doesn't matter what they're wearing, just as long as The Hammer is retrieved—which, in the end, it is indeed, due to both the heroic efforts of our Trio and the organization of Constance Diehard.

The play was a huge success, and two years later the Kotz/Prickett team came up with a sequel, *The Return of the Hammer*, another musical set in the future. Bigor, Skip, and Pec are descendents of the first Trio. In their time, The Hammer resides in Hammer Hall, and is a kind of energy restorer to lesbians far and wide.

One dismal day it disappears, and the current Trio decide to go after it by following a procedure from the Hammer Manual, though no one knows if it works or not. They get whisked into outer space where The Band—a group of fat women who are guides for the Earthbounders—lives. The Earthbounders are confused and frightened, but they quickly settle into a feeling of security when taken in by The Band—at least until they are attacked by another roving band, The Voices. The Voices jeer and point and mock; they want the Earthbounder's Hammer and won't let up, even when the Earthbounders protest they don't have it.

Meanwhile, on Earth, Skip's girlfriend Gurlun meets up with FG, the Fairy Godmother, who has The Hammer! Gurlun goes after the Trio to let them know, but when she finds them, they are too traumatized by The Voices to hear

anything but what seems to be their inevitable downfall. The play culminates a battle during which the Earthbounders fortified by The Band, realize they have The Hammer after all—that it is nothing more than their own self-confidence. And even the snively, nas Voices join in singing "Sweet Success."

The idea of the Hammer and the Three Mustbequeers came about one evening when Cappy, Ann Rector, and Carla Johnson—who would later become Butchina, Thunder, and Toughie theatrical fame—were fancying themselves as brave and swashbuckling adventures. In telling themselves of their own heroic deeds, Ann, a construction worker boasted of rescuing a hammer—symbol of ancient womanal power—from the ve drawer of Reagan's desk in the Oval Office. Writer Kotz recognized a good story when she heard one, and took it from there!

It seemed at that point that The Hammer was a bit nonsensical; however, long after the lights had gone down on the last performance of the first Hammer play, Phrin was reading about the discovery of certain real live archeological artifacts from the Paleolithic era. Long bones found in many Paleolithic dig sites were engraved with repetitive markings and pictures of animals. It was interesting to note that there were two camps in the scientific community regarding the interpretation of these engravings. One group claimed that these carved bones (which they dubbed the "baton de commandement" after a baton carried by French military officers) were carved by man the hunter and carried into the hunt as a symbol of male power. Another more ridiculous camp argued that it was much more obviously a feminine instrument of measurement, used by women to measure the cycles of the moon and the periodic cycle of menstruation, useful in predicting the due date of the baby, that it was in fact the very origins of notation, measurement, and science that would culminate in the megalithic astronomy of Stonehenge.

Well, perhaps The Hammer was more historically accurate object than was originally supposed.

In the writing of the sequel, The

Hammer became a symbol of self-acceptance and self-confidence. Since accepting our bodies is one of the scariest things we all face in coming to accept ourselves, and because some of our culture's most overt woman-hating is expressed in the way we treat fat women, writer Kotz felt that a very matriarchal band of fine fat amazons would be just the thing to symbolize the acceptance of the rounder, softer, more fe-

live—though not recorded to last, as Fabiola Rodriguez, who'd been involved with Front Room Theatre, discovered about a year and a half ago. She called Phrin in a panic. "My tape's wearing out!" she exclaimed, and right then and there took on the task of raising the funds to produce The Hammer tape in a recording studio.

To Phrin, the Goddess Herself

remember with fondness the torrid atmosphere backstage, which was from all reports quite a hotbed of flirtation where many a heart was aflutter, and not only from stage fright. ●

Tapes with 'In Search of the Hammer' on one side and 'The Return of the Hammer' on the other can be obtained by sending \$10 to Friends of the Hammer, 5445 26th Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98106.



The Three Mustbequeers: Butchina (Cappy Kotz), Thunder (Ann Rector), Toughie (Carla Johnson).



Crew and directors of *In Search of the Hammer*, 1983.

male parts of ourselves that we are all taught to loathe. While writing the play, Kotz asked a group of fat women, each having a required 200 pounds or more to her credit, to get together to move and improv and just be so that she could gather inspiration for The Band (*Return of the Hammer*). After five sessions together this Mother Band closed by celebrating a full moon in the country, where—in various states of nudity—they sang long and exuberantly around a campfire and then fell asleep in a sisterly pile in a nearby teepee.

The band in its seven-member on-stage incarnation had three members of the original Mother Band. Fat turned out to indeed be a very challenging symbol. The whole issue evoked many emotions long before the first performance; as one fat activist in The Band put it, she had never been around so many women on diets in her whole life. With a brave Patty Contaxis in charge of this cauldron of energy, the brew bubbled into a fine piece of theatre.

When the two musicals were over, there were memories, of course, and some photos, as well as a tape or two recorded

seemed to be in charge of producing the tape. Fabiola kept coming up with money just as the bills were due; three excellent musicians volunteered their considerable skills and talents, and created together some very exciting instrumental arrangements; almost all of the singers of solos from the original casts were willing to lend time and energy; and everyone came through again and again with the very best of themselves and their creativity. As musical director Susan Talbot put it, "It was such a collaborative, intuitive co-creation, a building of energy, trust, and magic. I kept being surprised that it was working, since there was no one person acting as director and producer. Then I started to trust the process so that by the end I really accepted that it would work."

When asked what stood out most for them, several women involved in these projects seemed to mention the same themes: the thrill of working with so much talent, of singing very lesbian songs, songs that were much more deeply lesbian than just on the level of pronouns, of preserving lesbian culture, of being involved in such a successfully cooperative effort from and of and for and by lesbians. And last but not least, many seemed to

ABOUT THE WRITERS: This article was yet another collective effort by those Friends of the Hammer, Fabiola Rodriguez, Cappy Kötz, and Phrin Prickett.

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15th Anniversary Bash OLIVIA RECORDS AT CARNEGIE HALL

By Jorjet Harper

It was certainly an Event with a capital E, as lesbians from all over the country converged on New York City's famed Carnegie Hall for a concert of women's music, and regrouped later that night at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on Park Avenue for a party in the hotel's elegant Grand Ballroom.

The occasion was Olivia Record's 15th anniversary, a post-Thanksgiving Day bash that was the crowning jewel in the series of anniversary concerts Olivia held in major U.S. cities during 1988.

For lesbian activists, the word "fundraiser" usually conjures up modest images of auctions, bake sales, potlucks, and benefits with local amateur musicians. The Olivia concert and ball had the flavor of a real charity ball, where the upper crust can display their glitter without guilt, because it's for a good cause. *This* cause, at least, was one of our own: raising money for the company that has produced music by and for lesbians for a decade and a half.

Before the show began, the lobby of the landmark concert hall was totally jammed with women in what comic Kate Clinton, the evening's emcee, termed "lesbian gridlock." From flashy sequins to demure black velvet, the crowd was all dyked out, overwhelmingly dressed in formal wear, evening gowns, and tuxedos, with a smattering of street clothes--demonstrating that lesbians, too, can be ostentatious and clothes-conscious when the occasion dictates. "It's so rare lesbians have a chance to *really* dress up," said one diamond-bedecked woman in a deep blue strapless dress.

It was largely an older crowd--not surprising, with ticket prices ranging from \$100 sponsor's tickets on the main floor to \$25 in the stratosphere of the upper balcony. The nostalgia level was high in the sold-out 2800-seat hall, certainly because these songs have so much history for some women there, and perhaps because many of them had made the same pilgrimage five years ago, for the Olivia's 10th Anniversary celebration featuring Meg Christian and Cris Williamson.

Olivia president Judy Dlugacz opened the evening with a brief history of Olivia Records, which she said started with "four thousand dollars and a lot of what New Yorkers call *chutzpah*." [See "If It Weren't For The Music The History of Olivia Records," July 1988 and January 1989 *HOT WIRE*.] Dlugacz introduced Clinton, the perfect choice for emcee, who congratulated the audience for "coming out" despite the "Hetero Holiday Coma" that envelops us between Thanksgiving and the end of December. Clinton's comedy routines provided an explicit lesbian touch to the evening.

Opening the first set was Deidre McCalla, who sang several songs from her Olivia Albums, *Don't Doubt It* and *With A Little Luck*. Country-style singer Nancy Vogl, a founding member of the Berkeley Women's Music Collective, followed. "We never in 1974 thought we would be feminist memorabilia," she said. Dianne Davidson--backed by bassist Lee Maples and the power guitar of Nina Gerber--wowed the crowd and set the audience leaping with applause for her steamrolling voice and hot blues tunes.

Tret Fure and Band opened the second set. Tret was in fine form, dressed in dayglo painted tights and bright red boots, backed by Cris Williamson wearing a zebra striped jacket, and the talented bassist Carrie Barton. Tret sang her pensive "That

Side of the Moon is Too Dark," dedicating it to "all of you who kept the faith in the music all these years." Lucie Blue Tremblay--charming as always, wearing blue tails--also dedicated a song to "the audience and all our 'sweet ones,'" and talked about the im-



Kate Clinton

Toni Armstrong, Jr.



Cris Williamson

Toni Armstrong, Jr.

portance of the music that encouraged women to "get out of the cupboard." She did a medley of songs on the piano dedicated to Meg Christian.

The evening's headliner was of course Cris Williamson, who has been with Olivia since its very beginning and is still an active performing artist. Cris reappeared for her own set in a new costume--tails and diamonds. Her voice was powerful and smooth, and she sang her heart out at the piano in a medley of some of her best known songs, with Tret singing very sweet harmony. They were joined again by Carrie Barton on bass and Cam Davis on drums. Cris closed with "Waterfall" and "Come Hell or High Water," and everyone linked arms, swaying, and singing along at the finale, "And we can sing for a long long time...."

Despite the congratulatory good feeling, the Ghost of Christian's Past--Meg's, that is, whose departure from women's music has left a palpable absence--seemed to hover over the proceedings. And the short sets were self contained, a kind of sampler of each artist's work. No songs were written especially for the occasion, and there was probably nothing any fan of women's music had not heard before--especially if fans have seen these musicians do sets at women's music festivals. Even the patter between songs was familiar in some portions of this show.

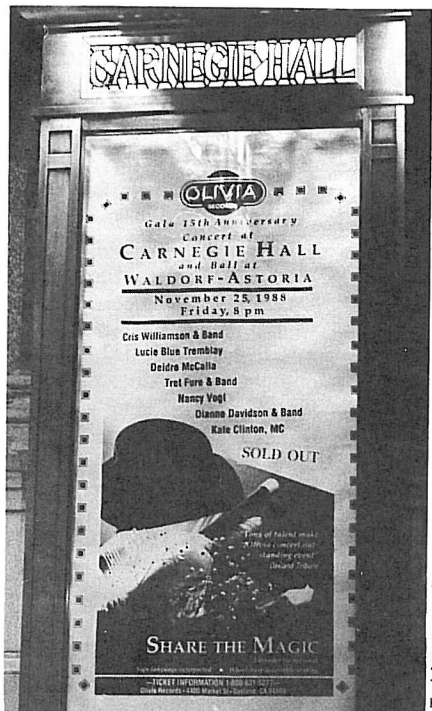
Nevertheless, as the crowd poured out onto West 57th Street, they were clearly uplifted by the show, happy, and more than ready to party. One of the biggest thrills of the evening was the brisk twelve block walk from Carnegie Hall to the Waldorf. Wave after wave of lesbians dressed to the nines saluted passersby who did doubletakes when they noticed that both halves of these many handsome couples were female.

The aura of conspicuous consumption resumed at the Waldorf Grand Ballroom, where 1500 women (and maybe five or six men) paid \$40 a head to cram into the gorgeous ultra-posh space with its sizeable stage, large dance floor, and two levels of balconies. Dianne Davidson's band and Kate Clinton performed, and then the airwaves were taken over by some very un-women's music (Top 40 mainstream tunes, mostly with vocals by women) that was nevertheless eminently danceable. Drinks were available at prices to match the surroundings: \$4.50 for a coke, \$5 for glass of white wine, and on up. On the other hand, seeing the changes on straight hotel guests' faces as dozens of dazzling dykes milled around the Waldorf lobby was *priceless*.

The energetic partying went on till about 3:30 a.m., the revelers gallivanting around in their finery through the elaborately chandeliered, mirrored hallways. As parties go, the Gala Ball for Olivia's 15th was an unqualified blast.

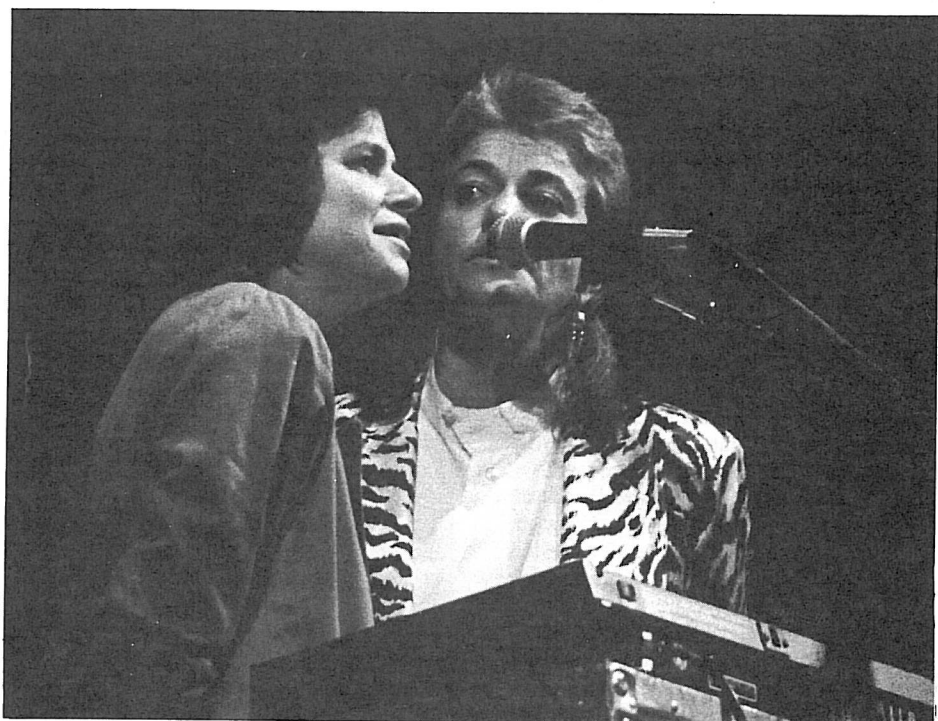
According to Olivia spokesperson Karen Hester, the concert and ball were both solid successes financially for the company. Would Olivia consider another party at the Waldorf Grand Ballroom? "Maybe for our 20th," said Hester. ●

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



Olivia 15th Anniversary Concert

Toni Armstrong, Jr.



Tret Fure and Cris Williamson

Toni Armstrong, Jr.



Lucie Blue Tremblay

Toni Armstrong, Jr.



Deidre McCalla

Toni Armstrong, Jr.



Nancy Vogl

Toni Armstrong, Jr.



Nina Gerber and Dianne Davidson

Toni Armstrong, Jr.

EACH IN HER GENERATION

BERNICE & TOSHI REAGON

By Rena Yount

Bernice Johnson Reagon is a powerful woman, impressive in her presence and in her achievements. She has an air of steadiness, determination, sometimes impatience; there is a lot to be done.

She was a member of the Freedom Singers, founded in 1961, who performed for civil rights demonstrations all over the South, as well as being a field secretary for the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, whose members were front-line troops of the movement at a time when that work could get a person killed.

As a political activist and spokesperson as well as musician, Bernice Johnson Reagon is quite an act to follow. Her political and personal identity took shape in the Civil Rights movement, where cultural expression and social protest were inextricably linked. "It was out of that experience," she says now, "that I chose to be who I am."

She is the founder of Sweet Honey In The Rock, the internationally renowned Black women's singing ensemble whose blend of musical beauty, poetry, and political awareness have won them a dedicated following in the progressive, Black, and women's communities [see "Sweet Honey In The Rock," March 1985 *HOT WIRE*]. To have kept Sweet Honey going for fifteen years at such a level of quality would have been a formidable achievement by itself. In the meantime, Bernice also developed the Smithsonian Institution's Program in Black American Culture and directed it from 1977 to 1988. She is now a curator at the Museum of American History, a position that will give her more time for her research on Black American culture and oral traditions. She has four solo albums; she has written; she has raised two children; she has produced concerts and records. She is a woman of apparently endless energy and deep political commitment.

Toshi Reagon, at 24, is a young musician working hard at building her own career. She has an engaging personality and a many-textured voice that can range from a strident rock sound to a velvety whisper. She has played at all of the major women's music festivals, at colleges and clubs all over the country, and at folk festivals such as Winnipeg and the Clear-

water Hudson Revival. She recently toured Spain with Casselberry-DuPreé.

Together, Toshi and Bernice present the kind of image of mother and daughter that feminists are deeply attracted to. Both dynamic women, both gifted musicians, they have different styles—yet share a sense of common values and common heritage. Mother and daughter have performed on the same stages and have worked together in other ways. Bernice critiqued the songs for Toshi's forthcoming album; Toshi assisted Bernice in producing two Sweet Honey albums.

Toshi grew up with music of all kinds. Her mother, she says, took her everywhere. "I saw a lot of great musicians," Toshi says. "I saw a lot of great concerts. It's really important for me now to have those memories." Still, her tastes were her own from the start. "I listened to a lot of rock & roll, and that's how I started getting into music." She says she was also strongly influenced by folk music, and describes her current style as a "folk-rock-R&B style of singing."

Though her style differs from her mother's, Toshi has a sense of carrying on a musical heritage. In separate interviews, she and Bernice both mentioned the first time Bernice heard music that Toshi was working on for a video on AIDS. Toshi says, smiling, "I wanted to do something like I thought Mom would do. She listened to it and said, 'You got it! You got the Southwest Georgia sound!'"

Bernice recalls, "I said, 'Toshi! You are finally able to harmonize!' And I was responding to the kind of harmony which is not present in Toshi's earlier music. These new pieces were rich with those kind of rolling, sliding bluesy lines. And I was just so pleased. She said, 'Ma, I didn't even go to church every Sunday in Southwest Georgia, and you mean I can hear the harmonies?'"

"It was funny," Toshi says. "But I was really happy, because it means that she's taken it from these people and she's passed it on to me, and I'll pass it on to my kids, and it'll be around as long as we are—which is real cool."

According to Bernice, daughter has musically influenced mother as well. "I would know nothing about contemporary

folk, or people like Sting or U2, if Toshi was not saying 'this group does this,' and 'do you know this person?' and 'U2 came to a Sweet Honey concert—wow!' So she's very influential as a resource. Her perspective is not mine, so when we collaborate we are able to support each other in areas where we need support."

Toshi had a say in the arrangement of the title song on Bernice's most recent solo album, *River of Life*. "I was singing it as I heard it in my head—it was one line," says Bernice. "I thought it sounded really good. Toshi said, 'Aren't you going to do anything else with it? I want you to put a bass line on it.'" Bernice decided she could hear that—a slapping bass line. Toshi had further suggestions as well—and on the record, the harmonies are there, rich and evocative. "So the way *River of Life* came out had to do with Toshi pushing me," says Bernice.

Their relationship has not always been smooth. "We've had a very normal mother-daughter relationship," Toshi says. "It's been hard at times. We had major disagreements, and major fights, and major *everything*."

"There are stages where you fight with your mother," Bernice acknowledges. "If you don't grow up you can continue all your life, but it's useless. And Toshi's so strong, I don't think I would have survived fighting with her long. The years we fought were so intense." Then she laughs. "So I gave it up as soon as I could."

Is it hard working together, two strong-willed women with a family history behind them? "No," Toshi says, "strong-willed women work well together when each is confident enough in herself that they don't have to be defensive." Clearly, here, confidence is balanced by mutual respect as well as affection. Toshi says of Bernice, "She's an incredible musician. She understands voices better than I do, she understands how they work. I'm much more focused on instruments. And she even has an edge over me in that, because she understands how a sound works, which I don't quite get yet. And she's a standard; I'll write something and I'll know that I couldn't get it past her. So I go and I work on it and I work on it un-

til I feel it's something I could have her listen to."

Mother and daughter have built and nurtured their working connection as artists. "When it comes to music," Bernice says, "I've always spoken to Toshi not as a mother but as a senior in the field. I told her, 'do this with your voice,' or 'don't try that.' I told her you have to learn to produce yourself, you can't sit around and wait to be discovered. That counsel is

don't deal a lot with terminology, and I don't see 'feminism,' necessarily, as the term that's big enough to cover all of the radical women I see moving politically and socially during these times. But I feel very compatible with most of what I see happening with women who call themselves 'feminist,'" she says. "I prefer to talk about 'radical women organizing to redefine their lives,' and to cast it so that it includes radical women who cannot

There are songs about South Africa and about workplace hazards, love songs, traditional gospel, and hymns to movement: "We who believe in freedom cannot rest...until it comes." It is a rich mixture and one that draws a diverse audience. It is woven together by the lives and concerns of the five black women singing on stage, plus their ASL interpreter.

When Toshi describes herself politically it has a different sound, but many of the underlying themes are the same. Toshi's sense of connection with the women's community is strong and affectionate. "I love the women's community. And it treats me very, very well," she says. "I love playing at the festivals; I love the communication; I consider myself a part of the community."

She has assumed from the start that she will "cross over" to many different audiences. This is partly dictated by her desire to support herself as a musician, and the knowledge that the women's community by itself can support very few careers. And it's also a matter of speaking her piece wherever she can. Toshi does not believe that crossover in itself should be an issue. Women worry that artists will change their values, their message; that when someone crosses over, the feminist community loses them.

"I don't mess around with that," Toshi says. "I sing the same stuff that I would sing for anybody, anyplace. It's the same song. The same sound. Whoever wants to hear it, can."

"The women's community is a mostly white lesbian community," Toshi observes. "The people I want to communicate with go on beyond that. The change that I need to have happen in the world that I live in needs to happen from that community *and* from other communities."

Toshi and Bernice are fortunate in having a solidarity with each other that many of us don't find within our blood families. But they also reflect something larger, a generational continuity in which we are all involved. After nearly thirty years of work as a politically-conscious artist, Bernice says, "Sometimes it's a high time and there are many voices. And there are other times when things are very thin and you don't feel like you have a lot of company. But I have never as an artist been alone. There have always been those older than me and those younger than me." That sense of continuity gives powerful sustenance. And whether allies are many or few, the task remains the same.

continued on page 39

ABOUT THE WRITER: 'HOT WIRE' contributing writer *Rena Yount* writes poetry, and short stories as well.



Roland Freeman

Bernice and Toshi Reagon Dynamic women and gifted musicians, they have different styles, yet share a sense of common values and common heritage.

counsel I would give any young singer. And when she speaks to me musically, she does not speak to me as her mother. She speaks to me as a musician who has another range of vision. I sometimes look at her and think, hmmm...it's okay if I die now. She's a very powerful person. And she is not in my generation. I can see the continuity, but it's in the voice of *her* generation. It's a voice I could not speak. She makes me feel very optimistic about the future."

Like a number of other women of color, Bernice has not wholeheartedly embraced the term "feminist." She speaks about this issue thoughtfully and with care.

"I am a radical Black woman living in these times, and therefore a part of the overall movement of women organizing to redefine the space we have to live in. Many of these women--but not all--call themselves 'feminist.' As far as I'm concerned, you have to be a radical woman. I

think of who they are without thinking of their children, their brothers, their husbands, their community."

Bernice acknowledges the importance of separation, "that pulling away when you're trying to come to yourself." But she stresses the need for coalition, and for people reaching across boundaries while trying to maintain the integrity of who they are.

This approach--a strong sense of personal identity combined with broad connections--is reflected in *Sweet Honey In The Rock*. The music is specifically Black, drawing on traditional Afro-American choral forms for the compelling rhythms and exhilarating harmonies which are consistently praised by critics. The content of the songs ranges over the whole world. There are songs about women--about civil rights organizer Fanny Lou Hamer, about a Black mother scrubbing floors to send her child to college, about "every woman who ever loved a woman."

A MOTHER-DAUGHTER CONVERSATION ALIX DOBKIN & ADRIAN HOOD

As told to Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Alix Dobkin was born in Manhattan on August 16, 1940. Her long-time involvement in music includes working steadily on the folk circuit since the '60s, and co-owning The Gaslight South folk club in Miami. Her women's music credits include performing and touring since 1973. She has recorded 'Lavender Jane Loves Women' (1973), 'Living With Lesbians' (1976), 'XXAlix' (1980), and 'Never Been Better/These Women' (1986).

Adrian Leighton Hood was born on October 21, 1970 in Manhattan, where she lived with her parents until mother Alix, daughter Adrian, and mother's lover Liza moved to the isolated Schoharie County in the Catskill Mountains in 1974. She lived with her father from age five to age eight, when he remarried and the new family relocated to Woodstock. Her education includes the Quaker boarding school Oakwood, and she currently attends Ulster Community College.

ALIX: My life is so different from your "conventional mom." It has a lot of built-in stresses for both of us. Ever since you've known me, I have been a lesbian; even though I came out when you were a year and a half old, as far as your conscious life, you've never known me to be anything else. I have always felt so positive and wonderful--and still do--about my choice, that I've never felt any shame or embarrassment about it, and I've never felt like I had to apologize or hide it from you. So you were always exposed to a very positive attitude about first of all my being a lesbian, and second of all, I think that my direct relationship with women's culture--the fact that I've been so active in it for the last fifteen years--has been a great plus for us in many years. I'd like to talk about that. I think it gives us a lot that we share. Like Toni Senior and Toni Junior [the Armstrongs--see "Mothers & Daughters," March 1988 *HOT WIRE*], the festivals--Michigan--is our major focus of women's music together, although you do come to concerts...

ADRIAN: Not any more...

ALIX: ...not so much any more, but...the older you get, the less interested you are.

ADRIAN: No, the less time I have.

ALIX: Right, the busier you are. But I think we ought to back up a little bit, because it hasn't always been this easy for you to be at concerts with me--as you recall. Your father, years ago, got very upset first of all about my being a lesbian, second of all about my being a *public* les-

bian, and third about you traveling with me and being visible as my daughter. He felt for a couple of years that I was exploiting you for my own political purposes.

ADRIAN: He didn't want me in women-only space because he did not want me anywhere that he was not allowed to go, where men were not allowed to go. He didn't feel it was good or healthy for me. And then I started dating. And then he wished I was there all the time.

ALIX: I'll never forget four or five years ago when you were just budding into your beautiful, gorgeous self and started seeing boys--your father told me on the phone, "I wish Michigan lasted all summer." I could hardly believe it, because he had been so opposed to your going anywhere with me--you weren't allowed to travel with me, you weren't allowed to appear in concerts with me.

It has been a very positive experience for us, because you always had a very privileged position at women's events, especially concerts or festivals where I was performing. Both of us have a very privileged position in these spaces and situations, we get a lot of extra special perks and attention, so it's not a normal lesbian mother and daughter experience for us. It's been a wonderful thing, and that's been both of our experience in women's culture, we have visibility and recognition.

It's been one of the great pleasures of my life, seriously, that I have been able to participate in building a culture that was accessible to you, and that gave you particularly, and girls your age in general, the choice that we have, this institution of women's culture that you can choose to be in. You've experienced it and you're much richer for it, so I'm pleased that I had something to do with helping create that. That's been a great source of pleasure for me, and it gives me just indescribable pleasure to be at the festival with you and see how you relate to women whom I know and love and think so highly of; to see your independent relationship with them has been a wonderful plus for me.

ADRIAN: This is only recent, though. For so long I would go to these events and I was "Alix's daughter"--that was my title.

But throughout the years I have gotten to know many women, especially at Michigan, and have established wonderful relationships, wonderful friends. I work in the workers' area with women, though some of my best friends don't have anything to do with where I work. I've met most of the women through you, but I've established my own independent relationships with them. We correspond and are in touch throughout the year, and then we see each other at Michigan. And the festival really is probably the most significant thing in our life that ties me into women's music.

ALIX: I think working is a wonderful way to establish relationships with women at Michigan. I also find it so interesting that you are a Deadhead. Do you describe yourself as a Deadhead?

ADRIAN: No.

ALIX: But you're a fan of the Grateful Dead; you go to the concerts, and you love them. It seems to me that there's a great deal of similarity between the communities.

ADRIAN: I love the community. I love being at Michigan and I love being at Grateful Dead shows. It's very similar. We get into our cars with all my best friends and we go on tour, with all the Deadhead paraphernalia. The farthest I've probably gone is seven hours. We stay over in hotels, and it's a community. Everyone is there for the same purpose, because we love the music, we love the atmosphere. The atmosphere is peace and love. People who walk through who don't know what's going on--the older generation, people your age--feel like they're back in the '60s. It's a lot of just hippies and tofu being stir-fried on the street, VW buses everywhere, tie-dyed everywhere. The community is very similar, because everyone really cares about the other people there. I feel extremely safe when I go to Dead shows in that environment, and at Michigan I feel extremely safe. You can walk around by yourself and not have to worry about it because there's people surrounding you all the time and they can be complete strangers but you know, you make eye contact with them and you smile at them and you can say hello and talk to them. That's the way it is at the

festivals and at Dead shows.

ALIX: Do you think you tend maybe to like the Dead because of your background in the music you were raised with, or because of the women's community that you've always been a part of and at home in? Do you think that's had anything to do with your feeling for the Dead?

ADRIAN: I don't know--I started liking them when I was at boarding school--which is also similar to Michigan and the Dead shows, a small community, though I've never made that connection before. But the music I listen to is from your generation--I don't even know what's on the Top 40 charts except Tracy Chapman, and I was listening to her before *Rolling Stone* even knew her name. I really enjoy some women's music--I love Teresa Trull, who's one of my favorite performers, not just in women's music. I enjoy Holly Near.

wonderful performers there that, I can see my friends loving them, going to the concerts and all...

ALIX: One thing that is such a thrill to me at Michigan is to not only walk around with you and talk to women and to hang out with women, but to go to concerts with you now that you really appreciate the quality of the music. Mom used to say that it's the highest form of art, and I agree because nothing unites people in the moment like music does. When we're responding in the same way in the same moment together, it's a very exciting kind of communication.

ADRIAN: Liza [Cowan] and I were talking the other day about when I was younger--I guess around five--and all I used to want was for you and my dad to get back together. I think it's in the back of every child's head who's parents have been divorced. And in a way I still would

it was in some ways maybe even more devastating to you than it was to me, and yet you got through it. You still have a very close and strong relationship with Liza, even through all that separation and difficulty and trauma. It was a catastrophic event for both of us, and you've survived that and come through it, and with my getting together with Denslow and breaking up with her, and having these big changes in your life that you had no control over that you had to react to, and you did. You've learned an awful lot about relationships and an awful lot about life.

ADRIAN: I definitely agree with that. And I really respect it. I respect our living situation right now so much, living with you and Liza with our poor old dog that is older than all of us, and our cats. I'm closest to you and Liza, definitely, out of all twenty of my parents, and to watch the way you react to each other and the way you live together and work together is very special.

ALIX: That's an important point, about growing up in a lesbian subculture.

ADRIAN: Oh, it's different. I've had both.
ALIX: You still have both; you've had them for a number of years. I find that it's a wonderful gift that I'm able to give you, to have this situation where you can see how women can relate to each other, how it's possible. You have a growthful, positive relationship, and also you can compare, because you've got examples of both. I remember when you went to live with your father, you would tell me, "My father never yells at me." Remember that? "My Daddy would never yell at me." And I would say, and Liza would say, "Oh, yeah? Just wait." So it was a great education for you to live with him and then to live with his wife and your step brother--that's a wonderful family, and you're lucky to have them as well.

ADRIAN: Right. I remember thinking, "All I want in life is a *normal family*; I want a mother and I want a father, and I want a sibling and a dog and a white picket fence, and I want us all to live together"--and now that I have it...Oh God! It's so conventional.

ALIX: There were certainly stresses when you were little and lived with Liza and me. People have to understand, this was in a rural, backwoods area--nobody there is even separated let alone divorced--let alone a lesbian.

ADRIAN: They didn't even know what

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Toni Armstrong, Jr. wishes to extend a special greeting to all mother-daughter combos who consciously value keeping their "special relationship" alive and well.*



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Alix Dobkin and her sister Julie with Adrian Hood, together at Michigan 1988.

I love Debbie Fier. There's someone called Alix Dobkin, I think--she's kind of good. And Lucie, Edwina... I love the music. This past year [1988] was actually the first year I wasn't working at Michigan except for odd jobs, and I got to listen to more music there than I have in the past--eight or nine--however many festivals I've been to combined. I loved it. I noticed so many things this year that I never noticed before. The sound, for example, is *outrageous*, it's so good. I've been to a lot of concerts, and their sound is the best, thanks to Myrna Johnston and Shelly Jennings and the other girls that do that. The lighting, the stage, is just great, and the music is really good. They have some

love it if my dad and my mom were married. But then when I lay awake thinking about that, I think, yeah it's a great fantasy, but then Liza wouldn't be in my life, Denny [Brown] wouldn't be in my life; I wouldn't have these relationships, I wouldn't have this perspective on life that I have and this whole other culture that I would never have been exposed to. And I've gained so much from it.

ALIX: Yes, Adrian, I remember you telling me about how you'd learned so much ahead of other kids in relationships when Liza and I were together for six years and you lived with us, and we were a family.

ADRIAN: And we still are.

ALIX: When Liza and I broke up, though,

lesbian *meant*, or Jewish. And from New York City--three Jews...

ALIX:...radicals...

ADRIAN: ...two of whom had their heads shaved, combat boots, overalls that came up to their knees...

ALIX: Our overalls?

ADRIAN: They were floods, Mom. Your pants were always too short for you. And the "I hate men" bumperstickers and "I'm a lesbian" bumperstickers...

ALIX: No, no, no! See, that's to the eyes of the young! That's what it *seemed* like!

ADRIAN: Well, it seemed like that to *them*. I mean, you were not ashamed, you were not hiding...

ALIX: ...*eau contraire!*

ADRIAN: My kindergarten teacher hated me, she hated me and it had to have been because of you. I remember one time I got sick on the school bus on the way to school and my bus driver--I had two bus drivers, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and they were the only people at that whole school who liked me...

ALIX:...and they were really the only ones who ever saw us!

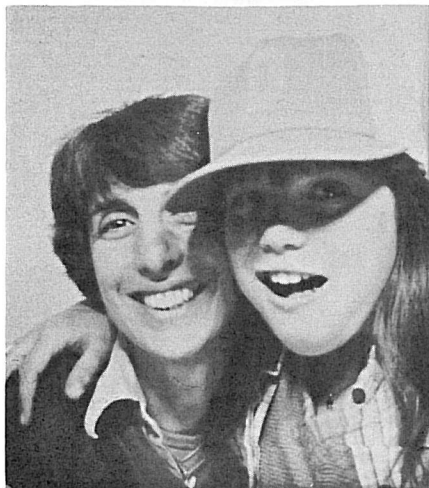
ADRIAN:...my bus driver brings me into the classroom, and he tells my teacher, I don't remember what her name was...

ALIX:...Miss Horrible...

ADRIAN:...*Mrs.* Horrible--no that wasn't her name--anyway, I got sick, and all she said was "So?" Meanwhile, here I am this five-year-old kid who just threw up all over the school bus, who's deathly ill, and I remember you and Liza coming to pick me up at school, and was I embarrassed--you had on the work boots and the shaved heads, and Liza probably had her broken nose and the black eye--I remember walking through the hall and it was just very, *very* hard. All I wanted was a normal family.

ALIX: And all I wanted was not to have to be involved in a straight community, and having a kid means you *have* to be involved in that community. I had to be a parent, I had to interact with other parents, I had to interact with all kinds of different people I would no more pick out than the man in the moon. It was a great stress for both of us, because it brought elements into our lives that were very difficult. And we did not have a good time with each other. It was a very hard, isolated time. You had hardly any friends, and any kids lived far away, I had to drive you, it was a big production for you to get to play with friends, so you didn't really have all that many social resources at all. That left you dependent on us. And you know, we were *lesbian separatists*--this is not your ideal. I mean, we were as nice as could be to you, I certainly did as much as I could, but we were at each

other's throats all the time. I don't know if you remember this, but it was a constant battle between us. You were a very willful child and I'm a very willful individual too. The situation didn't suit us, and that's why you went to live with your father. We were at the end of our rope. Sam offered to take you in New York, and you went to live with him.



Alix and Adrian in earlier days.

That was a very painful, nightmarish experience for me in many ways. You can speak for yourself. But for me, I was ridden with guilt, wondering had I done something wrong, and was this the right thing to do. But I knew we couldn't continue it the way it had been going--it was just too hard. And so I tried to reconcile it, and we saw each other every two weeks--and that was a nightmare. It took us a number of years to get to the point where we could see each other every week. When I think back to how bad it was, it blows me away...the contrast is stunning. I remember in 1978 when you were eight years old, Adrian, we were only seeing each other every couple of weeks, and our parting scenes were tragic, heart-rending drama-ramas. I remem-

ber saying, "I can't imagine how it will ever be good with us; I can't imagine how we could ever have a good life together, how this could ever work out." Yet it has, more than I could ever have dreamed. Which isn't to say we don't have our problems, we do; we have our conflicts of course, but I'm *very* proud of you, and *very* pleased with how you've turned out, and I know that you're a wonderful feminist and you love women and you are loyal and devoted and you have really good values and you stick up for yourself.

ADRIAN: I'm proud of you, too. I am. I have my wishes--I wish you weren't as out as you are; I wish that being a lesbian, which is something I respect, wasn't such a *major* part of your life--that it wasn't your career, your lifestyle, your everything. That is often hard. And I wish that there were more...I'm not even sure exactly what I wish that there was, but ...you being on the road a lot is hard, though it was much harder when I was younger. Before I went to boarding school we used to have the hardest times when you'd go away. When I first lived with my dad I remember our phone conversations, which just left me crying and crying. When we're separated it's very hard for me. And even now, when you go on the road I get so sad. It's a very difficult life. Yeah, there's a lot of wonderful aspects of it, but it's very, very hard. It's hard when someone says, "What does your mother do?" If it's someone that I can't tell you're a lesbian, well, "She's a folksinger..." "Oh really? Does she perform ever?" It's hard. You are a lesbian and there's no way of hiding it.

ALIX: That's right, you're stuck with it. And you're straight. I remember a letter that you wrote to me a couple of years ago--do you remember that letter? When you said that you had been worried that I wouldn't love you as much if you were heterosexual? You wrote me a beautiful letter, and you said that you realized that I would love you no matter who you were or what choices you made for your life, that you really believed it.

ADRIAN: Do you still have it?

ALIX: Yes, of course--it's a very beautiful letter. You realized that I would love you even if you weren't a lesbian. You know without a doubt that's true.

ADRIAN: Within the past few years, I always felt a little uncomfortable being straight at Michigan. There was this time period when I was a kid, when I was identified as a child, when I was "Alix's daughter," and that's who I was at the festival. But then, when I got to be around fifteen, sixteen--maybe even fourteen--I was looking older, so people started with,

BERNICE/TOSHI from 35

same: "to radiate and register that community of values that I believe in...do it every day until I die. And I try to share the sweetness of living that kind of life. A lot of times the risks are emphasized--how much it might cost, and what you might lose. But not as much is shared about how sweet it feels to be a fighter, or to struggle to live a life that makes real sense to you, that resonates very deep within your center and gives you a stability in the midst of howling winds."

Coming from a woman long immersed in political and cultural changes, these words carry comfort. They remind us that just as "sister" is a word that belongs to us all, we are all both daughters and mothers, finding a way to pass on, in our own generation, in our own voice, what we receive from the ones who have been here longer. ●

ALIX/ADRIAN

continued from previous page

"Oh, maybe she's a lesbian." I was thinking, "Oh-my-god, I'm going to be identified as a lesbian, what am I doing here?" and it would make me nervous a little bit. But now I feel so comfortable--so welcome and so accepted as being straight. It's just wonderful. I've gained so much from my lesbian friends.

ALIX: All my life revolves around lesbian culture--my identity as a professional lesbian, my commitment to lesbian culture and international lesbian culture--and I can't even imagine what my life would be like any more without it. Although I do sometimes wish I could be more in the mainstream just to experience how normal people live, I remember when I did that years ago and I hated it. I couldn't stand it. So I don't know how I'd do in any other profession. All I know is, women's culture has given me a great many gifts, and I feel very privileged and pleased that I can offer them to you and your generation, for you to choose or not to choose, but at least to know that it exists, that you can love women...

ADRIAN: If you weren't involved in the culture, I think it would be much easier and so boring. Even though it's been hard, it's been worth it. It's been worth the struggles that we've gone through. Like I said before, my fantasy used to be to have my mommy and my daddy married and living together--but if I'd gotten it, I would have missed out on so much. ●

**TIME TO GIVE A 'HOT WIRE'
GIFT SUBSCRIPTION**

SOAPBOX from page 6

I wish to commend you on an excellent magazine. What prompted me to subscribe rather than hunt for the next issue...is that women's music and culture helps to affirm who I am, both as a female and a lesbian. It shows me that being a "girl" must never be deterrent to living in my dreams. It provides me with a window to a world that I would normally only catch glimpses of. It gives me a sense of belonging to a community, a family of friends.

I think what the whole scene of women's music has accomplished is wonderful. However, it seems that the emphasis is moving away from the community spirit. The artists and producers must remember that once they've got us hooked we'll stay; thus they should continue to concentrate on drawing more people into the circle. They must also continue to work on developing diversity: women of color, physically challenged, older, different music styles. This trend, which I've seen beginning, is crucial and must be encouraged. I see you as assisting these efforts by presenting ideas and people that are not necessarily always out in front but that must be examined and appreciated.

Deborah Christmas, Manchester Center, Vermont

Here's my payment for the ten copies of the January '89 *HOT WIRE*--plus \$5 (wish it was more) for miscellaneous purposes of your choice. I get plural pleasure for my 30 bucks--first when I read my copy, then again when I give extra copies away to womyn who've never seen it before. I strongly recommend this method of supporting and promoting the magazine to womyn who like to give presents. The response is always satisfying. *HOT WIRE*, please don't perish! Help me out, those of you who are going to spend \$5 on beer or espresso or nachos at the bar tonight--why not buy a friend a *HOT WIRE* instead--while you still can. The lesbian community has a notorious history of "we don't know what we've got 'til it's gone," but we can change this anytime. How about now?

Morgan in Seattle

If you are interested in buying 'HOT WIRE' in quantities of five or more, we are willing to give you a forty percent discount (each magazine costs you \$3 instead of \$5). Send SASE addressed to Marcy or Sylvia for details about bulk orders.

Just to keep *HOT WIRE* readers up to date, our thirty-page section "Women Working Toward a Radical Restructuring of the Communications System" is now a regular feature of the annual *Directory of Women's Media* in the 1989 edition. The previous four-page section entitled "A Radical Feminist Analysis of Mass Media" has been expanded, now also providing a wealth of information, ideas, and analysis. In addition to this significant section, the *Directory* has grown in the number of entries, now 1,873. With 702 women's periodicals worldwide, it's encouraging to see the increasing communication among women dealing with such a wide diversity of issues and concerns. As well as women's media groups, the *Directory* contains the listing of 518 media women and media-concerned women. Each woman tells her par-

ticular interests and resources, providing a helpful networking among all media women, whether in our own media or in mass media. We would like to hear from *HOT WIRE* readers.

Dr. Martha Leslie Allen, Washington, D.C.

The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press has been publishing the 'Directory of Women's Media' annually since 1975. Founded in 1972, WIFP is a non-profit tax-exempt research and publishing organization of women who are "concerned with the expansion and restructuring of the communications system in order for media to be in the hands of all people, not just wealthy and predominantly male media owners." [See article on the Allens (mother and four daughters) in the March 1988 issue of 'HOT WIRE.']

Good idea to include the Michigan Back Stage Pass (January 1989) photos. After hanging around the fringes of the women's music industry, I was familiar with many of the names and faces, but not to put them together. It seems like only the performers get attention, but the backstage people work just as hard to keep our cultural events and institutions going. How about some pictures of the *HOT WIRE* workers doing their thing? I fantasize you're all very cute as well as dedicated. Smart girls are a turn-on.

Kathie Currant, Oakland, California

We'll keep your fantasy life intact for now, Kath. To add our two cents to the imagery, though, many of us are single.

Kay Gardner's "Minstrel Memories" (March 1988 and January 1989) crack me up. I've seen her perform, and her image is one of spiritual, serious, heartfeltness. Very centered. Very chakra-like. Her joviality and general sense of play really comes out in her columns, which will make me appreciate her a lot more when I next see her do a show.

Gwen Maloney, Portland, Oregon

It's a good thing Kay Gardner is documenting some real-life experiences had by the pioneers of women's music. Already we have a generation of young women's music devotees who have never seen Meg Christian, Casse Culver, Margie Adam, Gwen Avery, etc. I am surprised nobody has written a book on the early days. I am enjoying the coverage given to the early Olivia Records days and to Kay's memories. I just hate to see our past erased so quickly.

Carole Anne, Atlanta, Georgia

Thanks for your consistently good balance of white women and women of colors in *HOT WIRE*. It seems like more than an effort at tokenism, unlike some other feminist publications I've read. More please, especially about Kitchen Table Press; black women's production companies; women of colors who are back-up musicians; and projects by/for women of colors.

Deanne Witherbee, South Bend, Indiana

We are always in search of writers who already know something about their topics. If you are interested in the above--or related--ideas, please send SASE and request contributors' guidelines. ●

MULLING IT OVER

FEMINISM A FIGHTING VISION, A HEALING VISION

Excerpts from a lecture by Marge Piercy

Marge Piercy's first book of poetry was published in 1968, and her work has been translated into ten languages. Her credits include ten volumes of poetry, a collection of essays, and nine novels, including the much-acclaimed 'Woman on the Edge of Time' and 'Small Changes,' which has never been out of print.

The following excerpts are from a lecture entitled 'Feminism--A Fighting Vision, A Healing Vision,' given January 10, 1989. Piercy's was the second evening in the Women Writers Series, sponsored by thirteen Chicago women's organizations to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the founding of Jane Addams Hull House.

I'm going to start with a poem, not only because of course that's what I do best--not lecture or give speeches--but because many of the themes I want to touch on are present in it. [Following the reading of "The Perpetual Migration:"] Now that's what I, who wrote it, would call "a poem totally infused with feminism," yet it doesn't mention women. No, rather it assumes female experience as the norm, that what we sane human beings--like feminists--want is peace and plenty, not random sex and lots of happy violence, not guns and buns or whips and whoopie. This vision of the good life is based on autonomy, not domination; it places the speaker and other humans roundly inside nature rather than squarely on top or outside of nature, to be mastered or manipulated; it assumes when the intelligence functions that the other powers of the brain are also operating, and does not assume everything is knowable...

Feminism is for most women now defined by its enemies. It is the mass media controlled by rich men and powerful corporations--which require the extremely low-paid and marginal labor of women in the workforce and unpaid in the home--which fosters a contempt for women as

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

they're depicted, who capitalize on violence toward women in films and magazines and books, who use women's bodies to sell everything from airline tickets to chewing gum. Who determine what almost everybody in the country thinks feminism is.

Feminism concerns issues that have only been raised since the women's movement got rolling again, which were not regarded as public issues before but simply as personal problems: rape; incest; child abuse; battering in the home; the feminization of poverty; the circumstances of birthing; the technology of fertility; birth control; abortion and sterilization; the lack of educational and work opportunities available to working class and sometimes middle class girls; the proliferation of pornography; the use of language, of manners, of the way things are to enforce sexual castes and keep the power structure intact. Feminism concerns all those issues, but all other issues as well that we're concerned with in our lives--which is why so many feminists find themselves working on issues of war and peace, of nuclear proliferation, on environmental issues, on issues of safety both occupational and in the streets of our cities, on issues of education, on issues of choice and science. For whose benefit are decisions made, and what fallout will result in the lives of ordinary people who have to live with the results?

In truth, many of our most passionate continuing obsessions are not that different from the basic concerns of your dog: what shall I eat today? will I have enough? am I loved, am I liked? what is my social position in my surroundings? am I attractive? how do I smell? am I in danger? This ancient core of our concerns is often the stuff art deals with--which is why we can read poetry written by Sappho or the Psalms of David and be moved thousands of years later. We're creatures of our history, and the very words and images in which we think are products of our culture, as manufactured as the digital watch you wear or the run-

ning shoes on your feet...Where a Victorian speaker might pose the Bible or Shakespeare as a touchstone, we refer to ads, icons of the tube: *Where's the beef? Coke: it's the real thing; Don't leave home without it; The night belongs to Michelob...*that is our real common culture.

We find ourselves programmed with desires we gave no assent to; we suffer because we do not resemble images that do not exist. Women look in the mirror and men look at their wives and girlfriends, and both feel left out of an image that in no way resembles the illusion sold them, a twelve-year-old girl made up for two hours and shot through a scrim. You can never be too rich or too thin here, said of course by a woman who was both, while hospital wards fill with young women dying of anorexia, starving their bodies back into girlhood so they'll never be women.

It's the evening news. You watch a woman firefighter climb into her professional gear and mount the engine, off to a fire. We encounter an attractive blonde medical student, articulate, confident. Both women tell us with wide smirks that no, *they're not feminists...*not one of those women, they're just competent, they explain, and feminine too; they're just doing what comes naturally to them. As I watch, I'm aware of myself as part of their furniture--something they're standing on. Here are women bedecked in the spoils of the labor of the women's movement, saying how they have no need for fighting to get what they deserve by dint of their hard work, intelligence, application, willingness to get along with others. They seem to believe that all the previous generations of women who failed to become firefighters, and who were admitted to medical school perhaps two to a class, simply lacked their own sterling qualities. They seem to me like women dressed in the skins of leopards and arctic foxes who deplore cruelty to animals.

Basically many young women have bought the image the media has present-

ed to them of feminists as bra-burners, as either women who hate all men or women who want to be just like men. At the same time that these young women reject feminism and reject identification with other women, their lives, their ideas, and their goals have been wholly changed by feminism. They say, "Of course I want a good job; of course my career will continue after marriage; of course I mean to have children, but then I'll go back to work; of course I ought to earn the same wages for the same work." They have no sense even of recent history. They do not understand that what they are taking for granted is still being won by the very hard work of other women. The media sells them an image of feminists as women they are afraid to resemble and would never willingly meet.

The images we buy unreflectedly do kill some of us, and cripple many more. We are now in a time when people spend hours a day pursuing a perfect body, which is defined as someone who photographs well, since the camera adds fifteen pounds to anyone. We are as Puritanical about food and weight as previous generations were about sex. Fat is supposed to be a sign of weakness, indulgence, sin. It takes an enormous amount of time to try always to look younger than you are, and to try to carry less weight than your body comfortably wants to carry. It's supposed to be healthy, although I may add in a spirit of heresy that that's debatable. Osteoporosis is an increased risk for the skinny, and it's harder for thin women to become pregnant or to finish their pregnancy. It's certainly a replacement for educating your mind, developing your interests, and becoming closer to other peo-

French you learned at twenty returns easily if you go to France; but retired athletes go as rapidly to flab as anybody else. So it's a prominent occupation, and truthfully the waitress at MacDonal'd's who has (what is judged by this year's standards) a perfect body, is still a waitress at MacDonal'd's and likely to remain so. The myth is the young and pretty and thin inherit the earth, but it ain't necessarily so. More likely it's the kid who sits at the computer instead of running around the block. Fat and pimples never kept anyone from writing a superb novel or a fine song or from making a million. The history of rock music is the history of misfits; and for every handsome man and beautiful girl there are twenty others who have talent, and good costuming, and rather peculiar looks at best--and who cares.

If you care passionately--and you probably do--and you've been programmed to care passionately, *why?* You can be thin if you work at it, as you might better work at a Ph.D. in mathematics or biochemistry, and what are you then? Just what you were before, but less. No smarter, no better prepared, no more powerful, no better defended. Is flesh evil? Who said so? Who told you you had to look like little boys?...This world is run by fat bald men more than it is by little boys. But I don't see women trying to look like fat bald sixty-year-old men.

Witty films of the '30s and '40s depicted working class people as sturdy, honorable, the center of life. They were protagonists. It was sometimes the rich who were shallow, partial, out of touch. A common assumption then was that ordinary people had *worthy* dreams and ambitions, that they did not all want to be

tiful, faultless, very young women are not posed against the blank backdrop, but in glossy and impeccably clean work situations. The models are young looking, maybe eighteen at the very outside. They're shown in set-up after set-up as bosses, particularly in media. They're depicted as surrounded by men who are obviously subservient. Here they are, young and gorgeous, and they become important executives. These are the glamour dreams, the fantasies young women find in the media. [She] no longer dreams primarily of capturing a Harvard business school graduate, she plans to incorporate him into her life later on. In the meantime, she plans to become him.

A beautiful young woman lies coiled on a bed. Beside her is nestled a clean and dewy baby--obviously rediapered and dressed by somebody else. The woman wears a sexy negligee; what is most striking is that beside the baby stands a gorgeous leather briefcase, opened to coyly display papers, portfolios of obvious importance. This message of this ad--I believe for sheets--is *you can have it all, you're special; don't identify with those losers shrieking about rape, incest, housewives thrown out at forty to become bag ladies, the vast number of old women left alone to eat cat food or freeze to death this winter--you're golden and you can have it all.*

A few women attaining power in an unchanged system has little to do with feminism. Such occasional penetration has always been the case. In the most feudal and misogynist societies, an exceptional woman becomes queen or empress--and nothing at all improves in the lot of the rest of the women who labor and die

In truth, many of our most passionate continuing obsessions are not that different from the basic concerns of your dog.

ple. If you spent the amount of time each week you spent in pursuit of somebody else's body on learning a foreign language, writing something meaningful to yourself and others, practicing piano, or changing the society--this country would be a far different place.

I wonder why the media is pushing thinness called "fitness"? I'm appalled when Oprah Winfrey, who is one of the most successful women in the United States, claims that the primary accomplishment in her life was losing seventy pounds....And you can never rest. The

somebody else, to wake up rich and famous or both. Instead they often wanted goals that under a just system would be quite achievable--to take care of their children adequately, to hold onto their land and farm it, to run their small-town business without losing their shirt, to marry the person they chose and live where they chose.

Now I look at a catalog for Saks Fifth Avenue. On every page I see the same message being used to sell the fall line of suits, pantsuits, and dresses. The beau-

outside the palace. She's admired for her "masculine" qualities, and scandals circulate while the woman in the fields or behind the counter or in the factory struggles on. This does not mean that a few women in high places do not function as role models, although I cannot really imagine the role model of Queen Victoria was too useful to factory girls.

I do not regard the intellect as male. I do not regard analytical thinking as wrong thinking, but one very potent and neces-

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sary way to use the brain. However, it alone cannot save us, and I think we're vastly in need of saving from what the unchecked careening rage of the patriarchy has brought upon us. Dividing the society into those socialized to do and those socialized to feel has just about finished us as a species. Everyone born since 1945 has been born a child of the bomb, and has lived with that evil sun just burning the edge of the eyeball, darkening the rim of consciousness...We can each destroy the world so many times apiece, and nuclear technology is possessed by more countries every year.

You can't go mountain climbing with a grand piano on your back. We may not be able to survive our own technology of killing until every person is responsible for nurturing the young; until each of us is socialized to care and feel every public choice, and to ask of every decision--in the words of Iroquois activists--what does this mean to the seventh generation?

The media has found feminist anger photogenic often, and interesting to depict--and indeed our anger was the beginning of our freedom to think and rethink. Women have long been forbidden effective anger. A knowledge of one's own anger and its sources--the ability to use its energy directly and indirectly--are essential to any successful political action. But anger alone leads to frustration.

Feminism has evolved a spiritual side with which I am often uncomfortable, because it easily fades off into ineffectual and wishful thinking, the reliance on magic which only works on those who already believe in it. Feminism has developed that spiritual side not because women are batty and silly, but because feminism does necessarily involve a holistic way of thinking and feeling, and because the visionary is vital to a movement that talks about structuring society and viewing the world and each other so differently from the way we usually have.

What I view as one of the many functions of feminist art is to create that experience of the underlying ground of unity among women, among all living creatures, who with our planet make up one being. Earth as she rolls along. Strangely enough, the shots of Earth from the moon published after the one moon landing was a quasi-religious experience for me. Seeing our planet from outside as the blue-green object it is--swaddled in clouds, vulnerable, beautiful, fragile as an egg--changed my perceptions permanently. Perhaps I'm some-

one who must see something to love it fully, who must experience what is loved as a concrete object--perhaps someone for whom icons are wrought.

I believe love can be taught. It can be instructed and can be educated. In a healthy sane feminist society, loving would be something all adolescents would study. I don't just mean sexuality, although that too is needed instruction, but the ability to love and to serve in love...We must be taught, we must teach each other, to see and feel the connections. Without that sense of being part of a web, a social network of labor and society, a total community of rock and bird and lizard and coyote and person, a maze of past from which we issue and a future which issues from us, we necessarily do more injury than good to ourselves and others. Selfishness is finally fatal to all of us if only because there's no away in throwing away and no away in running away--if there ever was. There's no frontier to escape to, starting over and over again. No matter how deeply you penetrate the wilderness you encounter pipelines, acid rain, predators with reproduction problems from pesticides, and lead residues in the trash of previous freedom seekers.

An important function of feminist art and sometimes feminist philosophy is developing the imagination. If we cannot imagine anything other than what is, we can only ask for more of the same--more and bigger MacDonald's, bigger Big Macs, heavier tranquilizers, Star Wars weapons, faster cars to go nowhere in. If you look at science fiction and see how it is simply the current set of sex roles and class divisions writ large in the stars, you understand how difficult it is for people to imagine that things will change. In fact, they change all the time. The vacant lot where you caught tadpoles as a kid is now a parking garage that wants five bucks an hour for stacking your car. The blueberry bush has given way to massage parlors. The world changes all the time, but not according to your heart's desires necessarily, unless you work to make it so. Meanwhile, be assured others who have more money and power than you do are on the phone to their banker and to their special friend in the government, making sure that what *they* want happens. So you would be well advised to do what you can do if you want the world to be what *you* want.

Most of my own life's work in fiction has been aimed at trying to persuade women who view themselves as "middle

class" or "affluent" to identify with women who are working class. You have only to look at the reviews of my books by women critics to understand how unwilling such women are, as a rule, to take seriously the world view of the woman who might be their cleaning lady or their secretary or their waitress at lunch. The desire to believe that "if I have more than someone else I deserve it" is strong and almost omnipresent. If I make more money than you, my time is worth more, and thus I am inherently more valuable.

If the women's movement is to gain momentum again, it cannot evade one iota of its support for lesbians and lesbian rights, but it must stop having as a quasi-official policy in the so-called women's community that lesbians are therefore the only real feminists, and chaste or heterosexual or bisexual women are second class feminists. A choice of sex object has to be a free choice. If women who choose a man are excluded or denigrated, then you're dealing with a lesbian movement and not a women's movement, and most women will find it increasingly irrelevant to their problems, their struggles, and their choices. There has to be a change of emphasis from sexual choices to a larger picture in the women's movement for feminism to remain a movement of most women.

It's a tricky business. There can be no retreat from support for lesbian rights, no retreat at all, for such rights are central to the women's movement, and central to women's autonomy and choice. But there can be no exclusion of the concerns and interests and troubles of heterosexual women, either women alone, women alone with their children, or women who live with a man or men--no exclusion of the interests of women who live in traditional family structures, or women who are by force or circumstance or by personal or political choice living in a non-traditional style. Nobody can by any definition be less equal than anybody else in feminism and carry out what I perceive as the essence of feminist vision.

We can neither allow feminism to become a synonym for affluent greed and ambition for the exceptional rising star (whom the powers that be have always been willing to accommodate on a one-time basis), nor can we allow feminism to fade simply into a demand for lesbian rights and the creation of a special enclave in which a few lucky women can be comfortable with each other and ignore the violence and degradation outside. Nor can we allow feminism to become the

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**OUR 15th
FESTIVAL
JUNE 1-4, 1989**

An Indoor Festival



MAINSTAGE

Kay Gardner
Woody Simmons
Robin Tyler
Edwina Lee Tyler and
A Piece of the World
Faith Nolan
The Dance Brigade
Robin Flower and
Libby McLaren
Mary Watkins
Pat Parker
Nancy Vogl
Sue Fink and Band

**THURSDAY
INTENSIVES**

Amylee
Z. Budapest
Kay Gardner
Sonja Johnson
Phyllis Lyon and
Del Martin
Louise Rafkin
Betsy Rose
Terri Jewell
Kay Leigh Hagan

**THURSDAY NIGHT
Homecoming Dance**

Featuring
The Fabulous Dyketones

SHOWCASE

Monica Grant
Jane Winslow
Tendre
Nancy Hill
Tanya Shaffer as
Miss America's
Daughters with
LauraMichele
SDiane Bogus
Amethyst
Sue Fink, M.C.

**DAY
PROGRAMMINGS**

Accoustical
Classical Series
Merchants and
Craftswomen
National Emerging
Women Artists Exhibit
Older Women's Series
Spirituality Conference
Women of Color Series
Women with Disabilities
Writers Conference

**THURSDAY NIGHT
Women's Panel**

"Taking the Power
Within and Without" with
Del Martin, Phyllis Lyon,
SDiane Bogus,
Sonia Johnson,
Kay Gardner, Pat Parker,
Betsy Rose

For more information contact:
NWMF Dept. H.W.
P.O. BOX 5217
BLOOMINGTON, IN 47401-5217

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One person per form; please copy all you need!

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone, Day () _____ Night () _____

FESTIVAL PASSES

Note about Festival Passes: Over 60/Under 16 - half price; Under 12 - free.

	before April 30	after April 30	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4-Day Pass, (Thurs.-Sun.)	\$95.00	\$99.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 3-Day Pass, (Fri.-Sun.)	82.00	88.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday Pass	22.00	26.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Friday Pass	35.00	35.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Pass	35.00	35.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday Pass	22.00	26.00	_____

MAINSTAGE CONCERTS ONLY

<input type="checkbox"/> Friday (7:30 p.m.)	\$16.50	\$19.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday (7:30 p.m.)	16.50	19.00	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Sunday	16.50	19.00	_____

ROOM AND BOARD

- Campus Housing (Double Rooms Only)
No. of nights _____ @ \$17.00 _____
Arrival date _____ Departure date _____
- Campus Meals
Friday-Sunday Package \$39.50 Adults _____
\$22.00 (Under 16) _____

OTHER

- Airport Shuttle: \$15.00 round trip
Arrival (airline, flight no., date, time) _____
Departure (airline, flight no., date, time) _____

- Women In The Arts (WIA) Membership, \$5.00 _____
 Payment by Visa/MC, \$5.00 _____
TOTAL \$ _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

- Personal Check Money Order (Make check/MO
payable to **Indiana University #235-89**)
 Visa MasterCard

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Mail To:
Conference Registrar
Indiana Conference Bureau
IMU L-9
Bloomington, IN 47405

ON STAGE & OFF

'TIS A GIFT TO BE SIMPLE

By Mimi Baczewska

Land goes on and on, even to the cities--under the asphalt and buildings, land breathes and pulses.

I've always wanted to live in the country. When I was a child, I dreamed about living on a farm, and used to ask my folks for a horse, thinking the side yard was big enough. I remember spending hours in the small woods behind the house.

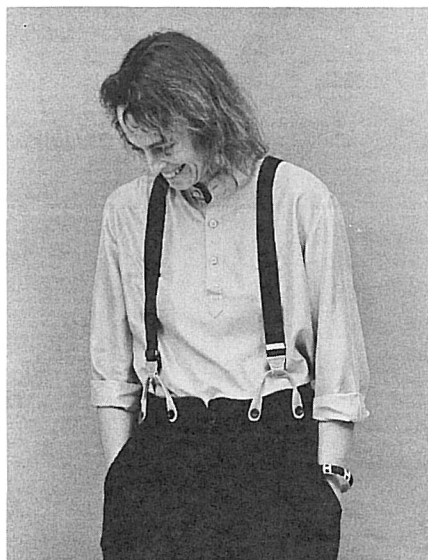
Once I was grown and on my own, I chose to pursue the dream.

Now I live on land in the Ozark Mountains, eighty acres I share with my partner, my cats, and my horse. Life is never dull here--there's always something to do when you're trying to be as self-sufficient as possible. In early spring through summer, for example, we grow a garden to eat and preserve, and a garlic crop which we braid up and sell. There are other womyn living on tracts of "womyn's land" close by, and there's always time for visiting, sharing projects, playing music, and walking in the woods.

Here--in the trees, bird song, storms and bugs, clear skies and starry nights--I find peace and simplicity and songs. To listen/see/feel/breathe/and work here over time, one can see the abundance that the earth gives, the changing stability of nature, the joy of life in bird song, the secrets whispered on the wind.

I have lived on this piece of ground for eleven years in various stages of hardship and chosen poverty (which showed me how little I truly need). Over the years I have built a level of comfort most people would still find too severe. Until a year ago February, I lived in a two-story wood frame woman-built house located in the hollow of the woods I call "The Enchanted Forest." Two large Grandmother Oaks greet you at the top of the hill, one of which has housed a fox den below it for a number of years. Womyn carried that house down the hill piece by piece to build it, as I carried my laundry, groceries, furniture, and a long list of other things--

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



Janet Ryan

Mimi Baczewska: "Here--in the trees, bird song, storms and bugs, clear skies and starry nights--I find peace and simplicity and songs."

including my piano. I lived with wood heat, and candles and kerosene lamps at night. A spring above the house provided gravity flow water which ran all the time outside through a hose close to the house. Storms brought down firewood, which I would gather and cut.

Daily survival required a lot of work, but I was rewarded--with privacy as well as deer, fox, possum, coyote, wild turkeys, and myriads of birds. As simple as life was, I managed to fill the house with my life as a tapestry crochet artist and a musician/songwriter. I have supported myself for a number of years with my crochet work, taking my pouches (mimi bags), hats, and hacky saks to festivals and craft shows, and with my music playing at house concerts, womyn's coffeehouses, benefits, and other gigs. Living simply, my expenses are minimal.

This perfect environmynt for both parts of my life has provided inspiration, images, color, silence. As a songwriter, my images come from nature, from my dreams, from loving my way of life. I hear music in the wind, in the rushing water

after a storm, deep inside myself, and in the peace I feel here.

In 1982 I recorded the first album of my songs, entitled *Mimi*. It was a low-budget home recording done in the living room of a friend. I played all the instruments (guitar, piano, and flute) and sang all the harmonies. I had songbooks printed to fit inside the cassette, which I sewed on my treadle sewing machine. In August 1987, I had it remixed in Boston by recording engineer Karen Kane. By December I had a new batch of tapes ready to be re-released.

In February '88 my life was changed. While I was out visiting, my house burned to the ground--leaving me with my life, my cats (who had followed me out), and my laundry which I had left in my truck. It was a devastating loss: all my work, materials, instruments, newly remixed tapes, master recording--my past.

The transformation was complete.

I chose to view the experience as a blessing in disguise. Such a unique opportunity to start over! As painful as it was, I am now at peace with this experience. But the impact was awesome, in the truest sense of the word. It rippled out to many people, who in turn touched me deeply with their caring and generosity. I am especially thankful for the precious experience of feeling what it is to be totally in the momynt with the only thing I really have--myself.

My first impulse was to stay on the land close to "the remains." I moved into our guest space, a 1922 orange circus wagon, which brought reality full circle as I had lived there ten years ago, before building the house. I needed time before rebuilding--it wasn't in the life plan to build a new house. I've continued living in the wagon, without electricity or running water, which has certainly helped me keep down the quantity of my material possessions. I built a porch on late last summer, which doubled the space. The

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Mimi Baczewska has been writing songs for twenty years. She considers herself to be a Jill-love-all-trades.

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Starting in 1986, *HOT WIRE* has presented awards to women who have made outstanding contributions to women's music & culture during the previous year. In the January issue, readers were asked to submit nominations specifying the contributions of their nominees. The point is not competition but appreciation for those who have contributed to our network in an especially outstanding way. Below are the nominations we received. Please note: *HOT WIRE* readers do the nominating, not the magazine staff.

Please vote for one individual and one organization.

The survey of favorites is included for fun and to give us at *HOT WIRE* a closer look at the tastes of our readers (so we know better who and what to cover in the next year's issues). Please make your survey selections completely on the basis of your personal favorites; this is in no way intended to be a list of "bests." Results of last year's voting can be found in the July 1988 issue.

Readers' Choice votes and surveys for this year can be written on a separate piece of paper or photocopied from this page.

We must receive them no later than May 15, 1989

SEND TO: 'HOT WIRE' READERS' CHOICE, 5210 N. WAYNE, CHICAGO, IL 60640.

INDIVIDUALS

ALISON BECHDEL for her *Dykes To Watch Out For* cartoon series and books.

ALIX DOBKIN for staying woman-identified and keeping community building in her vision.

AUDRE LORDE for *A Burst of Light* and a lifetime of inspirational writing.

FAITH NOLAN for being a strong voice for politically-conscious women, especially for black lesbians.

GAIL STRICKLAND for playing Marilyn on the TV show *Heartbeat*, the first well-adjusted, openly-lesbian character on prime-time TV.

LISA VOGEL/BARBARA PRICE for producing the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

CRIS WILLIAMSON for being a pioneer in women's music and for her continuing presence.

ORGANIZATIONS

ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE (AWMAC) for being a professional organization for the growing women's music industry.

FIREBRAND PRESS for producing high-quality feminist and lesbian literature.

KITCHEN TABLE WOMEN OF COLOR PRESS for publishing literature that focuses on the lives and issues of women of color.

LADYSLIPPER for maintaining the most comprehensive catalog of recordings, videos, publications, and other resources by women.

MOUNTAIN MOVING COFFEEHOUSE (Chicago) for being the longest-running women-only weekly coffeehouse in the world.

NAIAD PRESS for being the oldest and largest publishing house in the world.

THE WOMEN'S MUSIC ARCHIVES for the preservation and documentation of our women's music heritage.

FAVORITES

Vocalist _____

Group/band _____

Songwriter _____

Bass player _____

Percussionist _____

Drummer _____

Electric guitarist _____

Acoustic guitarist _____

Keyboards player _____

Instrumentalist _____

Wind instrument player _____

Comic/comedienne _____

Emcee _____

New performer _____

All-time favorite performer _____

Current song (last 2 years) _____

All time favorite song _____

Current album (last 2 years) _____

All-time favorite album _____

Live sound engineer _____

Recording engineer _____

Album cover _____

Fiction book _____

Non-fiction book _____

Periodical _____

Author _____

Cartoonist _____

Photographer _____

Movie/film _____

TV star _____

Film star _____

Film director _____

Mainstream performer _____

Other _____

RE:INKING

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH THE MAKING OF A BOOK

By Yvonne Zipter

"Love," Judy Grahn once wrote, "comes to those who / wait actively / and leave their windows open." Getting published, I have often thought, works much the same way. Take this book's story, for example.

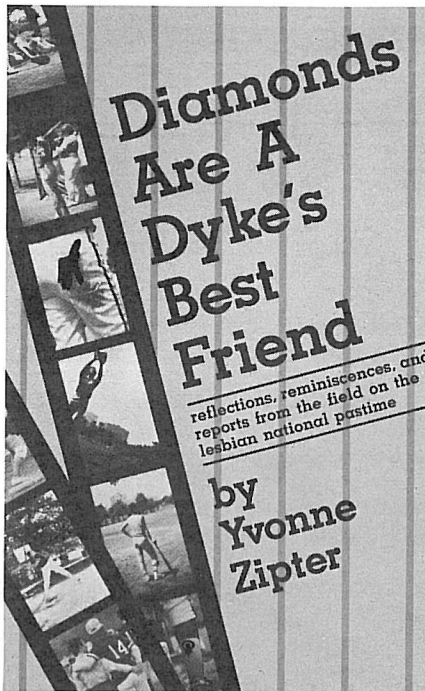
At the 1986 National Women's Studies Association meeting, I told a friend I would be happy to give her a lift to the airport after the meeting, but I was hoping to do so in order to be back in time for my softball game. We began talking about the phenomenon of softball within the lesbian community, how dykes everywhere seem to play. Suddenly my friend said to me, "Have you ever thought about doing a book on softball dykes?" I told her no and, what's more, though it sounded interesting, I didn't really have time to write a book.

But later, back at my table in the exhibit hall, I found myself jotting down notes on what such a book would include, along with a title. Excited, I went to tell my friend what I had been thinking. "Well, maybe I can find the time..."

That friend was Nancy Bereano, publisher of Firebrand Books. And such was the genesis of 'Diamonds Are A Dyke's Best Friend.'

It just so happens I'm very familiar with that story—because it's mine. And the reason I didn't think I would have time to write a book—besides working a full-time job—is that I was actively involved in a number of other writing projects, including a young adult novel I was trying to complete, a regular biweekly column, and peddling a poetry manuscript. But paying heed to Judy Grahn, I left that window open. Also, I reasoned, an open window could lead to opened doors...but first, I had to write the softball book!

No small task, that. Not only had I never taken on a writing project of this size before, but I also would be tackling a topic that, although integral to the lesbian community, had never before been documented at length. Though somewhat daunted, I looked forward to the chal-



lenge. I've always liked puzzles, and this was a good one: How, with little or no money, does one go about researching a virtually undocumented topic?

I broke it down into two parts: first, I would search for whatever had already been written about lesbians and softball (or sports generally); and second, I would collect insights and stories from softball dykes themselves.

When I set out on the first part, it had been a long time since I had done any kind of research. But I soon became acquainted with the various public and college libraries in Chicago as well as with several lesbian archives around the country. Not surprisingly, almost all of the material specifically on lesbians and sports was in small gay and lesbian periodicals, most of which I found out about with the aid of the *Lesbian Periodicals Index* by Claire Potter (1986, Naiad Press). Of the articles I was able to track down, most were simple reports of scores and games, and almost none were analytical, introspective, or on the general topic of softball as a phe-

nomenon in the lesbian community. The rest of the material I looked at was primarily books on sports, which I combed for the infrequent sections on women and the even more rare references to lesbians. It was quite clear that the bulk of the book would not be based on previously published sources.

From the start, though, my publisher and I had conceived of this book as a primarily personal account of softball dykes—personal, but with a national perspective. I hoped to achieve this perspective with the aid of questionnaires. Having written and reproduced the questionnaires, I sent them off in packets of five to fifteen to every city across the country where I knew someone—or where someone I knew knew someone—and asked that they be distributed to softball dykes. I was hoping to get from the questionnaires not only demographic information—how old softball dykes are, what their occupations are, their class backgrounds, etc.—but some interesting stories as well. However, I soon discovered that while women were more than willing to put little Xs in boxes, they were somewhat reluctant to answer the "essay questions." Still, I did get some gems.

One of my favorite stories came from a woman named Liz in Albuquerque. "My mother required me to play softball, hoping it would improve my coordination. She let me quit after the nun who was coaching got hit with a bat and broke her jaw," according to Liz. "Nineteen girls [went out for that team], and I was on the third string. I was the third string."

I knew that if I was going to get the number and kind of stories I wanted, I would have to get dykes to talk to me directly about their softball experiences.

With my trusty tape recorder at my side, I put my MCI to work, calling women from San Diego, California to Somerville, Massachusetts whose names and numbers had been given to me by questionnaire respondents and by those same friends who had distributed questionnaires for me earlier. My phone bills from January into March looked like pop quizzes on geography and math, but it was

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

worth it: I got some great stories, and got to talk to some wonderful women in the process.

Though I suspected I would have to do more research and interviewing ultimately, I felt it was time to start organizing my material and my thoughts and see what I had—and what I yet needed to get. I spent a couple of weeks devising a complicated system of notecards and chapter numbers, which I put in file folders and cross-referenced. It really paid off, though, because I always knew where to find things. Next, I looked at the material for each chapter and divided it into topic areas, jotting down tentative chapter titles and subheads within the chapters. Finally, it was time to start writing.

As usual, I experienced the approach/avoidance dilemma that I almost always confront when writing: I *want* to write, but I just can't get started. I generally begin a writing project by popping in and out of my chair as I think of just one more thing I need to take care of. At the same time that I'm taking care of such vital errands as watering a cactus or putting away the sweater that's been on the couch for weeks, I'm also furiously thinking about what my first sentence on paper will be. If I were a cartoonist, I would probably draw myself with steam coming out of my ears. Once I get a sentence down, however, my problems aren't over. I still get, every paragraph or two, the urgent need to put a record album away or dust the moldings in the bathroom. It would take a long time to write a book at this pace...

Luckily, at about that time, I met a woman who was not only very much interested in my project but who also had a project of her own that she was having trouble keeping on schedule. We set up weekly meetings at which I would give her a completed chapter and she would show me the latest edit of her video documentary. She was already well along with her project, though, so by the time softball season hit, she was done. We tried, for my sake, to keep regular meetings, but with just about everyone I knew hanging out at the ballfield all weekend, every weekend—partying, soaking up the sun, watching games—it was hard to get myself to run right home after my own game and start writing. ("It's research," we said.)

By September 1987, I had done a first draft of about half the book. The finished manuscript was due in January 1988. I took two weeks off work to finish the first draft. Then, for the next couple of months, I was on a tight schedule of a chapter rewrite every week. By December, I was ready to give a copy of the manuscript to

my friend Jorjet Harper, who had graciously consented to edit it for me before I sent it off to Firebrand.

When I got the manuscript back from Jorjet, I incorporated her suggestions and ran off a clean copy of the book for my publisher. After I marked the margins to indicate where I wanted the graphics to go, I got a copy made for myself and mailed my publisher's to her. I had made my deadline!

But I knew that wasn't the end of things: the manuscript in that incarnation was merely meant to help Nancy determine if we were in range of having a book for the fall of '88. I knew, for instance, that I needed to do more interviews. At that point, I had only talked to or heard from black women and white women. Without the input of Asian and Hispanic softball dykes, the book would be incomplete. Not only that, but I was anxious to hear how their softball experiences differed and were the same as those of the women I'd talked with already.

Oddly enough, help came from a woman I didn't even know, someone I had heard do a reading as part of the March on Washington in October 1987: Chinese-American poet Kitty Tsui. Though I didn't have a clue whether she played softball, I knew three pertinent things about her: (1) she is active in the Asian-Pacific Islander lesbian movement; (2) she's a body-builder (in other words, fairly athletic), and (3) she had given her business card to my friend Toni Armstrong, editor of *HOT WIRE*.

After several days of answering-machine tag, in which I described to Kitty the sort of help I needed, she left me the name and number of Linda Locke—a Korean-American lesbian who turned out to be as helpful as she was charming. Linda put me in touch with a half dozen or so other women-of-color softball dykes in the Bay Area.

Again I was not disappointed: their stories were wonderful. It would be hard to choose a favorite story from among them, but certainly one of them would be Mei's: "Softball for me was a real statement. I came over from Hong Kong when I was seven and didn't speak any English. I remember this was one way I felt like I was proving myself to be an American. It was really a rough time because I was a real oddity in Iowa where my adoptive parents were. That's why I played sports. It was kind of an expression for me, a way of saying, 'Hey, I'm an American—baseball is American.' So I thought if I could play softball really well, baseball really well, I'd be accepted."

The interviews went on—as did the research.

Finally, in April of 1988, I did more additions, updates, and revisions, printed out another copy of the manuscript, and mailed it—once again—to my publisher. Other than contacting Kate Clinton and Alix Dobkin for back cover quotes (of which only Kate's got used due to design/space considerations), the next steps were up to my publisher; this included, early in May, working with a designer on a cover design and doing some preliminary advertising. Then, caught up in a whirl of conferences and meetings, even my publisher did little work on the book.

DIAMONDS BECOMES FACETED

But in July we started the editing process. Nancy sent the book to me in three chunks, a few days apart, warning me that she had done "a lot of editing." As a professional copy editor myself, I know what "a lot of editing" looks like; I feared a manuscript looking like that childhood riddle: black and white and red all over. What I found instead were a lot of good prose-tightening, streamlining changes and some thought-provoking queries. On August 7, we spent three hours on the phone. I answered her questions, she answered mine, we each defended and discussed various points of style and word choice. Then she sent the manuscript to the typesetter and I went to the Michigan festival.

After Michigan, we chose the photographs for the book. A couple of weeks after that, I received the typeset, proof-read, edited galleys in the mail. (For those of you not familiar with publishing lingo, galleys are simply long sheets of paper with the typeset text before it is laid out in the format of the book.) On Sunday, August 28, we spent several more hours on the phone making the final adjustments and changes—and that was the last I was to see of the book until it was printed and bound.

Waiting for the book to come out, I filled some of the time by working with Nancy on setting up a mini-Midwestern book tour for November. It would be a three-city tour: Madison on the fifth, Minneapolis on the twelfth, and Indianapolis on the nineteenth. The big celebration, though, would take place in Chicago at Women and Children First Books, where

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Yvonne Zipter, a right fielder, is a copy editor and a nationally syndicated columnist. She was one of the founding mothers of 'HOT WIRE,' and in fact the journal's name comes from her poem "Finding The Hot Wire."

LIVE! FROM CANADA

CANADIAN WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVALS

By Connie Kuhns

The following article is a very brief and streamlined overview of the history of women's festivals in Canada. The information is excerpted from my book in progress, 'Rise Up! A History of Women's Music in Canada.' As always, the issues are more complex than space allows.

In August 1988, a group of women in Vancouver, British Columbia produced a one-day women's music festival. Billed as Vancouver's First Women's Music Festival, the line-up was an impressive collection of local women, including a remarkable band of teenaged musicians, two early lesbian-feminist songwriters out of retirement, and a large selection of jazz musicians with national reputations. As one of the emcees for the day, I can testify as to the caliber of the talent. The festival was the realization of a dream for Artistic Director Nadine Davenport, but the organizational aspect was certainly trial and error.

Four days before the festival, the organizers still needed coordinators and volunteers. There was no fencing, stages, sound systems or stage instruments—and already a deficit of \$2,100. It is certainly a testament to the determination of the dozen women who came together and worked tirelessly over those last four days to pull this festival together. In the end, however, despite a turnout of roughly 550 women and men, the deficit had grown to \$3,600 and not all of the performers were paid on schedule.

Although the festival was open to the public—and this was widely publicized—some women complained about the handful of men in the audience, and they objected to the male musicians which accompanied some of the jazz women. This included a woman of some renown who began her career singing and recording with Duke Ellington.

Contrast this with Women In View: A Festival of Performing Arts held in the same city in January 1989. Concentrating

LIVE! FROM CANADA is an introduction to women's independent music in Canada.



Marni Kalef

Catherine MacKay and Gwen Swick, le festival des femmes Canadiennes '85

on dance, storytelling, visual and literary art and related workshops, this seven-day festival featured very little music, but presented a variety of other performances on subject matters which included motherhood, the environment, lesbianism, spirituality, feminism, and the experience of immigrant women from Latin America. With a paid staff and crew, Women In View received generous grants from government and private sources. Their purpose in producing the festival was "to increase public awareness of women in the arts." The festival was open to everyone, with special discounts for students, seniors, and the unemployed, and was not subjected to the same type of criticism.

There is no definitive model for a Canadian women's music or cultural festival. Our festival image is always in flux. What an event is to become is shaped solely by the perspective of the women involved, and there are many issues to be considered: Canada has two official languages and many distinct cultures; it is sparsely populated, and women are

separated by mountain ranges, expansive prairies, tundra, and water. Unfortunately, we may also be separated by class, race, culture, and language. In some areas, women are also divided by sexual orientation. Traditionally, it has also been easier to gain access to women's culture from the U.S. than to our own because the border is just a car ride away. In Canada, some women must travel hundreds or thousands of miles to attend an event in their own country.

The first Canadian women's festivals took place in the mid '70s in a spectacular mountainous region in the southeast corner of British Columbia known as the Kootenays. The area is a mixture of Doukobor people, the rural working class, urban exiles, American expatriates, and an active women's community. Even the provincial tourist bureau describes the area as having "a reputation for seclusion...several generations of settlers have found a safe haven here from the anxieties of religious persecution or social unrest."

The first festival, held in 1974 in Castlegar, B.C., was organized by Marcia Braundy for the Kootenay Women's Council, an ad hoc group of Status of Women organizations in several small towns. The two-day festival featured local and regional musicians, workshops on witchery and crafts, a film festival, square dancing, and an arts & crafts fair. It was open to both women and men. The second year, the festival was held in nearby Kazlo and lasted for four days. The first two days were for women and their invited guests, and the final days were for women only.

These were historical events. It was revolutionary for women to put themselves first and to celebrate and promote each other. It was entirely new, as in the second year, to designate women-only space. Likewise was a workshop on lesbianism led by the Lesbian Caucus of the B.C. Federation of Women. The primary purpose was to bring all rural women together for the first time. As Rita MacNeil sang "Angry People in the Streets," so did the Doukobor Women's Choir sing the music of their culture.

Womankind Productions of Vancouver, with the assistance of a volunteer group, hosted the next women's festival in October 1976. The First Western Canadian Women's Music Festival (and last) was held at a YWCA camp with cabins and catered food. It was for women only, and as with the other two festivals, attendance was less than 200 women. But again, these were the first steps taken in that initial rush of feminist awareness that changed so many women's lives.

The West Kootenays Women's Festival (as it is now called) is still being held. Its permanent home is the Valican Whole Community Centre, a beautiful log building in the mountains thirty miles from Nelson, B.C. It's still a community celebration for about 150 women, with performers from the area, workshops, a potluck dinner, auction, and dance. Occasionally women attend from Vancouver, Washington, or Oregon, but it is primarily for women in the area.

Toronto took the spotlight in 1979 when A Muse Inc. organized a three-day festival at the University of Toronto which included more than forty performers primarily from Eastern Canada. But there would not be another festival of this magnitude until 1984, when the Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival was held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In the meantime, two major folk festivals became the main producers of women's music in Canada.

told me recently. "Its concern in general is about people who live in a society that's alienating. And the concern is to bring them together—the artists, the audience, the volunteers—and give them a quality of life experience which is something hopefully they take away with them and use as a model for their lives on a daily basis. Because I really think that is how the world changes."

The Vancouver Folk Music Festival is an example of this as well. At its peak, 20,000 people gather for two days and three nights at an oceanside park in a beautiful area of the city. The counter culture attends, as well as seniors, politicians, teenagers, students, children, professionals, and a large contingent from the feminist community. Lesbians are out of the closet. And over the years the music workshops have given women a place to gather.

The feminization of both festivals came about in part because of the large number of women who volunteer each year to work. Currently exactly half of the 800 volunteers at the Winnipeg festival are women, and in Vancouver women lead the pack. When women's music began to rise to prominence in the U.S., the artistic directors took note, and urged on by women working in the ranks—in particular in Vancouver by Susan Knutson and Wendy Solloway—began to book the first wave of feminist and lesbian performers. Gary Cristall sent talent scouts to

blues music and performers from other parts of the world. In varied proportions it has remained this way ever since.

The big breakthrough at the Winnipeg Folk Festival came in 1982 when Heather Bishop, Holly Near, Betsy Rose & Cathy Winter, Meg Christian & Diane Lindsay, Ginni Clemmens, Frankie Armstrong, and Mimi Fariifa all appeared in The Big Tent. Winnipeg also introduced a women's theme tent which operated from 1984 to 1986. In 1984, nearly thirty women appeared on this stage, including Toshi Reagon, Judy Small, Anne Lederman, Teresa Trull & Barbara Higbie, Heather Bishop, Holly Near, Ronnie Gilbert, Patsy Montana, and The Reel World Stringband. In 1985, newcomers included k.d. lang, Margaret Roadknight, Four the Moment, and Rory Block. The final year was a blow out, with Ellen McIlwaine, Christine Lavin, Tracy Riley, Heather Bishop, Connie Kaldor, and Sweet Honey In The Rock, among others.

Despite its popularity, when Rosalie Goldstein became artistic director after the festival in 1986, she disbanded the women's stage. "I did so with the most loving care," she told me, "because I believe it's important for women to be dispersed throughout the entire body of the festival. I would not put up a tent at the festival and say 'here are all the blacks' or 'here are all the Jews'—and that's exactly what was happening with women. I don't

"What it did for all of us women musicians was just short of a miracle," says Heather Bishop.

MAJOR FOLK FESTIVALS

Although both festivals were founded by Mitch Podolak, the artistic director for the Winnipeg Folk Festival is now Rosalie Goldstein, and Gary Cristall has been in charge of the Vancouver Folk Festival since 1980. With some philosophical differences as to what constitutes "folk music," both festivals offer an incredible opportunity to hear a wide variety of music from around the world, in an atmosphere of tolerance.

"I think there are some important principles around which the festival operates—I mean, in addition to its concern about women," Rosalie Goldstein

Michigan. He called "someone who knew someone" who eventually got him in touch with Holly Near.

And in 1980 the flood gates opened. On stage in Vancouver, in front of 10,000 people, were Sweet Honey In The Rock, Cathy Winter & Betsy Rose, Ferron, Robin Flower, Nancy Vogl, Laurie Lewis, Barb Higbie, and Holly Near & Adrienne Torf. "Feminist" appeared alongside "Gospel" and "Celtic" in festival publicity. The festival program printed articles about women's music, and songs by Rosalie Sorrels, Ferron, Holly Near, and Betsy Rose. There was a workshop called "A Good Woman's Love." All of this happened in an environment which included traditional folk and

think that's fair. I don't think it shows off women to their best advantage. I don't think that it invites people who might under other circumstances come and see that programming. It doesn't make it easy for women, whatever their sexual orientation, to put their music across. And I want that to happen in a serious way. It's what I believe in." *continued on next page*

ABOUT THE WRITER: Connie (Smith) Kuhns is the producer and host of Ruby-music, Canada's original women's music radio program now in its ninth year. She has written dozens of articles about women musicians and is currently writing a book on the history of women's music in Canada.

True to her word, the opening line-up for the 1989 Winnipeg Folk Festival will feature the thirteen-piece Women Who Cook band from Minneapolis; The Mahotella Queens, a female vocal choir from Soweto singing classic Zulu jive; the Roaches; and Gordon Lightfoot.

So it is that women's music meets the music of the world on Canadian soil. In a noncombative atmosphere, women are able to state their case to a supportive -- or at least open-minded -- audience who might have never heard the music under other circumstances.

But there were still issues to be resolved. The folk festivals programmed, naturally, folk music in all of its indigenous forms. But women's music was not just folk music, so many Canadian women were being left out of this musical revolution.

In 1983, a group of Winnipeg women known as the Sam Damn Bunch asked Joan Miller, Heather Bishop's manager/business partner, to organize a women's music festival. She accepted the offer, and

leveled at the 1988 Vancouver festival, women complained that there were men in the audience. Reviewer Didi Herman, writing in a national alternative magazine, suggested that the organizers couldn't exclude men from the audience because they were too dependent on funding. She said there was a "please-keep-it-in-the-closet feeling in the air, a rather unpleasant situation for women who had experienced or knew of U.S. women's festivals, which are known to be an integral part of lesbian culture."

But this was not an American festival. This was not a lesbian festival. Although certainly lesbian women were involved in the organization, the festival was intended to be for the entire community of Winnipeg. It was intended as a gathering of Canadian female talent. And the organizers were not prepared to tell any performer what to say or not say from the stage. To what degree a performer was "out" was up to her.

Ironically, letters to the *Winnipeg Free Press* complained of "taxpayers' money being spent on hate propaganda" and

well.

The following year the festival became a non-profit organization. The performers doubled and the attendance doubled--but the organizers were left with a \$15,000 deficit. They decided to hold a smaller festival the third year. This time they moved indoors with seven acts. Since there was no advertising budget, attendance was down considerably. But for those who attended, it was an intimate, fun weekend.

Although the decision to host another festival is still on hold, the organization is still in operation, producing events around the city. They are also involved in the Alliance for the Production of Women's Performing Arts, which will hold its second annual conference in Winnipeg this year.

In 1988, women's music took yet another turn in what journalist Susan Sturman called "the most ambitious women's music event ever undertaken in this country and possibly in North America." The five-day festival was produced by Les Productions Super-Meme, Inc., a produc-

"It was revolutionary for women to put themselves first and to celebrate and promote each other."

*Pictured
Lucie Blue Tremblay
and Connie Kaldor,
les festival des femmes
Canadiennes '85.*



Marni Kalet

by the time the Canadian Women's Music and Cultural Festival took place in Winnipeg in September 1984, there was a festival office, a paid staff of five, a total budget of \$90,000 and \$70,000 in grants.

It was a phenomenal experience for those who participated, especially the forty-two musicians who performed that year along with two theater groups. It was the largest cross-section of Canadian women musicians ever assembled.

Despite the fact that 1,000 people--predominantly women--attended every day throughout the weekend, there was public criticism. Similarly to the criticism

of "women hugging and kissing in a family-based park." But the mainstream reviewers were excited about the event, and it also received a significant amount of favorable coverage in the feminist press.

In the end, the festival changed how Canadian women musicians viewed each other. Heather Bishop told me, "What it did for all of us women musicians was just short of a miracle. It put us all together in the same place. It changed people's lives. That's a victory." And for the women who sat screaming on their blankets into the night, it was a victory as

tion company formed by avant-garde musicians Diane Labrosse, Danielle Roger, and Joane Hetu. Held in Montreal, the Festival International de Musiciennes Innovatrices featured experimental and innovative composers and musicians with origins in Iran, China, Japan, Jamaica, throughout Europe, and in Canada from Winnipeg, Montreal, and Toronto. The organizers wrote in their program (of which 25,000 were distributed free), "We believe these musicians have acquired enough identity to be appreciated outside of all-woman events; that's the reason why the festival will only take place this year. The

Festival International de Musiciennes Innovatrices wants to be a place of diffusion so that the Quebec public may become aware of these styles of music and ask for the presence of these musicians in the future." Consequently, feminist and lesbian sensibilities were expressed through music, along with other sentiments for everyone to hear. Susan Sturman noted that Third World, Eastern European, and black North American jazz musicians were not represented, nor were musicians from Western Canada—facts that organizers acknowledged in their brochure.

In Canada, it is hard to compete with the major folk festivals. They are established events which are seen as an integral part of Canadian culture. They have the budgets to produce any artist they want from any part of the world. Canada's one and only women's music distribution service went out of business in part because it could not compete with the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, which has the budget to distribute a variety of women's music. We have no equivalent to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival or the National Women's Music Festival. The only annual women-only festivals held in Canada are in the Kootenays and outside Kingston, Ontario on private land. As

mentioned, the Kootenay festival is community-based and the Kingston Womyn's Music Festival, now five years old, accommodates only 300 women.

Although there are lesbian women who desire and work towards a lesbian-only festival environment, it remains to be seen if this will ever be a national movement. It has not happened yet. Consequently, many of the debates which take place in the U.S. do not occur in Canada on a grand scale. In fact, a clear majority of feminist performers in Canada—heterosexual and lesbian—that I interviewed for my book do not support the exclusion of boy children of any age from any event.

For lesbians who prefer a lesbian-only festival and can afford to go, the festivals in the U.S. have traditionally filled this need. Through the work of Montreale Anne Michaud, the Michigan festival has become user friendly for French-speaking Canadians, and California is generally the place to go for lesbians on the Canadian west coast. With the exception of Sisterfire, the U.S. festivals are generally perceived as off-limits to heterosexual women, whether this is true or not.

What we do have in Canada is an incredible opportunity for women's music to be fully integrated into the country's music scene and from there into the consciousness of Canadians. Although the

same prejudices exist in Canada as do in the U.S. regarding women and minorities, in the last couple of years lesbian and politically-oriented performers who began their careers with support from the left, immigrant, and women's communities have been nominated for—and are winning—major music awards.

I am not suggesting that the purpose of women's music is to win awards. But because women's music did not separate from the mainstream and instead held its own alongside every other Canadian independent, there is not only the opportunity for the music to change women's lives, but to change how Canadian society feels about women. Our festival history reflects and encourages this development.●

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1989 Index-Directory of Women's Media

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

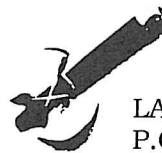
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HOT LINE from page 9

Tracy was Favorite New Pop-Rock Artist though she was not present to claim the trophy; REBA McENTIRE won Favorite Female Country Singer; PATTY LOVELESS was Favorite New Country Artist.

WOMEN

The Long Awaited by Chicago playwright CLAUDIA ALLEN had its world premiere run at Victory Gardens last winter.

KAY GARDNER has received a partial commission for a new large piece of music on the subject "Passages: The Ages of Woman." She is seeking relevant texts and poems by female children, lesbians, mothers, and women of age from all cultures for inclusion in the piece, estimated to be forty to sixty minutes in length. Because of the scale of the composition, additional commission monies are needed for completion of the work. Donations are tax-exempt. Kay Gardner, P.O. Box 33, Stonington, ME 04681.

Arizona Governor ROSE MOFFORD sent out 5,000 Christmas cards in 1988 with a caricature of herself as a toga-clad Goddess of Liberty perched atop the state capitol dome. According to *Time*, in previous years she has sent out similar cards showing herself as Uncle Sam, Santa Claus, and Mae West.

INES RIEDER, co-editor of *AIDS: The Women*, toured more than thirty cities last spring. Rieder, former editor of the international feminist magazine *Connexions*, is currently editing a new collection for Cleis Press entitled *Cosmopolis: Women of the Cities*.

WHOOPI GOLDBERG, in an interview in the *Advocate*: "Last year, after I went on the March on Washington, people said to me, 'What are you doing? They're gonna think you're gay.' People think that already, because I hang out with a lot of women...There hasn't been a studio head I've worked for who hasn't come out and asked me if I'm a lesbian...I say, 'Normally, this would be none of your business. However, I will answer you...it's possible. I'm not practicing at the moment, but I will not say it will never happen or hasn't happened in my past.'" [From *Outlines*] Also, Whoopi joined *STAR TREK: The Next Generation* as the Enterprise's humanoid cocktail lounge hostess.

The *Glamour Lesbians 1989 Calendar* included keyboardist BETH YORK as Miss May.

The leader of The BILLY TIPTON Trio, popular on the mid '50s nightclub circuit, died in Spokane in January at age 74 of a bleeding ulcer. "He" played jazz sax and piano, had a wife for ten years, adopted three sons, and was revealed after death to be a woman--surprising everyone (except presumably his ex-wife). "Now I know why I couldn't get him to a doctor..." said Tipton's oldest adopted son in an interview in the *L.A. Herald Examiner*.

BARBIE DOLL celebrates her thirtieth birthday this year, according to *Time*.

For twins aficionados: LILY TOMLIN and BETTER MIDLER play identical twins in the commercial film *Big Business*; the teenaged Patty Duke can be seen as identical cousins Patty (who's seen the sights a girl can see from Brooklyn Heights) and Cathy (who's lived 'most everywhere) in the syndicated TV reruns of the *Patty Duke Show*; SARA & ERIN LEONARD-HOOD play baby Emily on NBC's *Day by Day*; On *Knots Landing*, WHITNEY & MORGAN WHITE play baby Meg, and KATHRYN & TIFFANY LUBRAN play the four-year-old Betsy; MELISSA & SARAH KAY play baby Ruthie on NBC's *A Year in the Life*; BRITTANY & LACY CRAVEN play baby Jany on ABC's *thirtysomething*; and ABC's *Full House* features ASHLEY & MARY-KATE OLSEN as baby Michelle.

TERRY GARTHWAITE and TONI BROWN of the disbanded group The Joy of Cooking held a reunion concert last June at the Fillmore nightclub, according to *Bitch*.



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

'Outlines' newsmagazine distributes papers through pay boxes in high-traffic areas in the Midwest, including O'Hare Airport.

The first woman explorer to reach the North Pole, ANN BANCROFT, has come out as a lesbian, said *off our backs*. Before the expedition, she taught P.E. in Minnesota elementary schools. She no longer teaches, but does speak to community groups and schools. She now works for Wilderness Inquiry, an organization which takes disabled people on trips to wilderness areas. Since her Arctic adventure she has been featured on the cover of *Ms.* magazine, and a film producer has been considering a movie about her exploits.

KAREN HESTER, formerly of Olivia Records, is now the new promotional director for Redwood Records. She says that part of her job will be increased communication with the women's press and radio network.

EMMA FREUD, the great-granddaughter of Sigmund Freud, hosts a British TV interview show in which she talks with her guests in bed, according to a blurb in *TV Guide*.

The trio BETTY can be seen in the 23 episodes of *Encyclopedia*, the children's show on the HBO pay-cable TV channel.

FILM-VIDEO-TV

New videos recently released by WOMEN MAKE MOVIES, include *Lifetime Commitment: A Portrait of Karen Thompson*; *Visions of the Spirit: A Portrait of Alice Walker*; *You Can Fight City Hall*; and *Damned If You Don't*. To receive their full catalog: WMM, 225 Lafayette St. #212, New York, NY 10012.

ON BECOMING A WOMAN: Mothers and Daughters Talking Together is the first film conceived, written, directed, and produced by black women for black women, according to *Atalanta*. National Black Women's Health Project, 1237 Gordon St. SW, Atlanta, GA 30310.

Photos, home movies, and other film footage sought for documentary on 1968-1973 WOMEN'S LIBERATION DEMONSTRATIONS. Eliza Productions, P.O. Box 335, Canal Street Station, New York, NY 10013. (212) 673-3680.

GRETA SCHILLER, director of many gay films including *The International Sweethearts of Rhythm* and *Before Stonewall*, has teamed up with a new Texas women's production company to release their first lesbian erotic video, *Waking Up, A Lesson in Love*. There was difficulty finding financial support both from the lesbian and non-lesbian communities, reportedly because of the film's content, said *Atalanta*. Video duplicating houses also refused to work on the film. Foosh Flicks, P.O. Box 4493, Austin, TX 78765.

CHANGING OUR MINDS: The Story of Dr. Evelyn Hooker is being made into a documentary movie for TV. Dr. Hooker was the first psychologist to undertake research about the mental health of gay people, and fought within the profession to dispel myths about homosexuals. Financing contributions and suggestions for potential funding sources wanted. The Foundation for Integrative Studies, 123 W. 44th St. New York, NY 10036.

HEARTBEAT, the groundbreaking nighttime medical show set in a women's medical center, is the first TV show to feature a regular character who is a lesbian and is totally accepted by co-workers. Unfortunately, the show has become the target of an intensive campaign by right-wing fundamentalists who write an estimated 1500 letters a week demanding that the character [Marilyn] be removed or that the show be cancelled. Let's generate some support: Aaron Spelling Productions, Warner/Hollywood Studios, 1041 N. Formosa Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90046. We brought back *Cagney & Lacey*; let's save *HeartBeat*.

continued on page 57

FREESTYLE

VISITING WOMEN'S SACRED MYSTERY SITES

By Kay Gardner

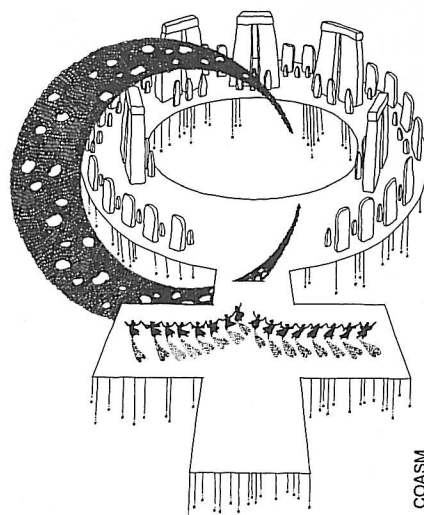
In September 1988, just before Autumn Equinox, I was fortunate to co-lead a group of eighteen women on a trip to women's sacred mystery sites in England and Ireland. Organized by Venus Adventures of Washington, D.C., the two week tour took us to holy spots in Bath, Avebury, and Glastonbury, England and then to Ireland to visit standing stones and stone circles in Owenahincha, Dingle, and New Grange with a side trip to the Temple of Isis in Clongal.

The other co-leader was Chris Carol, an English woman who now lives in Portland, Oregon. She arranged for us to begin in the charming city of Bath which had been conquered by the Romans who built an elaborate multi-level bathhouse in honor of their goddess, Minerva. The fancy bathhouse with steam rooms and round pools and rectangular pools and holy pools was built over hot springs, which were sacred to the indigenous goddess, Sulis. We weren't permitted to actually bathe there—a big disappointment to me—but it was instructive to go through the museum and see the statues to Minerva and older artifacts sacred to the more ancient triple goddesses. It was a fine way to begin an adventure honoring another female deity, Brigid, goddess of wells, flames, oaks, and healing.

When we had recovered from our jetlag and had met each other over a fine dinner at the hotel, we circled and sang chants and then prepared for the trek to Avebury where we'd stay for three days. Our drivers were two English filmmakers who brought along cameras and equipment so as to document our journey.

Avebury is a small pastoral town in England's chalklands, surrounded by an immense stone circle through which sheep and cows graze (and leave their droppings...one must remember one's Wellies [boots] when trekking the fields). Built about 5,000 years ago, the immense stone circle has only recently been revived

FREESTYLE: The musings and experiences of Kay Gardner, who has been deeply involved in women's music and culture since 1973.



after many of the standing stones had been buried or destroyed. Just by standing in front of each boulder, most much taller than I, I could feel powerful energy coming from each. It was almost as if each stone had its own personality.

If you can imagine an area the size of, say, eight football fields, with a large circle of stones in it, a waterless "moat" around the circle, and a ridge around that, you'll have an idea about the scale of the Avebury circle. Inside the large circle are two smaller circles and a spot where two of the original three hugest and most powerful stones stand.

Last summer at the Michigan festival, when telling Amylee, Iroquois medicine initiate, that I was going to Avebury, she gave me a couple of dowsing rods and said that the stones were supposed to have chakras, and with the rods I could possibly find them. It must have been strange for the members of our group—let alone the tourists—to see me approaching each stone with the two dowsing rods to see where the rods would part indicating a movement of energy.

I found that a pendulum worked as well. Holding my necklace by its chain around three inches above the pendant, I found that it would circle wildly at the point where the stone met the earth and at regular intervals of the stone's height in

alternate clockwise and counterclockwise directions. Each stone had a similar energy pattern, but not necessarily in the same order of direction.

Not completely satisfied with the rods and the pendulum, I tried singing harmonics (overtones) into the stones and was very surprised to find that they resonated most strongly at the chakra points! (If the tourists had found the dowsing weird, you can imagine what they thought of the strange American dyke singing full-voiced at the stones.)

What does all this mean? I don't really know, but it's fascinating. Perhaps each stone is imbued with the worshiping energy of a particular neolithic community member. I do know that each member of our group was drawn to a particular stone, almost as if it were her own.

Long standing stone corridors lead into the Avebury circle at opposite directions. Some believe that it was a meeting point for ceremonial magic, perhaps marriages with one family or clan entering from one end, the other from the other end to meet in the middle. No one can really know.

On the chalklands—which are really of chalk, as you find when you pick up the abundant white stones there—surrounding the circle, several miles away are other structures which were used for religious celebrations centuries ago. One is the West Kennet Long Barrow, a mound within which it is thought initiation rituals were held on the Winter Solstices. Nearby is Silbury Hill, the largest hand-built hill in Europe. It is shaped exactly like a pregnant belly and has a slight concave spot in the very top, like the "eye of the womb." Lammas (August 2nd) harvest rituals were said to be held at the top of this hill beneath which in the nearby landscape is a natural spring, the source of the West Kennet River. (One of the more enlightened guidebooks mentioned that Kennet was just the modern, polite term for the yoni-shaped spring beneath the Silbury "belly.")

Though we could have happily spent more days in Avebury, it was time to move on to Glastonbury, believed to be

the original site of the legendary Avalon. With side trips to Salisbury, Wells, and Stonehenge (which was so commercial that it wasn't at all magical-feeling), we reached our hotel at the foot of Chalice Hill in Glastonbury in late afternoon. In the golden light of day's end we walked to the nearby Chalice Hill Gardens. Here—in surroundings fragrant with lavender and roses—were fountains and singing birds and a holy well from a blood spring source (blood-red being the color of the algae floating on the iron-rich water). Legend tells that the well was Morgan Le Fay's magic mirror, into which she gazed for her prophesies.

The Tor—a sculpted ziggurat-like high hill with a tower on top—loomed over Chalice Hill, and even though climbing the Tor was the main tourist attraction, I got almost to the top, didn't like the vibes and turned around to return to Chalice Hill, where I felt most comfortable and nurtured.

I'm usually a rather solitary person, so the group dynamics were getting to me. Also, I had wanted to stop at some of the sacred sites, get my flute and Walk-person out and tape the music of those places. Here seemed an ideal place to do it. I took the next day off and visited the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey (where Arthur and Guinevere are said to be buried) and back to the Chalice Hill gardens, spending time meditating at each spot and then making the music I heard hanging in the air. My new tape *Avalon* is a low-fidelity collection of the flute meditations I "channelled" in Glastonbury.

There were three beautiful days in Avalon, Isle of the Apples, lying on the clipped grass of the gardens, listening to apples fall off trees in the pasture above and fountains crash into sculpted pools below me. I was sorry it had to end, but we were going to Ireland next, and—having visited the Emerald Isle in '81—I was looking forward to returning.

THE EMERALD ISLE

After a long train ride through Wales, it was then a long ferry ride to Ireland, and when we got there we found that the rental vans were considerably smaller than those we'd had in England. Somehow, not without grouches and gripes, we squeezed in with our luggage (who was the one who packed those bags full of Avebury rocks?).

We added roof racks to the vans the next day and, still a little too cozy for complete comfort, headed off in search of a stone circle where we could hold our Autumn Equinox ritual. At dusk, in a fine mist, we found the Drombeg stone circle

near Owenahincha on the Celtic Sea in Southern Ireland. It was out in the middle of nowhere (as are most of the stone structures in Ireland), but held magic from ages past. There were three spots within this site. We were drawn first to a figure-eight structure with low walls. Here we chanted and walked an infinity spiral. Next we moved to a well, around which was another low wall and a pool. Perhaps the ancient worshippers bathed here before their rituals. By now it was raining lightly, so we passed a rock around our circle with our eldest member holding it at the end, calling the four directions and tossing it behind her into the well.

The wind came up from the sea, and it began to rain more heavily. We quickly moved within the eighteen-stone circle, built an altar in the middle with candle, stones to shield the fire from the wind, heather from the nearby fields, and our personal ritual items. It was a short exuberant circling, but as powerful as can be when many like-minded women celebrate together.

A long drive took us to the Dingle Peninsula, which juts out into the Atlantic Ocean on the Western side of Ireland. A few miles from the town of Dingle was the hotel where we were to stay. It was raining again—a given in Ireland—and the hotel rose out of a mist. It felt kind of haunted until supper time, when we were fed a sumptuous meal of local lamb or salmon in exquisite sauces and then were invited to the hotel's pub to sit by the warm coal fire. Some local musicians, two men and a woman, came in with guitars and an autoharp. They had visited America often, and rather than playing Irish tunes, were most interested in playing Appalachian music! We all shared the songs we knew best. One of our elder members—Skip, from Denver—knew lots of Western songs which she sang in a rich, deep voice. The Irish musicians were blown away by her! "Wow (or its Irish equivalent)," they cried, moving closer to her, "we've got the real thing here." She was the hit of the evening.

The guys couldn't understand why a group of so many single women would be traveling together. "Are ye all aunties?" they asked. "Well, no matter. Let's just sing and talk about it tomorrow."

But tomorrow was time to drive to the other side of the country, to a town just north of Dublin, where we'd stay for the duration of the tour. It was good to come to a stop in one location for awhile.

On an easy day trip we drove up to Newgrange, a rather commercial but nonetheless magical mound in which is a stone temple shaped like the inside of a

pregnant womb. The guides called it a "burial chamber," but that's not what it felt like at all. It was most definitely a 5,000-year-old Mother temple.

To get inside, we had to walk through a narrow and low-ceilinged tunnel, like a rock vagina. On Winter Solstice—and only on that day for fifteen minutes—the sunlight comes up through the tunnel and illuminates the inside of the temple. Now, why would anyone want to illuminate a burial chamber? Oh, to tour these places some day and get the true story of matriarchal worship!

From Newgrange we swung by to Tara, a tall hill which overlooks miles of countryside on all sides. It was here that tribal chieftans were said to have met to decide the fate of the country. On the top of the very windy hill was a "screaming stone." Most texts implied that the stone screams, but after my discovery at Avebury, I believed the stone was meant to be screamed at. I did and it didn't.

The last visit was to Clonbeg, where a small group of ten of us went to see Olivia Robertson at the Temple of Isis. This "temple" had been built in what was once the dungeon of the Robertson family's castle. Thirteen altars, one to each astrological sign, and each to a different world goddess, have been tucked into nooks and crannies of the castle's understructure. The tour there begins with the altar of Brigid, just above the well over which the castle was built 300 years ago. Altars honor Ishtar, the dark Isis, Shakti, Tara, and Mary, among others. The most ornate and final altar is that to the Great Mother Isis.

When we reached the final altar, Olivia engaged us in a group meditation, during the middle of which she went into trance (she's a trance medium) and spoke to us as Dana, the matron goddess of Ireland. Strangely enough, those of us who were taping the entire experience found that our tapes were blank during this segment of the tour, but what I remember her saying (as Dana) was that we women had suffered for a long, long time but that our time was at hand. Because we have been so oppressed as women, we would lead with compassion and understanding. She then warned us to "take care of my trees;

continued on next page

ABOUT THE WRITER: Kay Gardner, M.Mus., is a composer, performer, priestess, and teacher of the healing properties of music. She is internationally known for her numerous recordings, broadcasts, concert tours, and video and film scores. At present she is finishing her book 'Music As Medicine: A Holistic Music Theory,' and returns this spring to the studio to record 'Sacred Geometry.'

NURU from page 18

male and power, because the drum is definitely powerful. Since La Triba, I have not seen anything that touched and involved women on all those levels, physically, musically, spiritually, and various other ways. Prior to that, there were the therapeutic groups and various little cliques or social clubs, but basically people would go party at the bars. I was one of those people, but I enjoyed sitting down with these women and playing this music, and watching other women groove on it, and bringing some of what I call *Ase*, some spirit to that. It was also pertaining to the African roots which I felt women's music lacked to a large extent."

Later, she directed another group called *Cultura*, which has recently formed into the new *Groupo Agogo*, with which she performs. In addition, Nuru is the co-director of a children's African dance company called *Kyaletu Zimbali* ("the fruits of African roots").

In 1985, Nuru was part of a three-woman musical called the *Echo Project* which traveled to Kenya and performed at the NGO National Women's Conference. In 1986, Nuru went to Cuba. She says, "This is the homeland, the motherland of a lot of music that inspired me at a young age and that I have always felt a deep affinity with. It also derived a lot from the homeland of the Yoruba peoples." While she was there, she met four folkloric groups. She played drums, sang and danced with them. She played with men who had never played with a woman quintet before. She says they ac-

cepted her and she befriended them.

In 1976, Nuru founded *Universal Vibrations School of Oral Traditions*, where she teaches workshops and intensive classes. Nuru describes her students as strong, involved with themselves, and learning to grow. "They're using music in a therapeutic way, moving their bodies; they're not ashamed of their sexuality, what their preferences are. They're learning how to go with their heart and soul," says Nuru. "I've been struggling with my family because sometimes they think I'm crazy. I wish I could show them all of the people that I've taught, the fun that we have, the barriers that we've broken through, culturally, racially, even sexually. I love watching the birth of a drummer."

For Nuru, teaching drumming concepts is obviously more than just teaching music. "It goes beyond music," she says. "It is something that can heal them. It's time to use it on all its levels—as a tool, as a musical instrument, as a medium, a channel for healing to come down, and a consciousness-raising experience, as well as just an instrument for people to dance to and let some of their inhibitions out-
rejoice."

In addition to teaching at *Universal Vibrations*, she has also freelanced at other schools. She has worked with the teachers in the *Brockton* school system to introduce drumming concepts into their curriculum. She has also worked with hyperactive children, blind children, and deaf children as well as the elderly at various organizations and institutions. In addition, she and her partner *Fa Too Liz*

Coleman do lectures and demonstrations at grammar schools and at *Tufts University*.

Over the years, Nuru has varied the amount of time that she devotes to her music. Currently, Nuru has an office administrative position at *Leslie College*, a small women's college in Boston. "There was a period of about four or five years when I just wanted to play music," she says. "I did not want to do anything else, so it was my primary source of income. I have worked off and on in an office, or did something else to keep myself well-rounded. I do not want to lose my business sense going off and being *avant-garde* or being a hippie or something."

In addition to her day job and performances, she is involved with several other projects to share her music and what she has learned with the world. She is in the process of putting together a solo tape and possibly an album, and is planning to organize some of her teachings into pamphlets so that she can reach more people than just those who are able to attend her classes.

"I think that women's music really changed as a result of the percussive drum becoming a part of it," says Nuru. "It's an important factor at the festivals because it's a very ritualistic type of instrument. Women start dancing to this drum, and they move like I have never seen them move before they get turned on to this drum. They move their bodies, their pelvic areas—you know, big women, small women, all colors, all different shapes."

MIMI from page 44

time is coming to rebuild—and I plan to begin this spring and summer between touring.

Tragic experiences can be good material for songwriting, and this one has boosted my repertoire. Because I had three concerts lined up, I was able to sing out my pain. Having performed frequently in the Midwest—especially in Missouri and Arkansas—I have built up a supportive audience. The rawness of emotion made these concerts a heartfelt experience.

I knew the next step was to make another album. I called *Karen* in September, and we arranged after a series of phone calls to record another album in *Chicago* at *Universal Studios* in January 1989. It was important to me to hire all womyn musicians—important to share the studio experience with womyn and to have "womyn's energy" in my music. I found everyone I needed among womyn in

Chicago and *Lansing, Michigan*. My sister *Christine* flew in from *New York* to sing with me. The process of recording took three weeks, and resulted in the digitally-mastered *Turning Tide*, available on cassette and CD. [Hear "Jazsong" on the soundsheet in this issue of *HOT WIRE*.] The weeks of recording this new album were an exciting and educational time, with support and encouragement from many womyn.

It is a strong web we womyn are weaving. In city and country we are in this together, not just for our network but in the bigger picture of our survival on the planet. It is a personal, political, and spiritual choice I make to live as I do. My music is an opportunity to share it. ●

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FREESTYLE from page 55

take care of my animals; take care of Earth," a strong environmental message that women must heed and do something about soon.

A full moon ritual on the shores of the *Irish Sea* capped the trip to *England* and *Ireland*. The moon was behind the clouds which spurted raindrops on and off. We called the moon out—just as the women in the circle I led in *Bali* last year had—and she appeared, giving us a mostly dry circling time shadowed only by small clouds scudding quickly across the moonlight. It was powerful to sing and chant for the last time with new friends in such a magical setting.

I feel so fortunate that 1988 was such a rich year of adventure in far-off places for me. June '89 takes me on another tour, this time to *Alaska*, land of the midnight sun, for the *Summer Equinox*. Who knows what future lands will pull me to their shores? ●

HOTLINE from page 52

GROUPS

PASS THE TORCH: The Lesbian Mentorship Project seeks to match new lesbian activists with experienced "mentors" who have demonstrated long-term skills and commitment. The first mentor roster included more than 30 women. Open lesbians with ten or more years of activism in the feminist, gay, or lesbian movements are sought, as well as less experienced women who are interested in signing up as "apprentices." Pass The Torch! 2305 Canyon Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90068. (213) 469-4454.

The **CORINNE GUNTZEL MEMORIAL FUND** has been started by the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation to support projects and research in women's history. Awards range from \$250 to \$500. Harlene Gilbert, The Elizabeth Cady Stanton Foundation, P.O. Box 603, Seneca Falls, NY 13148.

LESBIAN ALUMNAE: Bryn Mawr College lesbian alumnae network forming. Karen Klotzkin, 29 Summit Grove Ave., Bryn Mawr, PA 19010. If you attended Mount Holyoke College--whether or not you graduated--you are invited to join the MHC Lesbian Alumnae Network. Sonna Albino, 32 Elm St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Lesbians attending Illinois State University (or associated with ISU dykes) from 1972-1976 sought for 15 year reunion scheduled for this August. Toni Armstrong, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

Missing Link Music has formed a new **CASSETTE DISTRIBUTION** outfit for small labels and independent cassette artists. They don't deal exclusively in women's music but are feminist and actively seeking women artists. Yearly catalog available. Karen Gunderson c/o MLM, 6920 Rossevelt Way NE #328, Seattle, WA 98115. (206) 633-2258.9

Producciones Poderosas is an **INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC** compilation service for sharing a multitude of recorded women's voices and sounds worldwide, from places such as the Caribbean, Haiti, Africa, and Cuba. It also contains males vocals and musicianship. PP, 910 West Ave. #636, Miami Beach, FL 33139.

The National Coming Out Day of Long Beach, The Center Long Beach, The Center Los Angeles, and The Center Orange county announce second annual **ARTS CONTEST**. According to *Lesbian News*, submissions will be accepted from June 1 to September 1. Finalists



Toni Armstrong, Jr.

Holiday spirit at the Oceanside, California home of Toni Senior and Lois B.

will be announced October 11, on National Coming Out Day. SASE to Lee Balan, The Center Long Beach, 2017 E. 4th St., Long Beach, CA 90814.

The **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF WOMEN IN THE ARTS**, the first major museum in the world honoring the achievements of women artists past, present, and future, is looking for charter members, according to *Atalanta*. NWMA, 1250 New York Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20005.

REDWOOD RECORDS has become a not-for-profit organization, which will make them eligible for more grants. This spring they expect to be publishing *Note By Note: A Guide to Concert Production*. Redwood Records, 6400 Hollis St., Emeryville, CA 94609. (415) 428-9191.

The **ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE** publishes a newsletter, sponsors an annual conference, and has several caucuses of interest to women working in the women's music and culture industry, including sign language interpreters, concert producers, performers, technicians, and bookers/managers. AWMAC c/o WBP, P.O. Box 18129, Cleveland Heights, OH 44118.

MARY MASSARA is the new publicist for Olivia/Second Wave Records. One of her first goals is to update and computerize their media mailing lists for the dissemination of news releases, tour schedules, and info re new record releases. Send SASE and request for Media Questionnaire to Mary at Olivia, 4400 Market St., Oakland, CA 94608. (415) 655-0364. ●

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MARGE from page 42

province of a few experts in the media centers who achieve a measure of fame and visibility and try to define the needs and desires of women unlike themselves.

Far from fading, feminism grows daily more relevant. We see what the last grasp of patriarchy represents: death to the earth and all on it with perhaps the exception of a few cockroaches and microbes. Honor defined as a aggression; good defined as organized greed; power worshipped in its final and most lethal form. Feminism moves toward a world in which love may actually be a common experience. Our technology is monstrous because some of our values are monstrous. There must be a caring dimension added to how we carve up the world, the connection of choice and consequence, explosion with fallout, of poison with illness, of destruction with coming scarcity. We must learn to *feel* what we do, what kind of technology is good for children and other living beings, good for ordinary people. But we have to learn things beyond the family in its narrow sense, beyond those with whom we easily identify. To whom the future belongs depends in large part on who the sense of "we" comes to include, whether the

majority of white men learn to be women as well as themselves in that human "we" as nothing that includes us now, how much of the rest of the world is part of that meaningful "we." It means that the "we" of feminism must include women of a wide range of colors, classes, choices, lives.

I have always liked speculative fiction because it has the capacity to change the variables in society. It both enables you to look at some particular trend such as using poor women as incubators for the more wealthy parts of the society, or using the poor as organ donors for people who can afford to buy organs. You can do something like that in a society, develop it to its limit and thus explore consequences in a trend in the society you've built, and make it loom very large. The imagination is potentially very liberating, and science fiction is one of those areas where the imagination can be let loose, which is another reason I like to read it. I also think that sometimes for women it's very liberating to move into an area where you can have women who are equal, able to be aggressive, able to be heroic, able to do many things as long as they remain reasonable human beings.

I started writing both fiction and poetry

DIAMONDS from page 47

owners Linda Bubon and Ann Christophersen had helped support me in every conceivable way for years.

As usual, though, I'm getting ahead of myself.

In spite of my keeping-busy activities, anticipation began to build as the third week in October approached, which was the scheduled arrival of the book. A week before that, in fact, I had a few "book dreams." In one of these dreams, I opened a box of books and discovered that, at the last minute, Nancy had panicked about the book title, fearing that the word "dyke" would keep us from getting reviewed in certain places. In this panic, without telling me, she changed the title to *Diamonds There Will Be*.

At last, though, an advance copy of the book arrived at my office on Tuesday, October 19 at about noon. *Diamonds Are A Dyke's Best Friend* ran in bold red letters just as we had planned, right over my name. Let me tell you, I didn't get much work done that afternoon! Luckily, I have a very supportive supervisor. It reminds me a lot, actually, of the story my grandmother tells--incessantly--about the day I was born. When she got the phone call from my father at the hospital, her boss

had someone take her over there, saying "She won't be any good to us anymore today." My supervisor is equally astute--and understanding.

But my supervisor's support was just the beginning. Virtually everyone where I work was excited and enthusiastic about the book. In fact, when I held a lunch-time reading there that Friday, about twenty people (out of about thirty) showed up, bearing a cake and flowers and buying nine books--pretty impressive when you consider that only a few of us there were lesbians!

That same night was the big celebration at the bookstore in my home town. I talked there about the book and read a few excerpts to a crowd of about thirty women and men, some of them friends I hadn't seen in many months, and some of them people I'd never met before. We had champagne and Italian cookies--though I, fortunately, spent little time eating and imbibing, being too busy autographing books.

After a two-week long lull in activity, my lover and I embarked on the book tour. Let's just say it was instructive! For one thing, I have a healthy new respect for our women's music performers, who travel like that all the time. I also did my first

when I was fifteen when my family moved into a house where I had a room of my own with a door that shut for the first time. And I've been writing both every since.

I think trying to get very much knowledge from the mass media is a lost cause. I think if you're interested in something and you want to know what's going on in a place, I really believe you read books. You read things that are in-depth, you read real articles in something that will print things in depth. If you want to know about what's going on, you can't inject it, you can't get a five minute fix on it. If you're curious about something and you want to know about it, you have to read about it in depth. I don't think we learn anything except fizzle a lot of the time from the attempts to paint the news in. Most of the news, it disappears all the time, it's the effinescent that goes on that makes us feel as if we know something. What do we know about those two great whales? Where did they go?! They dropped off the world? Every day they were there, we cared about them passionately--what happened to them? They've got transmitters on them, don't they? What happened?! Well, it's not a story any more. They dropped off the world. It's this constant turning the world into consumable pieces. ●

radio interview and first TV interview, both of which aired in Madison, Wisconsin. In addition, I learned that book signings--unless you're Toni Morrison or Adrienne Rich--work better when you do a reading; it helps focus things better and clues people in on who the heck you are, and why you keep sitting there.

The tour ended on a positive note in Indianapolis, where a large crowd of Indy softball dykes showed up to listen to me read and had me sign copies of the book.

Now things are pretty much back to normal. I'm putting together a new poetry manuscript for a couple of contests; looking for a publisher for my young adult novel; and working on my syndicated columns, which were originally published in Chicago's lesbian/gay newsmonthly *Outlines*.

But even now *Diamonds Are A Dyke's Best Friend* hasn't been forgotten. At this writing, I'm trying to adapt the book for a staged reading to be held at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago. We're also brainstorming about ways to reach that set of jocks that doesn't hang out at bookstores. All in all then, in other words, here I am again--waiting *very* actively, but leaving every darn window in the place open. ●

\$\$ BUCKS \$\$

Our Sponsorship Program is moving right along. Please be sure to take the time to look at the Fairy Godmothers section of our masthead (located next to the table of contents). These women are investing a lot of their hard-earned money to help guarantee that *HOT WIRE* will not have to cut back on size, quality, or frequency of publication. We are still in need of approximately 100 women who are willing to donate \$5 per month (we will "bill" you three times per year, or you could pay in one lump sum). If we could find these additional investors, the cost to each of us would become *reasonable!* (Shona and Sylvia--yes, the complaint department gals--are also in charge of this project.) Many thanks to those of you who include a few extra dollars with your subscription checks--it really helps. Many thanks also to those of you who give gift subscriptions. Increasing the circulation is crucial.

HOME IMPROVEMENT DEPT.

The *HOT WIRE* office is expanding. The magazine is currently produced by volunteers in two rooms of a basement. Some wonderful local lesbian carpenters are helping us knock out a wall and add a third room--an improvement we can't

SOR JUANA *from page 15*

a Platonic attachment, noble and heroic, yes, but not really *physical*. (Sor Juana often uses words like "desperation," "torment," and "supplication" in describing her love for these women--not the kind of thing you'd expect to hear in Platonic friendships.) It "does not necessarily ex-

wait for. Many of the problems we (and you) have experienced are a direct result of a million papers and activities being forced to co-exist in a space that has room for only about a thousand.

ON VACATION

"Behind The Scenes" will return next issue, with profiles of the three concert producers from Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago. "The Audio Angle" is being written this time and next time by "guest writer" Edie Herrold, and regular columnist Karen Kane will return in the January 1990 issue. This issue features "Live! From Canada" by Connie Kuhns, which alternates issues with "Access," the column which presents viewpoints and information about issues of accessibility within the women's music and culture network.

Toni Armstrong, Jr.
 Publisher/Managing Editor

clude the presence of Sapphic tendencies in the two friends," he concedes, but "neither does it include them. Any comment on this subject would be mere supposition; we lack facts and documents. The only thing that is sure is that their relationship, although impassioned, was chaste."

Figure that one out. Maybe he imagines that their relationship had to be "chaste" because Sor Juana was a nun.

I think in the interest of intellectual enlightenment on the subject of lesbians, I'm going to purchase a copy of *Lesbian Nuns* and send it to Senor Paz. And I'm going to keep hoping that sometime in the future someone else will write a biography of this amazing woman that will explore, rather than defensively, homophobically deny, the obvious: that Sor Juana, La Decima Musa, was indeed "Sapphic" in more than just her name. ●

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RECORDINGS

AFRICVILLE. Faith Nolan, 1986. MWIC Records, PO Box 690 Station P, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M45-2Y4.

BREAKING ALL THE RULES. Dianne Davidson, 1988. Olivia Records., 4400 Market, Oakland, CA 94608.

EDGES OF THE HEART. Tret Fure, 1986. Olivia Records, 4400 Market, Oakland, CA 94608.

FIGHT LIKE THE DANCER. Nancy Vogl, 1986. Olivia Records, 4400 Market, Oakland, CA 94608.

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.*

I CAN BE STRONG. Aleta Quillen c/o Women Against Rape, PO Box 211, Media, PA 19063. *Songs, written during counseling for sexual assault, to tell my story and give hope to other victims.*

IN MY TWO HANDS. Betsy Rose, Parallax Music, PO Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707. *Lively hymns, chants, country-eastern ballads. Live recording with guitarist Nina Gerber.*

IN SEARCH OF THE HAMMER/RETURN OF THE HAMMER by Cappy Kotz, lyrics by Phrin Prickett. Friends of the Hammer, 5445 26th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98106. *Two lesbian musicals performed by lesbian-feminist theater group Front Room Theater Guild.*

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, Iceberg Records, 207 E. Buffalo #501, Milwaukee, WI 53202. *Contains songs recorded in the studio as well as some live selections.*

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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."*

SISTERSHIP. Faith Nolan, 1987. MWIC Records, PO Box 690 Station P, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M45-2Y4.

SNEAK PREVIEW. Sam Weis, PO Box 20211, Seattle, WA 98102. *Four tunes.*

SONGS YOU CAN SEE. Peggy Lipschulz & Becky Armstrong, 1122 Seward, Evanston, IL 60202. *Contemporary songs plus full-color live drawing.*

VERSE-ABILITY. Helen Hooke, Montana Blake, PO Box 888, Hoboken, NJ 07030-0888. (201) 795-3409. *Hooke, of Deadly Nightshade fame, on lead vocals, guitar, and violin.*

WOLF MOON. Cris Williamson, 1987. Olivia Records, 4400 Market, Oakland, CA 94608.

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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.
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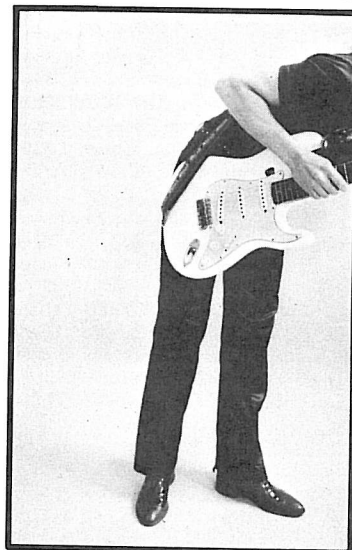
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DOUBLE DAUGHTER by Vickie P. McConnell, Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. *Detective Nyla Wade searches for the truth behind attacks against lesbian teachers.*

DREAMS AND WHAT THEY MEAN TO YOU by Migene Gonzalez-Wippler, Llewellyn New Age Series, PO Box 64383-288, St. Paul, MN 55164-0383. *Explores the nature of sleep, dreams, the human mind/consciousness--analyzes dreams.*

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THE GODDESS BOOK OF DAYS by Diane Stein, 1988. Llewellyn Publications, PO Box 64383, St. Paul, MN 55164-0383. 1-800-THE-MOON. *A perpetual datebook honoring Goddesses and the women they represent.*

INN PLACES 1989. Ferrari Publications, PO Box 37887, Phoenix, AZ 85069. (602) 863-2408. *USA and worldwide gay accommodations--specialized guide to romantic places.*

LETTERS FROM A WAR ZONE by Andrea Dworkin. Sacher & Warburg Ltd., Michelin House, 81 Fulham Rd., London SW3-6RB. *Collection of writings by Andrea spanning 1976-1987.*

LESBIAN ETHICS/TOWARD NEW VALUE by Sarah Lucia Hoagland. ILS, Box 60242, Palo Alto, CA 94306. *Uses lesbian experience as a starting point for redefining ethics.*

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.'*

MY STORY'S ON! ORDINARY WOMEN/EXTRAORDINARY LIVES by Paula Ross. Common Differences Press, PO Box 6504, Albany, CA 94706-0504. *Anthology of stories about a variety of women's lives.*

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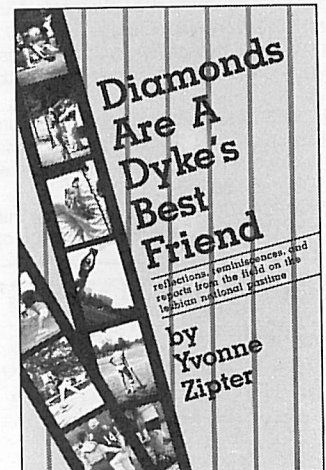
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LESBIAN-FEMINIST DEADHEADS wanted. I'm doing an article for 'HOT WIRE' and need to talk with women who are into both women's music culture and Grateful Dead culture. Contact Marcy c/o 'HOT WIRE.'

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BE DIRECT.....Tell them exactly what displeased you about their coverage or lack of coverage (e.g., size of crowd reported, negative or stereotypical portrayal of lesbian and gay people, representation of a civil rights march as an AIDS event, sexist, racist, or homophobic language, etc.)
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**Cris Williamson (above),
Dianne Davidson &
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Vogl starred in the
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Anniversary Concert
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Toni Armstrong, Jr.

FOURTH ANNUAL 'HOT WIRE'

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

Starting in 1986, HOT WIRE has presented awards to women who have made outstanding contributions to women's music & culture during the previous year. In the January issue, readers were asked to submit nominations specifying the contributions of their nominees. The point is not competition but appreciation for those who have contributed to our network in an especially outstanding way. Below are the nominations we received. Please note: HOT WIRE readers do the nominating, not the magazine staff.

Please vote for one individual and one organization.

The survey of favorites is included for fun and to give us at HOT WIRE a closer look at the tastes of our readers (so we know better who and what to cover in the next year's issues). Please make your survey selections completely on the basis of your personal favorites; this is in no way intended to be a list of "bests." Results of last year's voting can be found in the July 1988 issue.

Readers' Choice votes and surveys for this year can be written on a separate piece of paper or photocopied from this page.

We must receive them no later than May 15, 1989

SEND TO: 'HOT WIRE' READERS' CHOICE, 5210 N. WAYNE, CHICAGO, IL 60640.

INDIVIDUALS

ALISON BECHDEL for her Dykes To Watch Out For cartoon series and books.

ALIX DOBKIN for staying woman-identified and keeping community building in her vision.

AUDRE LORDE for A Burst of Light and a lifetime of inspirational writing.

FAITH NOLAN for being a strong voice for politically-conscious women, especially for black lesbians.

GAIL STRICKLAND for playing Marilyn on the TV show Heartbeat, the first well-adjusted, openly-lesbian character on prime-time TV.

LISA VOGEL/BARBARA PRICE for producing the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

CRIS WILLIAMSON for being a pioneer in women's music and for her continuing presence.

ORGANIZATIONS

ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE (AWMAC) for being a professional organization for the growing women's music industry.

FIREBRAND PRESS for producing high-quality feminist and lesbian literature.

KITCHEN TABLE WOMEN OF COLOR PRESS for publishing literature that focuses on the lives and issues of women of color.

LADYSLIPPER for maintaining the most comprehensive catalog of recordings, videos, publications, and other resources by women.

MOUNTAIN MOVING COFFEEHOUSE (Chicago) for being the longest-running women-only weekly coffeehouse in the world.

NAIAD PRESS for being the oldest and largest publishing house in the world.

THE WOMEN'S MUSIC ARCHIVES for the preservation and documentation of our women's music heritage.

FAVORITES

- Vocalist
Group/band
Songwriter
Bass player
Percussionist
Drummer
Electric guitarist
Acoustic guitarist
Keyboards player
Instrumentalist
Wind instrument player
Comic/comedienne
Emcee
New performer
All-time favorite performer
Current song (last 2 years)
All time favorite song

- Current album (last 2 years)
All-time favorite album
Live sound engineer
Recording engineer
Album cover
Fiction book
Non-fiction book
Periodical
Author
Cartoonist
Photographer
Movie/film
TV star
Film star
Film director
Mainstream performer
Other