

# HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

## FESTIVALS

NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FEST  
MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FEST  
CAMPFEST '85

NICOLE HOLLANDER

SEXISM & RACISM  
ALIX DOBKIN

WOMEN & SCIENCE FICTION

STUDIO RED TOP: JAZZ

J. CASSELBERRY

LAADAN  
LANGUAGE FOR WOMEN

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FLAMENCO DANCERS

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THE CONFERENCE CIRCUIT

CONCERT INTERPRETING IN ASL

Toni L. Armstrong

VOLUME TWO, NUMBER ONE, NOVEMBER 1985

\$5.00

## Guidelines For Contributors

### Writings

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

### Graphics

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

### Soundsheets

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

### Deadlines

For March issue: November 15

For July issue: March 15

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(Unless special arrangements are made in advance.)

### Payment

Payments vary. Send article proposal for details.

### Inquiries

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Chicago, IL 60660



## FROM THE CURIOSITY FILE

Women often ask us where we got the idea to call this journal HOT WIRE. Here's the inspiration:

### FINDING THE HOT WIRE

By Yvonne Zipter

There is a tension between us, physical as potential energy, a high voltage, untapped. Take this test:  
touch me.  
Not sexually,  
but with the flat of your hand, with the tips of your fingers, touch me:  
arms and shoulders;  
the bend where shoulder meets neck;  
my cheekbones;  
the hair above my ears;  
my shoulder blades;  
the ribs in my back and the small of it;  
my waist;  
elbows, forearms, wrists;  
and hands.

If you can do that and not want more, closer, harder, if you can do that and not want the press of hip bone on abdomen, breasts against breasts, my hand firm at the small of your back, then we will know that you are not drawn—like an electromagnet—to my charge.

Will you take the test?

**First publishers:** Not Just a Stage (Toni Armstrong, Michele Gautreaux, Ann Morris, Yvonne Zipter)

**First subscriber:** Dorothy Hoogterp, Michigan.

**First re-subscriber:** Janet Soule, Chicago.

**First Canadian writer:** Christine Kulyk.

**First bookstore to order:** Women & Children First, Chicago.

**First record distributor to order:** Paradigm (Karen Merry), Southern California.

**First festival photographer:** Vada Vernee.

**Most subscribers by state:** (1) California, (2) New York, (3) Illinois.

**Most issues sold at single event:** 51 copies of volume 1, issue 1 (Nov. 1984) with Kate Clinton on the cover, sold at Kate Clinton concert at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago. Kate signed the magazines along with records after the performance.

## Inquiring Minds Want To Know...

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

### About You

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

How old are you?

Are you a HOT WIRE subscriber?

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

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

### You & HOT WIRE

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

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

What else should we include in HOT WIRE?

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# NICOLE HOLLANDER

## An interview with the creator of *Sylvia*

By Paula Walowitz

*Nicole Hollander, creator of the nationally syndicated comic strip Sylvia, has had eight books and two calendars published since I'm in Training to Be Tall and Blonde in 1979. Her slide presentation on women and cartoons is in much demand around Chicago, where she lives with her two cats.*

**HOT WIRE:** First of all, where are you syndicated?

**NICOLE HOLLANDER:** Well, I syndicate myself.

**HW:** What does that mean?

**NH:** It means that I have the strips printed on a reproduction sheet, just like the big guys do it. I send the Sundays in black and white to a place called Greater Buffalo Comics. I specify the colors according to a chart they have, and they send them out to the newspapers that I'm in. The daily strips I send out to the newspapers directly six days at a time so they can lay out their whole week.

I have an assistant, Gail, who is also my promotion manager and my building manager. I have a bookkeeper who comes in every other week; she does the invoicing. Everyone is on a part-time basis. It's like a cottage industry, and I have 40 newspapers. When I was with the syndicate I had 12. And I shared my money with them 50-50.

**HW:** How did you expand it

from 12 to 40?

**NH:** We send out promotional material and Gail follows up. As more of the books come out and the cards...everything works together to make it known. So, it's both that you reach out to get people and that they have to know who you are, to have read something about you or have heard your name. The space is very tight in newspapers, and in order for my strip to get in, somebody else has to get off. It's very competitive.

**HW:** You were syndicated with...?

**NH:** The first one was the Toronto Sun Syndicate in 1980. I felt they weren't doing any kind of job for me, so I went to the Field Newspaper Syndicate. I stayed with both of them for a year and then went on my own. So, I've been on my own now for two years.

**HW:** What gave you the idea to syndicate yourself?

**NH:** The choice was either that I would do it myself or quit. I couldn't stay with them first of all because I owed them a lot of money. They take their 50 percent and then charge me for promotion, printing, and postage. By the terms of my contract, they had to pay me a certain amount of money per month, but then they would defer payment. That deferred payment started to become larger and larger. I thought, "What am I doing? This is crazy."

I had been in business for myself before, and that's probably what gave me the idea. I was a graphic designer. I knew how to produce things. I knew how to produce things better than they did. I had done my own business, where I called people and got clients. A lot of my work was in promoting other people. I thought I could do it, so that's what I did.

**HW:** Do you feel under pressure to produce funny ideas? Does that ever get to you?

**NH:** It's difficult. I think most people, if they're at all funny, say funny things in daily conversation. Friends say funny things. If you think of it that way, you probably think of a funny thing every day. On the other hand, if it has to be a cartoon, you worry about it. And I worry every day that one idea is being eaten up.

**HW:** What is your typical work day?

**NH:** It really varies. There are other things in my life besides cartooning. I have the business, so Gail and I have to meet and talk about business. Unfortunately, the telephone has to ring, and I have to answer it. Even though I have a machine, I cannot stop myself from answering it, so that interferes a lot. For the building, I have to hire painters, and there are leaks. I do like to see my friends occasionally, so I get up early and work if I can.

My best time is when I am almost unconscious. I get up,



not dressed, and just start to work. I don't even drink coffee. The cats have to be fed or they start yelling, but otherwise...

**HW:** Are Sylvia's cats modeled on those two?

**NH:** There's only one cat that appears, and it's this one.

be done or else there will be an empty space in the newspaper. That's a horrible thing to contemplate. I think newspaper offices must be incredibly chaotic, because they're always calling me and saying, "We can't find it. It was here but now it's gone...would you please run out to the post office and mail it overnight?" It's Gail who

I couldn't do it without her.

**HW:** She doesn't see anything as an obstacle? Like what?

**NH:** Like when they say the strip is too controversial. Or when she has to call someone and call them and call them and she finally gets someone who points out that they are not the person to call.

**HW:** What is the current climate like for women who want to do feminist cartooning for a broad audience?

**NH:** That is a contradiction in terms. The difficulty is that most newspapers want to appeal to what they think of as the "universal audience," and that necessarily means that they want the most bland kind of comic strip.

I am a feminist. I don't think my strip is necessarily a feminist strip because I'm too interested in outer space. I'm interested in a lot of different things, but because my main character is a woman—an outspoken, self-confident, older woman who is politically "left"—it's very difficult to get her into newspapers.

Newspapers get a lot of calls about things. People get very angry. Lots of times they don't tell me when they get calls, unless they're dropping me. Last night at my slide presentation, a young girl from Alaska told me that in Kodiak, there was a huge outcry about one of my strips that had mentioned an atomic-powered vibrator. I'm surprised people got mad at that because it's obviously such a silly idea.

I got one polite, tactful letter from a newspaper that said, "Our audience is quite conservative, and so we are not printing your dog poo-poo joke."

**HW:** Talk about the strips that have gotten you dropped. How many papers have dropped you?



Bonnie Cook

"Most newspapers want to appeal to what they think of as the *universal audience*...they want the most bland kind of comic strip."

**HW:** Really? I thought there were two.

**NH:** Sometimes I throw in other cats, but basically, it's this cat. If he turns, you can see that it's him. She is much more difficult to draw. Her fur is complicated. But I gave her this red stone necklace so she doesn't feel left out.

**HW:** Does cartooning ever feel like just a job?

**NH:** It is a job. A wonderful job, but it is a job. It has to

run to the post office, god bless her.

**HW:** It's good to have somebody helping you with this.

**NH:** Yes, and her personality is so much better for dealing with people than mine is. She doesn't see anything as an obstacle. She's always pleasant on the phone. And it isn't about her, so she doesn't take it personally if someone says something unpleasant like, "Why would I want to have Sylvia?"

**NH:** About five or six.

**HW:** It's not all dog poo-poo?

**NH:** A lot of it is the feminism; my attitude about drugs... the cartoon about the commercial where a girl asks her mother, "Ma, can a douche make you feel more confident?" and Sylvia answers the TV, "Not like a good stock portfolio." Many people got very annoyed with that.

There's a real blindness about what should be in the comic pages, that it's a family section, which isn't true. It's a section for adults. Kids understand on the level they understand, but usually cartoons are not geared for them. Even if it has animals in it, it's not necessarily a children's cartoon. Personally I think there are too many animals in the comics; it's a pet peeve of mine.

So, it's difficult to get into the newspaper if you have a special point of view. Someone was asking recently about when are we going to see gay cartoons in the paper. I wouldn't hold my breath. When are we going to see cartoons about black life? About the same time. Or, for that matter, cartoons about Italian families? A few of us can push our way in, but it doesn't mean that since *Doonesbury* is in there—or I am—that anyone else is going to be.

**HW:** How did you get in there?

**NH:** There was a moment in time, like a time warp, of openness and I snuck in there. Then the door closed behind. There was a time when feminism was big. It was powerful, and people were a little more open and a little more willing to give it a try. I got in there, and then I just kept plugging away.

Women helped me a lot. Without their encouragement, I couldn't have done Sylvia. That's where I started, in The

Spokeswoman, a national feminist newsletter based in Chicago. I did the *Feminist Funnies* for them starting in 1976.

**HW:** Does it take a lot of effort for you to think about what is and isn't acceptable, or is it automatic by now?

**NH:** I don't normally think about it until I'm finished, and then sometimes I look at what I've done and wonder "is this going to be acceptable or not?" Then I usually decide just to try it. Though there are some things I just don't. I have a joke that I've always wanted to do about the plane that was destroyed over the Soviet Union, but it'll never be funny so I can't do it.

**HW:** You're fighting a smile here.

**NH:** I want to say that the Soviets admitted today that they had a huge magnet and that they drew the plane into their territory, but can't do it, I won't do it, even though my hand goes to draw it, I won't do it. Every month I ask Gail if I can do it. And every month she says no.

**HW:** What was the story when the *Chicago Sun-Times* dropped you? The rumor was that newspapers drop strips periodically just to see how people respond, and that they had never intended to drop you permanently.

**NH:** Well, that's the story they tell. I felt it was an enormous coincidence that I terminated the Field syndicate, who owned the *Sun-Times* then, and then the newspaper dropped me. I terminated the syndicate in January, and in February I was dropped. What a coincidence.

**HW:** They must have gotten quite a response to have reinstated you.

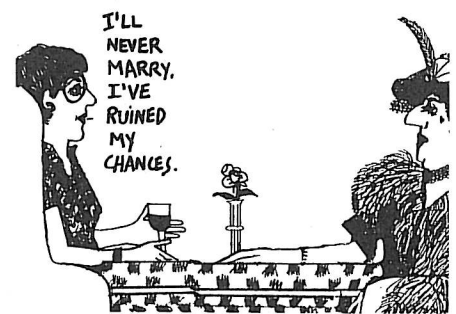
**NH:** Yes. They said they got

200 calls, but I know it was more than that. Individuals, in local women's organizations especially, made it their business to call and keep calling.

**HW:** What about other women cartoonists? Whose work do you particularly respect?

**NH:** Claire Bretecher, for one. She's available in one book translation (The National Lampoon Presents Claire Bretecher). Very, very funny. I show her in my slide show. She's very successful in France. She has a wonderful quirky drawing style and a perfect ear for intellectual pretension, and it translates. Joan Nesbitt, the English cartoonist, is terrific. So are Linda Barry and Mimi Pond.

And I like a few men—Tru-



deau, Mike Peters. Men can do cartoons that do justice to women, but they're men and they're most interested in doing cartoons about men. They find men more fascinating than women, just as women find women more fascinating. Also, men can't really tell the truth about women because women are so sensitive to them. If something coming from a man can be interpreted as sexist, it will be. Women give me more of a chance; they say, "She probably really means this or maybe that." Claire Bretecher says she can show women as real people with foibles because she's on their side. It's her side.

**HW:** Talk a little about your



presentation on women and cartoons.

**NH:** Women in the comic section, like in other areas of life, are either invisible or stereotyped. Mainly invisible. If you count the characters, male and female, in comic strips, you get about four male characters to every one female. That's including the animals if you can tell what sex they are.

The lead character is usually male. Our function is to be stupid, manipulative, after men's money. Secretaries come in for a lot of negative attention in cartoons; there's a lot of male fantasies about secretaries. There are fantasies about nurses too, but they're so sexual, they are not put into cartoons. So,



I show a lot of cartoons about secretaries.

I show a whole series of cartoons by Mort Walker, the Beetle Bailey cartoons. Happily, Mort Walker wrote a book defending himself, and I got an enormous amount of material from that book showing what Miss Buxley looked like at that time and how he's changed her. Because even though he says he was not doing anything wrong, that it's the most gentle kind of humor—and so on—he has

**"There was a huge outcry about one of my strips that mentioned atomic-powered vibrators."**

Nicole Hollander  
creator of Sylvia character

changed Miss Buxley. She does actually work now. She sits behind the typewriter. Her breasts have gotten smaller, and she's covered.

I also show some women cartoonists like Claire and Jo. And, of course, I show Sylvia.

**HW:** It seems obvious to me that men would tend to like the Sylvia strip less than women do. Have you gotten feedback about a gender gap?

**NH:** Some kinds of humor in the strip just have to do with being a woman. Minipads, how you view your physical appearance, or maybe your relationship with your mother, with your friends, with money, with jobs—those things are specific to be-

ing a woman. You don't even have to finish your sentence, the woman across from you knows what you're talking about, she has been there already 12 times. She laughs immediately. Sometimes men have to think about it awhile, and then they laugh. That's the gap—it's a time gap, it's how quickly you get it, how much it touches you viscerally.

**HW:** Do you see what you're doing as a form of political activism?

**NH:** I see it as a form of political involvement. To be an activist is to be out there devoting yourself to women, and going to meetings, and all that good stuff. But it satisfies my

need for political involvement, which is a strong need for me.

**HW:** It seems like maybe one out of five of your daily strips is really political. Do you feel like you can't have two political strips in one week?

**NH:** It really works the other way; I want to have at least one and they are harder to do. If I'm responding to a particular political issue, I have to absorb the issue. It's not something that comes immediately out of my own experience, so I have to think about it. Then I have to think about how I can change it to make it humorous. If it were easier to do, I would probably be doing at least two a week.

**HW:** Do you have feelings about Sylvia?

**NH:** I get mad when people say she's bitter or cynical. It's never women who say that. I think she takes shots at targets that deserve to get shot at. I don't think she's cynical.

**HW:** What is she then?

**NH:** Unrepentant comes to mind. Self-confident. Always has the last word. And she's someone who can still get angry. I hope that I will forever be able to get angry at things and not ever say, "Oh, that's just the way it is."

**HW:** Do you like being well-known?

**NH:** It doesn't really make that much difference. People are nicer to you about five minutes longer than they were before you were well-known. But you still have to do the same things you always had to do. You still have to clean the kitty litter. ●

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Paula Walowitz is a singer-songwriter, fledgling astrologer, and witch-in-training (wit).*

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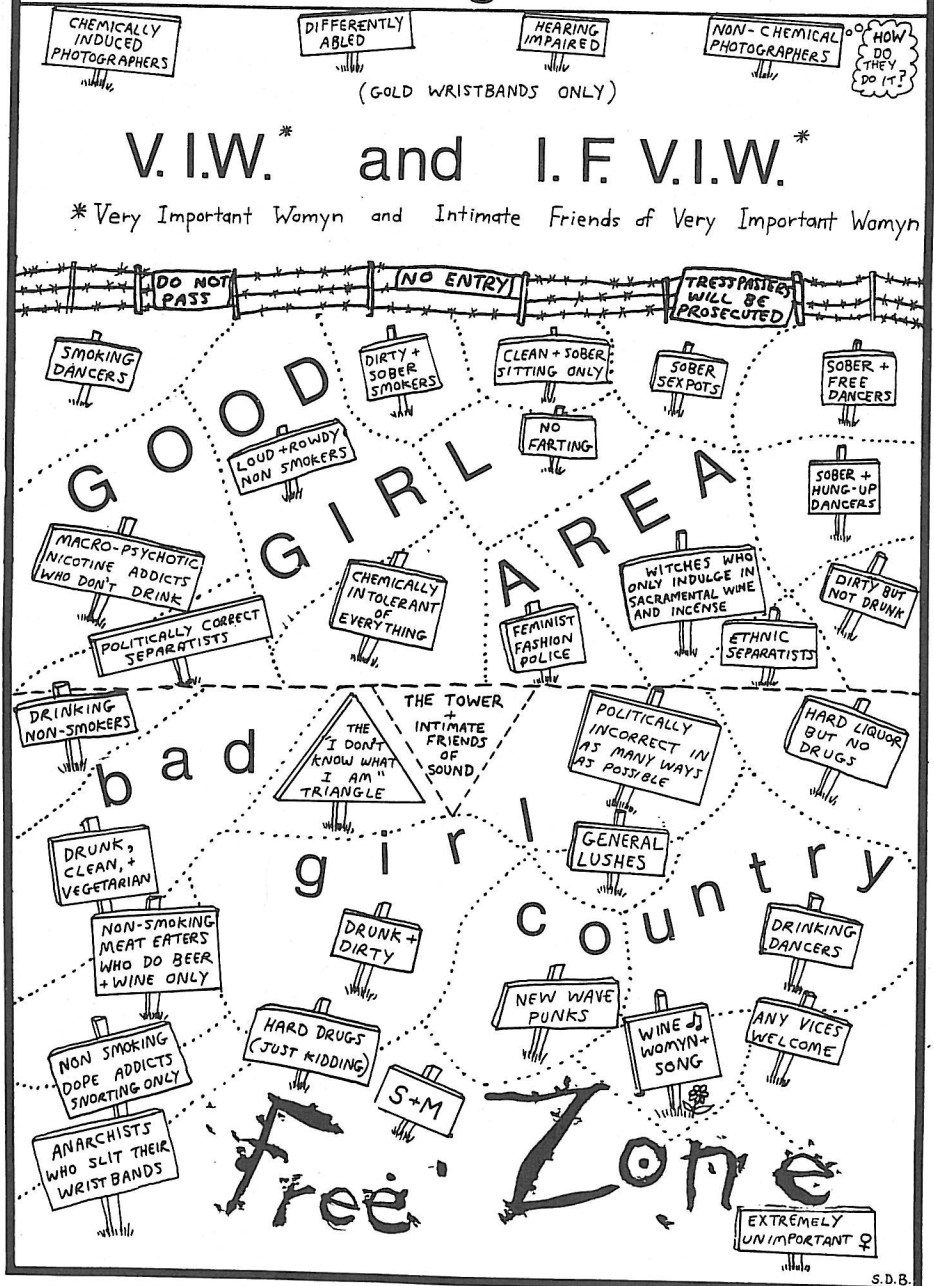


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*"Talent, especially in a woman, creates a zest for variety that the deepest passion cannot entirely supply. A monotonous life, even in the bosom of content, displays a mind so constituted."*

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)  
Am. writer and social critic



# FLAMENCO DANCERS

By Judith Markowitz

Because of the attention given to male performers, many people have the impression that flamenco dancing is the product of male creative energies. The truth is that women were central to its development. References to women dancers who made important contributions to flamenco dance date from as early as the 16th century.

The earliest of these women were the gypsy dancers, whose energetic performances were described by the celebrated 16th century Spanish writer Cervantes. Professional male dancers apparently did not appear on the scene until the 19th century. More recently, the talent and creativity of women—such as the three dancers described below who made important contributions to flamenco—redefined and redirected the art of flamenco dancing.

## ANTONIA MERCE (1886-1936) "LA ARGENTINA"

Antonia Merce was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She is believed to have been the child of two flamenco artists, so it is not surprising that she became a flamenco performer. It could not, however, be predicted that she would revolutionize flamenco dancing.

Prior to the changes introduced by Merce, flamenco dance tended to be uncontrolled and even wild. Borrowing from other schools of dance, Merce brought to flamenco a subtle, controlled

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



Detail from Dore's 'The Bolero,' showing the pre-La Argentine dance style.

style which became known as "stylized flamenco dance." All gestures and movements which did not directly contribute to the expression of the spirit of the music were eliminated. Instead, she designed a tightly-woven but emotionally powerful performance utilizing graceful arm and hand movements, facial expressions, skilled dance-steps, and effective use of the castanets. She transformed flamenco dance into an art.

## ENCARNACION LOPEZ (1900-1945) "LA ARGENTINA"

Encarnacion Lopez was also born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, but she spent most of her life in Spain. Her dancing career began early, but did not include flamenco until she was an adult.

Like Antonia Merce, she rejected the wild flamenco dance style in favor of a more controlled, "stylized" approach. Lopez not only refined the stylized approach, she used her highly creative talents to chore-

ograph flamenco song types, such as la cana, for the first time. Flamenco music has traditionally been a vocal art. Slowly, the song types of flamenco began to be played for dancers. Even now there are certain things that are not danced to; things that are considered too serious, too emotional. Lopez's choreography brought new song types into the dance repertoire.

## CARMEN AMAYA (1913-1963)

Carmen Amaya is one of the most dynamic and creative flamenco artists who ever performed. Born into a gypsy family of flamenco performers, Amaya displayed remarkable talents very early in her life. By age four she was dancing professionally, and by age 10 she was already dancing with the greatest flamenco guitarists of the time.

Amaya's dancing style broke with tradition and served to liberate female dancers from the "feminine" flamenco dancing style which stressed fluid arm, hand, and upper body movements above all else. Her natural style was driving and vigorous. She adopted the "masculine" dance style instead, along with the traje corto, or shirt and pants worn by the male dancers. Sometimes her dancing was so vigorous that the machine-gun footwork would break through the floorboards.

As Amaya matured, she be-

*continued on page 61*

JUDITH MARKOWITZ, Ph.D., has studied and played flamenco guitar for over 20 years. She has played at many women's events.

# ASL INTERPRETING FOR CONCERTS

## AN INTERPRETER'S VIEW

By Jody Steiner and Laurie Rothfeld

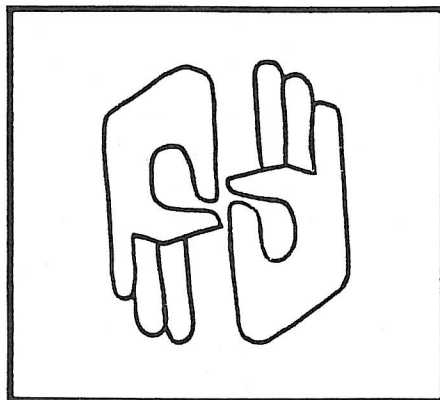
Why should American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters be incorporated into our cultural events? Because there is a need for it. Deaf people are a part of our society often excluded from information as well as participation by an insensitive or unknowing majority. If we extend ourselves to our deaf and hearing-impaired sisters, we have the opportunity to learn from their unique experience as well as share our culture with them.

Accessibility for deaf and hearing-impaired women is an area in which women's music has been ground-breaking. Mainstream music provides no role model for it. The women's music network has been developing and perfecting the use of concert interpreters for years, out of a genuine commitment to including all women who want to be a part of the evolving women's culture.

### INTERPRETER EYE-VIEW

Music is a universal language, but not if you can't hear. We share information, dreams, and ideas—we communicate. If you are deaf or hearing impaired, as are 16 million Americans, you may communicate visually using American Sign Language, a natural language with its own unique grammar, syntax, idioms, and metaphors. ASL is more similar to Chinese than English in how the words are put together. Be-

**ACCESS** articles present viewpoints and information about issues of accessibility within the women's music and culture network.



The generic symbol indicating Sign Language Interpreted Event.

cause English is the language of the hearing majority in the United States, communication in the deaf community (and between deaf and hearing people) occurs through the use of ASL and Pidgin Sign English (PSE). PSE is a blending of the principles of ASL and spoken English. An interpreter's job is to facilitate communication between two cultures and two languages. An interpreter-artist, moreover, can create new harmonies, when a language of shapes and movements interacts with a language of sound.

### PERFORMER/INTERPRETER? INTERPRETER/PERFORMER?

ASL interpreters are trained to follow a strict code of ethics. Having been trained to be a link in the communication exchange for non-performing interpreting assignments, the stage interpreter must now develop her performing skills. She must perfect her movement, body language, and timing so she can accurately match the energy of Kate Clinton or the

dynamic presentation of Casselberry & DuPree. There is a delicate balance here because the interpreter's job is to capture the essence of the performer and send it to the deaf audience members without stealing focus. This is a topic we encourage producers, performers, and interpreters to discuss—with feedback from deaf audience members. When are you part of the act? Rehearsing together allows for meeting each other (it's hard to work on stage with a stranger). It's important for interpreters to share translation ideas, perhaps explain a little bit about ASL, and clear up any last minute questions about the meaning of some lyrics. Rapport between performer and interpreter can lead to some clever ideas: Kate Clinton will take a sip of water during her routine, then offer the glass to the interpreter—who will dip her fingers into the water for relief! This pre-planned interaction pulls the deaf audience into full participation.

The interpreter is the deaf audience's link to what's being said on stage. If the interpreter is hidden in a badly-lit corner as far from the performer as possible, deaf people feel excluded and isolated. When Ronnie Gilbert dances with the interpreter during "Activity Room," or Sweet Honey members encourage everyone to sign along, deaf women are often moved to wave the "I Love You" sign to the performers on stage who have recognized and included them.



## HOW DOES THIS PROCESS HAPPEN?

The interpreter must receive lyrics/tapes four-to-six weeks before the event. Lyrics alone are not enough—the music is essential to the song and essential to the translation. In storytelling, theater, and poetry voice tapes and written materials are also essential for accurate translation of voice quality, pacing, and characterization. Interpreters will study and translate, often with the advice of a deaf consultant, for accuracy and clarity. The next step is to synchronize the translation with the music. This requires hours of work—estimates vary, but no less than 50 hours for a two-hour show. It's important to understand that interpreters are translating, not merely signing word for word in English grammar order. Many times interpreters are faced with last-minute set changes. When this happens, performers mistakenly think the song they are adding is a simple one because the melody is easy to follow, or the lyrics are repetitive. In actual-

ity, a song that is simple in the context of the hearing world may be extremely difficult to translate artistically (or otherwise) because of sound rhymes, puns, and fast rhythms.

One example of this is Betsy Rose's well-loved song "Coming Into My Years." The line "coming into my..." is repeated continually throughout, holding a different meaning in the context of each verse. Although the English words repeat, an accurate translation requires a different ASL phrase each time that line is sung.

This does not mean that interpreters can't and won't accept some last minute changes. In most cases they will. What it does mean is that performers must respect the interpreters' decisions on the feasibility of interpreting last-minute additions. Similarly, the interpreters must understand the artists' need for spontaneity. Flexibility and sensitivity are the keys to a successful event.

*"In a world where there is so much to be done, I felt strongly impressed that there must be something for me to do."*

Dorothea Dix (1802-1887)  
Am. humanitarian and reformer



Laurel Chiton interpreting for Holly Near in Boston at the Mobilization for Survival Anti-Euromissile Campaign.

## WHY DO OUTREACH?

The deaf community is made up of tightly-woven networks. Advertising in the mainstream press will rarely reach deaf people. A good interpreter can be the link to the deaf community. She can put the producer in touch with a liaison who will sell tickets, publicize the event, and help educate the production staff. Many interpreters are developing their own followings. Deaf and hearing people who like a particular interpreter's style will attend an event based on the quality and reputation of the interpreter.

## ADVICE FOR INTERPRETERS WHO WANT TO DO CONCERT WORK

Work with a contract. Communication is your job, so be sure everything is clear from the start. Is your fee fair? Does it include time and effort for outreach? Do you have the artist's phone number and address for contact prior to the event? Do you have explanations for what is needed for proper lighting and sound monitors? Will there be reserved seating for deaf people? Will you have access to a dressing room? Will you be fed? What will you do if you do not receive tape/lyrics four weeks before the event? Will your name appear on the advertising and promotional materials? Will your bio be in the program? Will you or another interpreter handle

*continued on page 61*

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Jody Steiner. Boston, tone-deaf, sings with her hands. An actress and interpreter, she has toured internationally with the National Theatre of the Deaf, has appeared on Sesame Street, and has interpreted concerts, political events, and theatre.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Laurie Rothfeld, free-lance interpreter/performer of Boston, has interpreted over the past 5 years at numerous festivals, concerts, rallies, and theatres. She is proud to be one of the lucky few to have dipped her fingers into Kate Clinton's water glass on stage.

Ellen Shub

By Joy Rosenblatt

## GATHERINGS

**PARIS**, France was the location of the Fourth International Congress on Women and Music in 1984. It was sponsored by the French Ministries of Culture and Women's Rights. Over 1,000 participants attended the events of the Congress. The Fifth International Congress will be held March 20-23, 1986, in Atlanta, GA. The Atlanta Symphony has agreed to dedicate its subscription concert of March 20 to the Congress and will have a woman soloist perform. Coretta Scott King has been invited as one of the keynote speakers. For info write: Dr. Ruth McDonald, Music Dept., Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA 30303.

**FORUM '85**, the unofficial series of workshops and discussion groups held in mid-July in Nairobi, was attended by over 11,000 women from 150 countries. The conference marked the end of the UN Decade for Women, reports Sojourner.

**WINNIPEG** hosted the second annual CANADIAN WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE FESTIVAL over Labor Day weekend. Featured performers included Lillian Allen, Heather Bishop, and Lucie Blue Tremblay, reports the Canadian paper Kinesis.

**ISRAEL** will host an international women's music festival embracing all forms of music, to be held June 23-29, 1986. For further info write Liora Morjel, P.O. Box 3391, Beer-sheba 84-130, Israel.

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

**WINTER MINIFEST**, Nov. 30, Mountain Moving Coffeehouse for Womyn & Children. This Chicago event, now in its fourth year, is the only winter festival of women's music and crafts.

## NEWS



Susan Wilson

**The Not-Ready-For-Low-Percentages Players at the 1985 MIC.**

**WOMEN'S MUSIC INDUSTRY** updates: A women producers' alliance was formed at the 1985 Music Industry Conference in Bloomington, and it will be conducting a survey to ascertain what producers are doing, what they want from this alliance, and if they would attend an early producers-only (pre-fest) segment at the next MIC. Interested producers should write to Allegra Productions, P.O. Box 469, Cambridge, MA 02238. The Women's Music & Culture Association was founded and seed money was collected to start a mailing list and to get the organization going. Long-term goals may include: running the annual awards banquet at the MIC, providing professional development and standards, doing joint promotion, and increasing education, networking, and skill-sharing among women in the women's music industry. Any women working in the business should write to the Association c/o Midwest Music, 207 E. Buf-falo, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

**CLASSICAL NEWS.** At the 1985 NWMF, The Classical Women's Music Network was organized. A directory is being compiled of women composers and conductors as well as a listing of all involved in the performance, production, research, and creation of compositions by women. The NWMF Chamber Ensemble committee was also formed, and has drawn up a 3-year proposal vis-a-vis classical music and the NWMF. Synthesia, Inc. was started to oversee these projects. For info write Leslie Judd, 7303 Egypt Lane, Louisville, KY 40219.

**ROADWORK** is closing its California office after 4 years of working as a bi-coastal tour planning agency. Penny Rosenwasser will continue to operate under her own name, doing tour coordination and booking.

## WOMEN

**TERRY GRANT**, owner of Goldenrod Distribution (MI, OH, IN, KY, TN, AL, and MS) is also the proud new owner of Horizon Distribution (MA, ME, NH, VT, RI, and CT). Terry has no plans right now to merge the two companies, but will continue with the same excellent management of Merle Bicknell, who has run it for the last two years.

**LILY TOMLIN**, along with **SALLY FIELD**, have received awards from WAND (Women's Actions for Nuclear Disarmament) for their work on behalf of disarmament. According to Sojourner, WAND founder Helen Caldicott presented the awards to Tomlin and Field, who serve on the board.

**JUDY GRAHN** was presented with the Gay Book of the Year Award by the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association for her book Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds, reports the Feminist Writers Guild Newsletter.

**BESSIE SMITH**, known as the "Empress of Blues," was inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame this past March in Seneca, NY. She made over 160 recordings before her death in 1937 from a car accident in which a "whites only" hospital refused her treatment, according to Otherviews.

**FERRON** was invited to perform at Folk City's 25th Anniversary Concert held Sept. 14 in New York City. Also featured were Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Mary Travers, Laura Nyro, Janis Ian, and others.

**DEIDRE McCALLA's** album Don't Doubt It was nominated as the best album on an independent label by the 1985 New York Music Awards. One song from the album, "This Part of the World" by Ilene Weiss, was nominated as best song on an independent album.

**THE SINGING NUN**, Jeanne Deckers, who gained fame recording "Dominique," has committed suicide along with her long-term female companion in Belgium. The former singing nun left the Dominican order in 1966 and had been beset by financial problems, according to The Weekly World News. She set up a home for autistic children that had to be closed because of money trouble; the Belgium government was demanding back taxes even though she had donated all profits to the Catholic Church.

**"BANG BANG UBER ALLES"** the political musical by June Jordan and Adrienne Torf, was produced off-Broadway this past summer. Part of this material was seen at the 1984 NWMF.

**KRISTIN LEMS**, one of the original founders of the NWMF when it was in Champaign-Urbana, has spent the last year in Algeria as a Fulbright scholar teaching English.

**LINDA TILLERY's** album Secrets moved from #30 to #8 on the KUTE radio charts in Los Angeles during the summer.

**MARILYN SHRUDE** became the first woman ever to win a prize in the prestigious Kennedy Center Friedham Composition Competition in October of 1984. Her piece was commissioned by the Toledo Symphony Orchestra, who gave the work its premiere performance. Her composition was chosen from among 104 entries. According to American Women Composers/Forum, it was awarded third prize.

## PUBLICATIONS

**BETWEEN OUR SELVES**, the women of color newspaper, is now in print. The women who edited the first two issues write that "Between Our Selves" is a forum for us as Afro-Americans, Arabic-Americans, Asian-Americans, Latinas, Native Americans, all women of color, to discuss thoughts and activities, report on our organizing strategies, further Third World feminism, and talk about our herstory and dreams." Write to them at P.O. Box 1939, Washington, DC 20013.

**THE LESBIAN INCITER** will be published from California. It has moved from Minneapolis, and the new address is: 2215 Market St. #307, San Francisco, CA 94114.

**ACHE**, the black lesbian journal, and **ONYX**, the newsletter of black lesbian writings, have discontinued publication.

**GOODBYE** to New Women's Times and its Feminist Review. According to Sojourner, off our backs incorporated the last two FRs in the June and July issues and have agreed to send oob to all the NWT subscribers until the subscriptions run out. The closing was due in part to two costly lawsuits.

## MOVIES

**RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE**, Rita Mae Brown's popular novel, is being made into a movie, according to New Directions for Women and HerSay. But Bruce Campbell, the filmmaker, plans to shoot it as a "hard R" and later add X-rated lesbian love scenes to make the film a hit at hardcore porn houses. Not only is Brown furious at this, but also at his refusal to hire her for the screenwriting or to pay enough for good screenwriting treatment.

**MORE THAN 50 FILMS** were shown at the International Festival of Women's Films in Toronto in the fall of 1984. According to Hysteria, most of the films were made in the last 10 years and came from 16 countries. The next festival will be in the fall of 1986.

**WOMEN MAKE MOVIES** has released their film Committed, a feature-length movie by Sheila McLaughlin and Lynne Tillman. It is the story of Frances Farmer told from her own point of view. It was selected by the Whitney Museum of Art for showing at the 1985 Biennial Exhibition, reports Media Report to Women.

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

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*"Between two evils, I always pick the one I never tried before."*

Mae West in 'Klondike Annie,' 1936  
Am. actress, playwright, scenarist



# WHO IS A WRITER?

**"So long as you write what you wish to write, that is all that matters; and whether it matters for ages or only hours, nobody can say."**

—Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

By Jorjet Harper

For some, writing is a calling rather than an occupation. For others, it is a way to earn a living, or a way to get in touch with themselves, or a way to express and share their thoughts. Because writing has multiple functions in our society, all sorts of practitioners can justifiably call themselves writers. And because almost no writer gets adequately paid for her work, the line between professional and amateur is a very fuzzy one. The fact that those of us who do get actual money for our words are often shamefully underpaid only feeds into the image of artistic sacrifice and unswerving dedication. Perhaps the only positive aspect of the chronic underpayment most writers endure is that it makes it easier to settle the question, "Am I a writer?" So many good, even great writers have been underappreciated in their own lifetimes or ignored for a major portion of their writing lives that the answer is: If you write seriously and if you keep writing, you are a writer, and you needn't let anybody—the male literary establishment, publishing houses, your cousin who is a member of the Book-of-the-Month Club, whoever—tell you otherwise.

There is so much romance and hype attached to words like "writer," "artist," "musician," and—perhaps especially—"poet" that it may seem terribly egotistical or grandiose to identify

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



yourself with any of them. But it is often an important psychological step to take if you are serious about your work. On the other hand, to whatever extent you are enamored with the mystique of writing—watching yourself "being" a writer—you are going to be deflected from concentrating on the substance of what you are trying to say. I think much writer's block may stem from trying to live up to the images that have been dumped on us of what a writer should be.

I once attended a writers' workshop in which a young woman said she had written a great deal in high school, but since then she had stopped completely. Her "dream" was to be a writer, so this inability to write had disturbed her very much. "But now," she said, "I realize that I am a writer and I will always be a writer, even if I never write another word

in my life." As silly and paradoxical as it sounded, she voiced this pronouncement with such defiance and desperation that no one in the room had the heart to challenge it or even ask her to explore its implications. It is risky to define yourself as an artist or writer a priori, without tangible "evidence"; if you don't do what you claim you are, you call your entire existence into question. But because developing an identity as an artist of any kind can be very difficult, it may be tempting at times to just assert it, as this woman did, fighting off not only doubt but common sense as well.

The imposing aura of magic surrounding the creation of any kind of art is further compounded by the historical denial we have experienced as women. This denial often takes very insidious forms, as Joanna Russ (*How to Suppress Women's Writing*) and other women have shown. I once got into a very draining argument with a former friend of mine who claimed I was not "destined" to be a writer, not because I was female, but because I had not kept copious journals from a tender age. But surely, I said, there must be many writers who began to write seriously without years of adolescent notebooks behind them? He—a frustrated writer himself—maintained that there were none. "For a real writer, it's almost instinctual." Just picture it: little chubby, sticky fingers reaching, groping for pencil and paper, kind of the way a kitten instinctively finds its way to the kitty lit-

ter...? There is always another level that someone can try to deny you on. If you write, well, that doesn't make you a writer. If you are a writer, well, you aren't a real (whatever that means) writer. You may be a working writer, but, well, you aren't a great writer, so why even try? And etc. You can waste a lot of time letting other people's biases—or outright nonsense—about writing get to you, get you down.

It's quite true that art requires commitment and time to concentrate. Almost everything worthwhile does. Women who want to write are often discouraged when their first few stories or poems are, by their own reckoning, not very good, though nobody would sit at a piano for the first time and expect to play a Bach fugue. Perhaps because reading and writing are taught us in school and are assumed to be a part of basic communication skills, we look at writing differently than music or painting.

Art with a capital A may be motivated ultimately by a grand vision. But in carrying out that vision, the writer must make many choices—specific ones—about content, style, characterization, tone, accessibility of language, phrasing, semantics, and more. It takes time to develop a sense of what's right, not for anyone else, but for you. I find myself searching my mind for the right word, right phrase, even the right idea. It's discouraging when it doesn't appear. But when I've found it, I know it. This process is genuinely mystical and scientific at the same time, and it's one of the great satisfactions of writing—one you don't have to be published to feel.

To be able to say just what you want to say in words is to be capable of many things, from minute self-examination to the creation of vast imaginary uni-

verses, from the most intimate recordings of daily life to large scale reporting or entertainment. The only prerequisite is the belief that your thoughts are of value.

It takes hard work to get over fear, fear of writing that is clumsy or lumbering, fear of appearing foolish, of discovering later that you've said things that are trite, wrongheaded, or just plain ridiculous. It can take a great effort of will to speak up, to speak out. Sometimes you feel that nobody is ever going to hear you; other times you are afraid that everyone will—and they will notice any flaw.

Writing for publication is a process of becoming visible. It can be scary to think that your words, your thoughts, vital bits of yourself, are going Out There, into the unknown, and that you will have no control over what others make of your work. Someone is bound to see something you never anticipated. This can be delightful if you like what they have found; it can be distressing when it is a misinterpretation. Publishing forces the writer to come to terms with the relative value of her words in the world as opposed to the value she places on them for herself.

After a reading I gave at a women's bookstore, someone came up to me, shook my hand enthusiastically, introduced herself, and told me, "I just love your world view." I'm sure she meant it well, but I felt simultaneously flattered and insulted. Had she really been able to comprehend my "world view" after hearing me read just six pages of my novel-in-progress?

Yet I see this assumption in myself, too. All I know of a writer may be her well-con-

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*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Chicago-based writer, editor, and songwriter Jorjet Harper is completing her first full-length novel. Earlier this year she became the National Administrative Coordinator of the Feminist Writers Guild.*

**The Feminist Writers Guild is a non-profit organization founded in 1977, dedicated to furthering writing and networking by all women who identify themselves as feminists. The Guild is open to any writer who is a feminist, "whether she writes much or little, whether she writes for publication or not." Unlike most writers' organizations, which require publication credits in order to be considered for membership, the Guild acknowledges that writing is a process, a becoming.**

**The Guild thus encompasses women who write nonfiction, fiction, poetry; journalists, publicists, media writers, songwriters, dramatists; women who are feminists but whose writing doesn't focus on feminist issues; women who are professional writers; women who write specifically for the womyn's community; women who are unpublished but hope to publish eventually; women who write purely for their own satisfaction, with no interest in reaching a wider audience.**

**If you have a commitment to feminism and to writing, we invite you to join us. Regular membership in the Guild is \$15/year; Fixed income membership (unemployed, retired, welfare) is \$7/year; Contributing membership is \$25/year. Members receive national newsletters and a yearly Directory. The Guild also sponsors literary and political projects. Local chapters offer workshops, discussion groups, readings, and other activities.**

**Feminist Writers Guild  
National Headquarters  
P.O. Box 14055  
Chicago, IL 60614**

**Rejection of her work based on patriarchal standards of style and content is an everyday occurrence for the feminist writer. Over the last decade, feminist writers, publishers, and presses have been building alternatives to a "mainstream" that is still suffused with notions of male superiority. As women writers in an inhospitable literary and publishing world, we need the courage, inspiration, and sense of unity that a broadly-based community of women writers can provide—as well as the information and resources we can offer each other.**

# TECHNOPOP & WOMEN'S MUSIC

By SUE FINK

***Will synthesizers destroy music forever, banishing art to a time capsule? Is technopop by its nature "non-feminist" music?***

I intend to have as many adventures as I can cram into this lifetime. My musical adventure of preference is the synthesizer, and I'm hooked on exploring its possibilities.

You are probably wondering what "technopop" is. To some extent, so am I. Artists as diverse as the Thompson Twins, Prince, Eurythmics, and Laurie Anderson are all dabbling in the techno world. It's music that is heavily synthesizer-based.

Synthesizers crept in as frosting on the cake in the 1970s. In pop music, they are to the 80's what guitars were to the 60's. Synthesizers are now the center of arrangements. Musical style has shifted to where they are the cake and the frosting as well.

Enthusiasm for synthesizers is by no means universal. Some people fear that these machines will destroy music forever, banishing art to a time capsule—or at the very least the synthesizers will make everything sound cold, sterile...the same. Others fear that technopop and rock are, by nature, not feminist music. Still others fear that synthesizers, like computers, will take jobs away from musicians.

These are tough questions. Here are the answers according to techno-Sue. Let's deal first with the accusation that techno music is cold and all the same.

I see myself as a singer, songwriter, and orchestrator much more than as a player. Since the completion of my schooling as an arranger and

composer, I have had very little access to a full orchestra. The synthesizer gives me the capability to bring the fullness to my music that I never could have experienced with piano alone. Instead of making everything sound the same, I can create an arrangement that brings violins to a ballad, or explosions to a song like "The End is Near." Far from limiting

the sounds I can work with, the synthesizer extends my options. Each song can be totally different in arrangement and feeling.

Some synthesists deliberately try to create a sound that is cold and machine-like to create a feeling or express a message. But the synthesizer can create magic and warmth as well.

There are new sounds being



Barbara McPherson

**"Far from limiting the sounds I can work with, the synthesizer extends my options. It's like having an orchestra in my living room."**



discovered that have never been heard—or used in music—before, which are changing music forever. What you get out of it is the creativity and imagination you bring to it. So in terms of art, the field is wide open.

Is technopop music "non-feminist"? In the 1960s, music with consciousness-raising messages was primarily associated with folk music. Rock music has been associated with sex, abuse, and drugs. But in reality music is music, and lyrics are lyrics. On tour recently in Dallas, Diane Lindsay and I passed a sign in front of a church that read: "Rock & roll condemns souls." Is this fundamentalist thinking any different from the broad generalization "Technopop is non-feminist"?

Women's and alternative audiences have been, until recently, mostly folk-identified. Meanwhile, the gap between popular overground music and what our audience has come to expect at concerts has widened. Women memorize the pop songs that the radio dictates to us, and they dance to these songs in bars. Isn't it time that we integrate our strong, socially-conscious lyrics with current-sounding pop music? If we do, we can broaden our audience and reach the ears of the mainstream.

Most of the drums on pop albums now heard on the radio use drum machines. They can create sounds that a drummer just can't play live. However only a drummer can bring the best out of one of these machines.

We can either fight the growth or use it. When it came to making my album, I turned to people like Barbara Borden [drummer for the jazz quintet Alive!] to help me program the digital drums on my technopop song "Boys Are Thugs." Her first reaction was, "This isn't my style of music. Drum machines are totally foreign to me." But the next minute her adventurous spirit had led her to listening to songs on the radio with me, discussing style and content. Next, she was excitedly experimenting with my machine. She brought drummer's perspective to the programming. We were able to create electronic snare sounds that gave the effect of gunshots that would be impossible to produce on traps.

It can be pretty overwhelming to imagine learning about oscillators, algorithms, ADSR, sequencers, etc. One recent review in a newspaper called me an "electronic wizard." But in reality I have trouble changing light bulbs.

initial fact-finding missions, I walked into the music store as if I was going to walk out with a \$30,000 synthesizer if only the salesman could convince me which one was the best. I had read one pamphlet beforehand, and I used a clever opening phrase: "Would you suggest me buying a digital or analog synthesizer?" Now I was in.

Demonstrations and fountains of information poured from his throat. The hard part was getting this information in English instead of in "Technoese." I wandered from store to store comparing, asking, reading—and I still felt like I hardly knew anything. I finally accepted the difficult truth that the only way to learn was to have IT in my hands. My heart almost stopped, but I took the big step and walked out with my OB8 (Oberheim) and my DMX digital drum machine and a very empty bank account.

I went home, unpacked the boxes, listened to other artists, and experimented. Almost immediately, my writing style changed dramatically. I found myself writing music that was drum-based instead of piano-based, orchestral instead of chordal. I created and played with sounds; I was a mad scientist shut off in my little studio with my imagination and

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## Invariably a drummer will come up and tell me I'm putting a drummer out of work by using a drum machine.

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Synthesizers have changed music forever, and musicians from now on are going to have to learn more than fingering and phrasing.

I use pre-programmed digital drums in concert and on my Big Promise album, and invariably a drummer will come up and tell me I'm putting a drummer out of work by using a drum machine.

I have to admit it was scary to make the first steps—but my curiosity helped me to bypass the panic. Maybe you can profit from my approach now that I've convinced you that it's okay to be a wild technopop pioneer like me.

When it came time to find out specifics about equipment, I was aware that salesmen tend to ignore women. So, on my

Pandora's box. Even my lyrics were affected by the stimulation the music brought to my brain cells.

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*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Sue Fink is doing too many things to crowd into this tiny bio. But you can get a hint of her incredible talent by listening to her outrageous album Big Promise, by catching her national tour, or by sending for her complete life story from "The Sue Fink Fan Club." She co-wrote "Leaping (Lesbians)" with Joelyn Grippo.*

# STUDIO RED TOP

## Women's Jazz in Boston

By CATHY LEE

"My experience has been that the women's jazz network is very different from women's music as a whole. Jazz women, both musicians and support personnel, have in common a professional commitment to a spiritual, musically accomplished, multi-racial, co-ed vision. To the degree that women's music emphasizes different dimensions (for example, "commercial potential," less mature musicianship, insistence on all-women groups or audiences, or alternative-gender-loving lyrics), many jazz women find the women's music network distorted and alienating. In saying this I don't mean to deny the legitimacy of these dimensions—or to imply that jazz women have nothing to gain by overcoming their prejudice.

Most women who are active in jazz could probably be dismissed as "fembots": they value themselves imitating, serving, and promoting the interests of jazz men. A growing number have combined feminist analysis with jazz activism, though we often find ourselves misunderstood, resented, co-opted, and sometimes openly attacked by peers both female and male. Feminists in the jazz community are caught between the rock of our colleagues' unquestioning patricentrism and the hard place of a women's music sisterhood which seems disinterested in, or unsympathetic to, our struggles.

*This is the story of Studio Red Top, which I created out of the thin air between those extremes to be a comfortable middle ground for me, for women like me, and for all who can imagine loving us as we are.*

Studio Red Top—the resource center in Boston organized to improve employment opportunities for women and promote appreciation of jazz music—has come a long way in since its 1978 beginnings.

The first SRT was an authentic fifth floor walkup loft I rented on behalf of my "money gig," a graphics and typesetting business. I lived in it (illegally) and opened to women

for occasional concerts, poetry readings, workshops, and jam sessions. Using the archive of materials I had collected—at women's jazz festivals in New York and Kansas City, and as music writer for *Sojourner* and other publications—I hosted record listening/discussions sessions focused on women. The same sort of sessions presented on jazz radio focused on jazz men.

Because this "adult playpen" was located above one women's bar and around the block from the legendary Saints Bar, I naively thought that women would flock to the presentations by, for, and about women. Wrong. The audiences were typically quite small, but even so I loved to open my living room to those who were inter-



Cathy Lee

The original Studio Red Top fifth floor loft shortly after Cathy Lee moved in. This portion eventually became the living/graphics portion.



Vocalist Debi Grimsley recording for SRT's 1984 International Women's Day radio special.

Donna Paul

ested in becoming women's jazz enthusiasts.

This studio, on Batterymarch Street, was pretty funky at times. In summer, 80-plus feet of non-climate-controlled glass wall faced southeast, making the heat nearly unbearable. An expensive forced-hot-air heating system—which felt fine but sounded like a 747 taking off—caused winter concerts to consist of chilly 20-minute sets interspersed with 20-minute heat breaks. After plans were announced to develop a new hotel nearby, real estate values skyrocketed and that Studio was sold as the area's first "office condominium."

Emerson College's Center for Women in the Performing Arts (now defunct) referred SRT

to our Boylston Street headquarters. In May 1980, we subleased space in a third floor dance studio for six concerts from the Boston Arts Group. That September, SRT shifted our concert series upstairs to a glorious 160-seat theater. The new space included a gallery/lounge, ticket and technical booths, stage lights and sound equipment, sufficient storage and office space, a green room for musicians, and separate facilities for men and women.

To earn back the tripled operating expenses of our new 6,000-square-foot duplex home (and hopefully earn staff salaries), we subleased space to various groups both short-term and long-term. Among the activities presented were concerts

by ensembles which did not fit SRT's own booking criterion ("jazz music performed by groups including at least one woman member, preferably more"), dance and acting classes, big band rehearsals, theater (including the 1981 Boston Womyn's Theater Festival), a monthly series of "Classic Films Directed by Women," community meetings of all kinds, and parties.

SRT also housed the administrative office of Metropathways, an urban magnet high school for troubled teens, which also rented space for fine and performing arts classes. The kids loved working in a real theater—at hours no jazz musician is normally awake—and SRT had a stable source of income, fundraising assistance, and beautiful original murals on our walls.

Though SRT also presented its own concerts weekly for 16 months, we rarely broke even financially and never got to the state of solvency necessary to begin paying salaries (though we did get sued by one volunteer for "back wages," and we lost the suit). Just as SRT arrived at the point where I no longer needed to subsidize it with graphic earnings, the building was sold out from under us and torn down.

Back in 1980, at the suggestion of Carla Bley, I incorporated SRT non-profit and tax-exempt, so the loss of rental income in early 1982—though debilitating—was not fatal. With income only from donations and grants, however, our concert schedule became limited to fewer than 10 per year. Commitment to area musicians was also compromised somewhat, because Boston's jazz media people are much more impressed with big names than with promising local musicians—particularly female ones.

Between 1982 and 1985, SRT produced concerts all over Boston and Cambridge, with Alive!



and pianist Joanne Brackeen's duo (their first pairing); rhianon and guitarist Mimi Fox with the black women's funk band IBIS, and Brazilian pianist/vocalist Tania Maria (first area concert appearances); flutist Barbara London's duo with bassist Richard Davis (which resulted in album deals for Barbara); and South African vocalist Sathima Bea Benjamin's new band Wind-Song (featuring L. Sharon Freeman on french horn and piano, the first instance of Benjamin's working with a second woman in her band). Whenever possible we also featured a local group on the bill, so the critics (lured by big names) would hear homegrown talent.

During the period of fewer concert productions, I devoted more energy to writing research articles on jazz women and doing grant applications. I also produced and emceed 13 radio broadcasts for a local college station dealing with women's contributions to jazz, using the SRT archives. This in turn led to my involvement with the collective responsible for producing 24 hours of women's programming annually on WMBR for International Women's Day. SRT sponsored a recording session in 1984 to obtain material for our own one-hour special, and that project led us to a tiny (90-seat) but elegantly-appointed jazz loft in Boston. Studio 203 housed our next dozen concerts.

In May, June, and July of 1985, SRT initiated a series of meetings of all Boston's non-profit, non-commercial jazz presenters, to provide input to the Boston Redevelopment Authority. The BRA is planning to replace the infamous pornographic "combat zone" with a more respectable "theater district," and anticipates providing space to performing arts groups through zoning loopholes and tax deals with potential developers. Since the area in question was active in the "Swing Era" and contains



Donna Paul

**Bassist Margie Pos of Bougainvillea, the women's jazz ensemble.**

## Winter concerts consisted of chilly 20-minute sets interspersed with 20-minute heat breaks.

many former jazz clubs and ballrooms, our ad hoc group's research will hopefully reveal at least one site that we could recommend the BRA preserve as a jazz venue. Perhaps that could be SRT's new digs. At the very least, these meetings are leading me to people who are properly trained in real estate development. They are also the first instance in which the various competitors for the jazz audience have banded together for our mutual benefit. It's exciting for me to realize SRT could generate this support from the greater jazz community.

SRT's most recent concerts were presented at the brand-new Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, a beautiful 200-seat concert hall that was developed by others partially on the SRT Boylston Street

model. Although we are allotted a limited number of the jazz nights there, our series has drawn better than many of CMAC's own presentations. And since CMAC staff now handles many of my least favorite jobs—like box office—I've glimpsed the delicious freedom to be exclusively an "Artistic Director," rather than administrator with ultimate responsibility for every task.

My spring dream for many years has been to bring a lot of Boston jazzwomen to Kansas City for the Women's Jazz Festival. Last year SRT tried to raise the money necessary for the trip by offering a tourist package, and we may do that again. SRT and Tufts University Music Department have agreed in principle to collaborate on a fundraising concert to send the "Red Top All Stars" to KC in March. That concert will be part of a women's jazz festival Tufts was already planning. Progress? You bet. Perhaps some of you HOT WIRE readers might be interested in hosting a concert by one of the groups who would be en route to Kansas City. It's long past time I got this show on the road. ●

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Cathy Lee is the founder and director of Studio Red Top, and an avid promoter of women's jazz.*

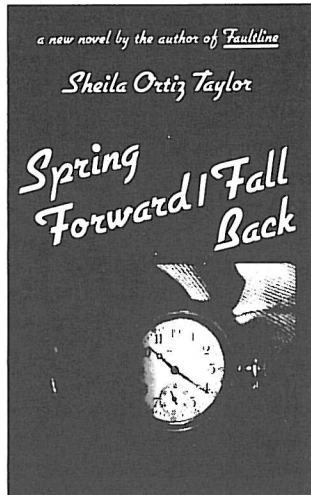
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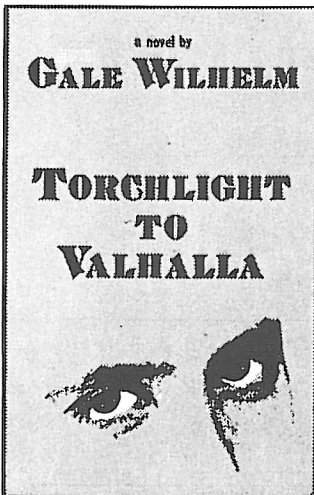
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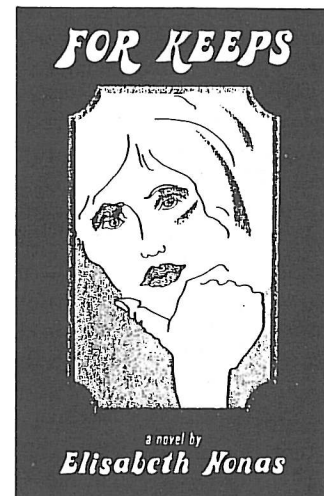
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# LÁADAN

## A Language For Women

By Suzette Haden Elgin



Suzette Haden Elgin signs a copy of 'A First Dictionary and Grammar' at WisCon, the only science fiction convention to focus special attention on feminism.

The putting together of an artificial language is a strange enterprise. Most people have little interest even in real languages; Americans in particular are famous for their dedication to the proposition that everybody in the world should speak English so that no American will ever be obliged to learn any other tongue. A limited market exists for artificial computer languages (there being no other kind, so far), but there is no market whatsoever for artificial languages for human beings. We don't even have an appropriate word for the process of putting such languages together. To say that you "created" one smacks of delusions of grandeur; to say that you "invented" one seems to equate languages with the light bulb and the steam engine; and none of the alternatives are much

better. I settled for saying that I had "constructed" a language, but that may be only the best of a set of bad choices.

You can't get a grant to construct an artificial language; you can't get an award for one; you can't sell one or donate it to a museum for a tax deduction; you can't exhibit it as art or craft; and scholars will laugh at you for having ever engaged in such a procedure. Unlike many other things that appear to have no obvious value to society, it is not even a respectable scholarly activity.

I knew all this when I set about constructing the artificial language called Láadan on June 28, 1982. I knew the project to be foolishness, and—for a woman with a family to support—an extravagant foolishness. I did it anyway. Perhaps I can manage to explain why.

There is a respected hypothesis in feminism that goes like this: EXISTING HUMAN LANGUAGES ARE INADEQUATE TO EXPRESS THE PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN. If it is true, this hypothesis has a curious paradox attached: the only mechanism women have for discussing the problem is that very same set of human languages hypothesized to be inadequate for the purpose. It is a fascinating problem.

When you try to give talks on this subject, three things always happen. First, people say that the hypothesis is false; second, they tell you that everyone knows there are many women's languages used by "primitive tribes"; and third, they say, "Well, if women don't like the languages they've got, why haven't they ever made one up that is adequate to express their perceptions?"

The first question is easily dealt with. You start by pointing out that not one word exists in English to express what a woman does during the sex act. (I am told by some women, usually very young women from either the East or West Coast, that they are perfectly happy with the verbs "to fuck, to lay," and so on as names for what they do during the act of love. For me, however, and I think for the majority of women, those words have an inescapable semantic feature that might be summarized as [+ penis]; they just won't do.) You suggest that it should be considered how long men would have tolerated a lexical gap of that sort. Often

Chris Kulyk



this is sufficient to silence all objections, with no additional examples being required; if not, there are examples in abundance.

The second question is also minor. You explain that all such alleged "women's languages," on examination, have turned out to be no more than a small set of words or parts of words, within a language, whose usage is restricted to women. Typically, they are sets of morphemes expressing respect, deference, subordination, and the like. We may find an exception in the form of a true women's language tomorrow, but none has yet been found, and thousands of languages have been studied—including many languages from nontechnological cultures, which linguists do not call "primitive."

The third question is quite a different matter. Many possible responses come to mind—the sort of thing you say when someone asks why no woman has ever written a great symphony for guitar and tuba, or some such item. You can say that it takes a lot of time, and that women have never had much free time. You can say that it requires very special and extensive training, and that women have not had access to such training. You can say that probably women have constructed such languages, but that like so much other women's work, all records of them have been lost. But these responses have been used so often that they no longer have any impact, and using them will earn you nothing but row upon row of smug smirks to look at. They will not dent the perception of your listeners that the real reason is that women just are not smart enough to carry out the task.

I reached a point where I couldn't handle the smirks any longer. I know now that I could have said, "A woman did construct a language. Hildegard of Bingen did. It has been lost, but

the fact that she constructed it, and that it had a vocabulary of more than 900 words, is a matter of historical record." But I didn't know about Hildegard of Bingen, not until I read Mary Daly's book Pure Lust, in 1984. I kept having to stand there and say, "I don't know why," and look at the smirks. It was awful.

And it may be that even if I had known about Hildegard, and could have given that answer, I would still have felt compelled to construct a language myself. Because I was at that time writing a science fiction novel, called Native Tongue, in which the women do make themselves a language. I am not expected to know anything about the construction of a spaceship engine, and my readers will forgive me if I don't try. But my doctorate in linguistics means that if I use a constructed language as part of the plot of a book, I am expected to know something about that, and to write about it in some useful fashion. I could have faked it, of course...just salted in an alleged word of the hypothetical language here and there. But there was that third question that was causing me so much distress, and there was my own Ozark conscience to answer to, and I could see no way to escape from either one. And so I sat down to do it myself; to construct a language intended to express the perceptions of women adequately.

The results of my efforts was Láadan; it means "the language of those who perceive." It took me several hours a day for an entire year, and I have not yet begun to repair the financial damage I inflicted on those who depend on me by spending my time in that project. At the end, a miracle happened. The science fiction group in Madison, Wisconsin, called SF3, published my first grammar and dictionary and took on the job of marketing

and distributing and advertising it. It is possible that because of their efforts the language will not be lost; and I am helpless to express how grateful to them I am.

There were many ways to go about constructing the language. The task itself, for a trained linguist, is trivial; I could construct three or four languages a week easily, and with a good computer I could turn out one in an afternoon. But I had set my mind to the goal of constructing a language that would satisfy not just the formal requirements but the empirical ones—the real world practical ones—as well. I knew that would be an enormous task, and I was not mistaken. I could have done it in half the time with a computer, but I didn't have one; I did it by hand.

Láadan does three things that seem to me to be crucial for a women's language, at least for those whose native language is English or one of the languages related to English. First, it has specific words (lexicalizations) for chunks of reality that matter to women but have not been given names of their own before. It has a word for what a woman does during the sex act. It has a word for that variety of love a woman feels toward a child of her body that she does not like. Second, it has lexicalizations for many sequences of meaning that are handled in English and related languages by body language alone; this lessens the linguistic work that women have to do, and is important to me.

The third thing Láadan does requires a bit more explanation. It happens that there is nothing that can be said in any language that cannot be said in every other language. It may be very inconvenient and time-consuming, but it can be done. In Navajo there is a verb (iHk'áád) which means "to go out

and catch a mother animal and hold it so that someone else can put to its breasts a newly born infant animal of the same species that has been abandoned by its own mother because some idiot of a human being handled it with greasy smelling hands before its own mother had nursed it, in the hope that the more experienced mother animal will adopt it and feed it."

lose than Hildegard of Bingen's language was. In that sense, it makes no difference what good it is. It is a scientific fact, a testing of the hypothesis that such a thing is possible for a woman. It doesn't even matter whether Laadan could be described as a "good" women's language or not; formally speaking, it has everything a human language is required by linguis-

ture; I would have had an awful time publishing a scholarly paper on the topic of constructing such a language, but papers on the difficulties of translation into the language and the insight those difficulties provide into women's perceptions will be much easier to place.

And what will happen now?

I wish I had good news for you. I wish that I could tell you

---

**"Laadan has specific words for chunks of reality that matter to women but have not been given names of their own before."**

---

You can say that in English—I just did—but it's terribly cumbersome. And much of the time that's the problem with English, and the other languages alleged to be inadequate for women. You can say what you want to say, yes; it is possible. But it takes so long, and is so terribly awkward, that people won't listen while you do it. This is one of the reasons that women in our society find themselves paying someone—most of the time a man—\$75 an hour and up just to listen to what they want to say. I tried to make that better, with Láadan. I tried to construct a language in which it would be convenient and pleasant to talk about the things that matter to women, for a change.

The obvious question, now that it's been done, is SO WHAT? True, I have an answer to that "Why haven't women ever..." challenge, but that's very little to show for a year's hard work. What, precisely, can I be said to have accomplished? What good is it? And what will happen now?

What I have accomplished is the formal demonstration that a woman can do what I have done; because I have access to print media, I have also managed to scatter mentions of this around in such a way that Láadan will be harder to

lose than Hildegard of Bingen's language was. In that sense, it makes no difference what good it is. It is a scientific fact, a testing of the hypothesis that such a thing is possible for a woman. It doesn't even matter whether Laadan could be described as a "good" women's language or not; formally speaking, it has everything a human language is required by linguis-

tic science to have, it has a vocabulary and grammar sufficient to allow its use for human communication, and it contains mechanisms for expanding it in the same way that any other human language can be expanded. As a scientist, I find this satisfactory, however much—as a woman—I might wish I could be sure that it was not only a good language but a superb one. One thing that it is good for is as a kind of diagnostic probe to find patriarchal language with. I've been translating the King James Bible, which is the most patriarchal document I know of, into Láadan, and it has been teaching me many things about what is and what is not patriarchal language that I did not know before. It lets me go beyond the obvious problems of pronouns and so-called "generic" uses of the word "man," and beyond the obvious problems of that long list of titles for the divine being that seem to have been selected from Soldier of Fortune magazine. You do not realize how fiercely patriarchal the Twenty-Third Psalm is until you have tried translating it into a language intended specifically for the expression of women's perceptions. This seems to me to be a useful function, and one that may be helpful in the fu-

ture; I would have had an awful time publishing a scholarly paper on the topic of constructing such a language, but papers on the difficulties of translation into the language and the insight those difficulties provide into women's perceptions will be much easier to place. And what will happen now? I wish I had good news for you. I wish that I could tell you that with the publication of Native Tongue, and the publication of the grammar and dictionary, and the publication in Women & Language News of a translation of the Nativity Story into Láadan, there had been a great surge of support for the language, at least from women. I wish I could say that women are studying the language and writing in it; I wish I could tell you that up against the G.I. Joe toys and calendars featuring buttocks there were Láadan toys and Láadan calendars. I wish I could even tell you that it had been possible for me to spend substantial amounts of time working with the language myself, whatever the reaction of the community to that task.

I can't tell you any of those things. There are a few small groups working with Láadan in this country, perhaps 20 people all told. I am working away at my translation project 10 minutes here and 15 minutes there, and I am trying to find women who would be interested in working with me to make available some Láadan products like calendars and notepaper and children's books. But in all honesty I have to tell you that what is most likely is that Láadan will remain nothing more than a bit of linguistic exotica, the sort of thing that gets a

footnote in the occasional linguistics thesis. That as much has happened as has happened is already astonishing, and can be attributed specifically to the brave efforts of a few people who thought the matter important enough to give a bit of space and time to.

I would welcome your help in proving my prediction false. If you would like to be involved in a thankless task with all the disadvantages cited at the beginning of this article, you would be welcome. Láadan is not "my" language; it is a language constructed by one woman for all women who might care to have one, who want to develop it further, who might want to use it as a model to help them construct a better one. It was made to be used, and I will be pleased to see it used. But if that does not happen—and I understand with all my heart why it is not likely to—it still has fulfilled its purpose. If I had to do it over again, despite all the drawbacks, I would have to do it over again. ●

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Suzette Haden Elgin is a Doctor of Linguistics. She has taught at the University of California, specializing in Native American languages, most notably Navajo, Hopi, and Kumeyaay. Her first science fiction work appeared in 'World's Best Science Fiction: 1970.' Since then, in addition to numerous linguistic texts, Ms. Elgin has written nine major SF and Fantasy novels.

## A FIRST DICTIONARY AND GRAMMAR OF LÁADAN

By Suzette Haden Elgin

This reference book is available from SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701, for \$8 plus \$1.50 postage and handling. I have refused to take any monies of any kind from this project, so that I can feel free to recommend the book. A tape to go with the grammar is available from me, Route 4 Box 192-E, Huntsville, AR 72740, for \$3; the \$3 is just what it costs to make the tape and mail it.

## Linguistics 707 Introduction to Láadan

1. **Pronunciation note:** Roughly speaking, the consonants of Láadan are all pronounced like their English counterparts except for "lh"; you'll hear "lh" pronounced, and won't find it difficult. As for the vowels: /a/ is like "a" in "calm"; /e/ like "e" in "bell"; /i/ like "i" in "this"; /o/ like "o" in "crow"; /u/ like "u" in "dune" or "oo" in "moon." A vowel marked with an accent is high-toned, and should be given heavy stress.

2. **Some useful expressions:** "Hello" or "Greetings": *Wil sha* (literally, "Let there be harmony.") "Goodbye": *Aril*. "Sorry": *Hóoda*. "Well...": *Doó*. "Thank you": *Áala*. "You're welcome": *Oho*. "Yes": *Em*. "No": *Ra*. "Please": *Lu*. "Such a/what a...": *Wu...*

3. **Making a sentence:** Assume you want to say "I speak Láadan." The word for "I" is *le*, the word for "speak, say, talk" is *di*, and the name for the language is *Láadan*. But you need two more pieces. *Láadan sentences begin with a word that tells you what Speech Act is being used, and they end with a word that tells you what sort of evidence the speaker has for what's being said.* If the sentence is a declarative statement, and your evidence is that you your own self perceive what you say to be true, then you say:

*"Bíí di le Láadan wa."* (DEC SPEAK I LÁADAN MY PERCEPTIONS)

To make a sentence negative, you insert *ra* immediately to the right of the verb; so, "I don't speak Láadan" is *Bíí di ra le Láadan wa*.

To indicate time in a sentence, you can use one of the set of time auxiliaries (present time: *ril*—optional; past time: *eril*; future time: *aril*; optative time: *wil*, meaning "let it be," or "would that," etc.) You insert the auxiliary immediately after the Speech Act word. So, "I spoke Láadan" is *Bíí eril di le Láadan wa* and "I will speak Láadan" is *Bíí aril di le Láadan wa*.

**The full set of Speech Act words:** Declarative: *Bíí*; Question: *Báa*; Polite request: *Bóo*; Imperative (rare): *Bó*; Promise: *Bé*; Warning: *Bée*. (NOTE: Since you don't offer evidence for a question, you don't need a word like *wa* at the end of one. "Do you speak Láadan?" is just *Báa di ne Láadan?* And the same thing is true for requests and commands.

**Suffixes:** The Speech Act words take a set of very useful suffixes that allow the speaker to indicate what sort of state or purpose goes with the sentence. For example, to say *Bíí di le Láadan wa* means "I say to you, as a joke, that I speak Láadan." Here is the full set of these endings: Neutral: *Ø*; Said in anger: *-d*; Said in pain: *-th*; Said in love: *-li*; Said in celebration: *-lan*; Said in jest: *-da*; Said in fear: *-ya*; Said in narrative: *-de*; Said in teaching: *-di*. (NOTE: These same suffixes can also be added, optionally, to the Láadan verb *lishid*, which means "sign," as in ASL, and to *dama*, which means "touch.")

## VOCABULARY SAMPLER

This is not intended to be complete in any way. It's just a sampler of words that you can use to practice with, in addition to the words already introduced above. If you'd like a full grammar and dictionary, you can obtain the book from SF3.

**LIVING THINGS:** Creature: *mid*; Insect: *zhub*; Whale: *uthemid*; Plant: *dala*; Tree: *yáanin*; Baby: *áwith*; Forest: *olin*.

**SOME BASIC VERBS:** Caress: *lámála*; Eat: *yod*; Have: *thi*; Want: *néde*; Drink: *rilin*; Sleep: *ina*; Perceive: *láad*; Perceive-internally: *loláad*; Understand: *en*; Teach: *om*; Menstruate: *osháana*; Menopause: *zháadin*; Sit: *wod*.

**SOME BASIC ADJECTIVES:** Busy: *shóod*; Good: *thal*; Old: *balin*; Pregnant: *lawida*; Small: *híya*; Important: *oth*; Black: *loyo*; Red: *laya*; Warm: *owa*.

**SOME MISCELLANEOUS NOUNS:** Cup: *ni*; Food: *ana*; Thing: *dal*; Water: *ili*; Weather: *ro*; Fruit: *yu*; Celebration: *elahela*; Magic: *yahanesh*; Moon: *óol*; Ocean: *mela*; Word: *zhadan*; Church: *áatham*; Day: *sháal*; Night: *náal*; Ear: *oyu*; Family: *onida*; Garden: *déela*; Network: *shenidal*.

**OTHER:** And: *i*; Because: *bróo*; If...then: *bre...ébre*; But: *izh*; They (2 or 3): *bezh*; They (more than 3): *ben*.



# SEXISM AND RACISM IN ROCK AND POP MUSIC

By Alix Dobkin

*In the 1960s, popular music introduced a basic pattern of sex and drug usage into mass culture. In the hands of the music industry of the 1970s, counterculture images were manipulated into slick products pushing violence, women-hating, and racism as cultural norms. And now, with a package of numbness and brutality, the industry's marketing strategy delivers yet another decade of anti-social themes.*

*So pervasive is today's popular music that it is impossible to avoid exposure to it. Through the music and lyrics, much of the Top 40 graphically reflects and reinforces a dangerously alienated reality. Abundant documentation regarding the effects of media bombardment indicates the need for attention and awareness. The solution is not in censorship, but through analysis and understanding.*

*Alix Dobkin and Denslow Brown*

*This is serious business  
Sex, violence, and rock & roll.*

John Cougar Mellencamp  
*Serious Business*, 1983

There are many excellent songs which have hit the Top 40 charts over the years, but there are many more whose lyrical content is tedious at best and outrageously offensive at worst. The latter are songs I will focus on here. They make up a disproportionately large percentage of the songs in rock & roll—songs which perpetuate racist assumptions, glorify violence, and objectify, stereotype, trivialize, ridicule, and/or ignore women in order to bolster the egos of the men who have become the pillars of pop.

The notion that women are on earth to serve the needs of men is inherent in our way of life and this is reflected and

reinstated in the music to which we listen. Overt and subliminal racist and sexist messages pervade every medium, but popular music, especially, is crawling with them. These messages penetrate our minds and modify our images of ourselves and others and, so, affect our actions and expectations. This is especially true in the field of "entertainment"—we are supposed to relax and enjoy ourselves; so, we disengage our critical faculties, fail to exercise our consciousness, and forget that we are receiving assumptions which subvert our own politics and values. Compelling popular music, because it often sets cultural styles, is especially effective in this process.

## SEXISM

Most of the songs in rock or pop music are written by men, and they therefore project the unmistakable biases of men. Of the 440 five-star albums in The Rolling Stone Record Guide (which lists "five years of rock, pop, soul, country, blues, jazz, and gospel"), only 19 are by women, either in female groups or by solo artists, and only 12 groups are composed of men and women. The Best of the Golden Oldies, another guide distributed in record stores, lists over 900 titles. This guide includes 108 women soloists and 30 groups that include women. Out of the "983 Top 100 Albums," 10 are by women soloists and five are by groups which include women, says Rolling Stone. In addition, a dis-

proportionate number of songs recorded and sung by women have been written by men, and most of these reflect male self-interest and point of view. And, because women have been excluded from the business of music, virtually every one of these albums has been produced, arranged, engineered, and promoted by men.

It is not surprising, therefore, that violent, abusive, and women-controlling behaviors in society are reflected in the narrative content of popular music. These songs—which operate on the level of unconscious behavior modification—ignore the reality of women's lives. These songs, in effect, lie to us.

To reject this mass-media information, we must first identify it. I found it helpful to put myself in the picture of the song, and I developed a series of questions which, although simple, clarify what the song is saying about or to women:

*What is the song about? Who is it directed to? Who am I supposed to identify with? Who do I really identify with? Is the song telling me to do something? Is the song threatening? Is the information in the song different from my knowledge and/or experience (that is, am I being lied to)? How do I fit into this picture?*

If we keep these questions in mind while looking at the following examples of lyrics, it becomes abundantly clear that, for the most part, rock

and pop music is not good for women—indeed, it's not good for anyone but white men.

## LIES, MYTHS, AND MISREPRESENTATIONS

One of the biggest lies perpetuated by pop culture is that there is a scarcity of men and, therefore, to pursue and keep a man is the proper career for women. We are supposed to compete with each other for a man and, once he is "gotten," we are supposed to spend all our time understanding him and caring for his needs, no matter how demanding or violent those needs may be. We are also told that we need a man for protection: "There's a killer on the road/Gotta love your man, gotta understand," warns Jim Morrison in his song, "Riders on the Storm." But, getting a man is, in the lives of real women, a relatively simple task; having one, however, is no guarantee of safety for many women—on



Alix Dobkin with break dancer Robin Ferguson at 1985 Michigan Fest.

the contrary, there are numerous songs threatening women by the men they are with. For example, Roger Waters of Pink Floyd expounds:

*Run to the bedroom. In the  
suitcase  
On the left you'll find my  
favorite ax  
Don't look so frightened  
This is just a passing phase  
Just one of my bad days*

*Would you like to watch TV  
Or get between the sheets?*

from the album  
The Wall

If the above are obvious examples of women-hating, there are other more subtle instances of language designed to keep women in their place as helpers and nurturers of men. Depressingly low-level, infantile relationships flourish in pop music and always have. In these relationships in rock, possession is 9/10s of the "love."

*You will be mine  
You will be mine  
You will be mine, all mine*

declare the Rolling Stones in "Emotional Rescue," certainly a mindfucking title. Bob Dylan, in "Sweetheart Like You" from his Infidels album, takes the stance of a man who knows how dangerous it is for women on their own, but his solution is for her to get married and stay home:

*What's a sweetheart like you  
Doing in a dump like this?  
A woman like you should  
be at home  
That's where you belong.*

*Taking care of someone nice  
Who don't know how to  
do you wrong.  
Just how much will you be  
able to take?  
Well, there's no way to tell  
by the first kiss.*

And, witness the overabundance of "Don't leave me" and "Who is gonna save me?" songs. Bryan Adams makes clear who is important when it comes to women's independence:

*You say you need your  
independence  
Well, I need mine*

*Separate lives and separate  
feelings  
I guess that's fine.  
But that won't last.  
It's no solution.  
I know I can't survive.*

*And lately I've been thinking,  
Thinking 'bout you  
all the time.*

*Don't leave me lonely  
Just want to be right by  
your side  
Your one and only, tonight  
So don't leave me lonely  
I need you here all the time.*

from "Don't Leave  
Me Lonely"

If women are not being intimidated or threatened, we are being guilt-tripped into providing support for men. Randy Van Warmer complains: "You left me just when I needed you most," and The Cars beg:

*Oh baby, just one more time  
to touch you  
Just one more time to tell you  
You're on my mind.  
Baby, why can't I have you?  
You're breaking my heart in  
two  
You know what I'm  
going through  
Oh baby, why can't I have you?*

from "Why Can't I Have You?"

## POP CULTURE AS A TRAINING MANUAL

Teenagers, who make up the major pop music market, are intensely conventional and particularly subject to mass culture images and peer pressure. Rock & roll and pop music furnishes their environment with every no-win, dead-end assumption and convention of a no-win, dead-end world for women.

Rock & roll, if we look at the whole marketing industry—music, lyrics, band images, and rock videos—we see that it tells boys that they should be ag-

gressive, egocentric, and irresponsible in satisfying their so-called needs. (Pop/rock & roll culture often defines these "needs" and provides the actions and stances to be adopted—into which "need" then accommodates itself.) It teaches girls to be passive, admiring, and nurturing masochists without independent options and without a future apart from men—following the early sex-role training that girls already receive from our culture. In rock narratives, if girls or women attempt to exercise some power over their lives, they are either scorned, ridiculed, or made to appear "evil."

Songs which express this ridicule and scorn are "Evil Woman" by Electric Light Orchestra, "Bad Blood" by Neil Sedaka, "Rich Girl" and "Man Eater" by Hall & Oates, and "Big Shot" by Billy Joel to name a fraction of the total. These girls or women, according to popular music, deserve to be punished for their resistance to male views—in fact, any woman who doesn't act passively and admiringly is threatened with exclusion from so-called normal society through what amounts to a smear campaign written by men.

Women are also told that there isn't much we can do about these smear tactics—even if we speak out—because women are not to be trusted or believed. Loverboy tells women:

*You're so emotional  
You're so emotional  
You never use your head  
Give your heart a rest*  
from "Emotional"

implying that women can't be trusted to think. The Cars, in "You Might Think," tell us what they know we really are:

*You might think it's  
hysterical  
But I know when you're weak  
You think you're in the movies  
And everything's so deep*

*But I think that you're wild  
When you flash that fragile  
smile...*

*And it's so hard to take  
There's no escape without  
a scrape*  
from the album Heartbeat

In the video of this song, a woman is spied on, invaded, and finally run over by a car with the face of The Cars' lead singer superimposed on it.

Another example of men knowing that women don't mean "no" when we say it:

*You say 'no'  
You say you don't like it  
But I know you're a liar*

writes/sings Bruce Springsteen, the so-called people's poet. And an even more insidious message is given to women when male songwriters dramatize their own love of violence by creating a female protagonist who "likes" it:

*Cruisin' for a bruise last  
Saturday night  
must have been something  
I drank  
I looked her in the eye like  
I had to fight  
Had a bone to pick and to yank  
Took her to the room with  
the mirrors on the wall  
Showed my brand-new whip  
With a gleam in her eye and  
a smile on her face  
She screamed as she started  
to slip  
'Give me a dose of your  
violent love, baby'*  
from "Violent Love"

sings Ted Nugent in this rape song.

Popular songs give no encouragement to women's independence or autonomy. Where do girls or women find the support to say "no"? In popular music, with few exceptions, they don't. According to rock and pop, domination and rape are a way of life for women

and they must therefore be—unfailingly—sexually available to men, or to a man. "Don't stop me now when I'm feeling this way," the Doobie Brothers insist, sliding in on their upbeat, well-constructed, and beautifully vocalized song.

And, of course, we must have a man in order to be recognized at all. Women scarcely exist except in relation to a man. The rock & roll boys don't like to address women unless they're telling us what to do, what not to do, or what they want to do to us—and what we should like about it.

A couple of examples comparing teenage and young girls' lives with the content of some tunes provide a clear picture of the way these songs distort and ignore the realities of girls' lives. According to a recent survey in the U.S., 70 percent of runaway girls in New York City were on the street because of incest and/or abuse at home. The songs about homeless girls, however, tell a different story, one which supports a sexualized/romanticized picture, such as Nick Gilder conjures:

*Hot child in the city  
Running wild and looking pretty*

or Van Halen describes:

*She was a runaway at just 13  
Toughest thing I've  
ever seen...  
Picked up a trade  
Now she's street made  
She knows just what to do.*

Van Halen adds a note of sympathy for the boys who are "victims" of these girls:

*Lazy eyes in the summer heat  
Fresh from out of town  
Now she's working on  
the street  
Shake them poor boys down.*  
from "Girl Gone Bad"

Between 1971 and 1979, the rate of premarital pregnancy



doubled in the U.S. and it's still rising. Four out of 10 girls conceive in their teens, and half of these give birth. 80 percent of female dropouts from high school do so because of pregnancy. Sexually active girls under the age of 16 run a higher risk of cervical cancer in later life. The pressure to perform sexually is psychologically damaging for everyone, but it's most often dangerous for girls and women. You would never suspect it, though, from the information given in the Top 40:

*She's sexy and 17  
My little rock & roll queen  
Acts a little obscene  
Gotta let off a little steam  
Dig that sound and shake it  
around  
You're mine, mine, mine*

---

**"It is not surprising that violent, abusive, and women-controlling behaviors in society are reflected in the narrative content of popular music."**

---

From this Stray Cats' portrait of teenage girls, "She's Sexy and 17," to Loverboy's tune ("Little Girl") about seducing and controlling a young girl, men are telling girls what they should do to turn boys on and that the boys will get it because "girls don't know what they want anyways":

*How can I make you trust me?  
And make you lose control?  
How can I make you at all  
When you don't know what goes  
on inside your mind?  
I'm gonna make you do it  
Just you wait and see  
I'm gonna make you prove it,  
That you don't know  
What goes on inside...  
You're too little, little girl  
to fall in love*

In rock music, boys are not concerned with the possibility

of pregnancy (except in cases of possible paternity suits which should naturally be contested, witness Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean"), nor are they troubled by the realities in girls' lives. It's not surprising, then, that given the expectation and behavior-molding role that popular music plays in teens' lives, that girls do not pay attention to their own needs or realities either—often, even, after they experience some of the consequences of living only for men's desires.

In spite of the constant and chilling reports in the news media of the drastically rising rate of reported child abuse and incest cases, Bruce Springsteen uses language that, taken on face value, promote the sexualization of girl children:

*Hey little girl,  
Is your daddy home?  
Did he go and leave you  
all alone? Mmm hmmm*

*I got a big desire  
Oh, I'm on fire  
Tell me now, baby  
Is he good to you?*

*Can he do the things to you  
that I do?  
I'll take you higher  
I'm on fire* from "I'm On Fire"

He would undoubtedly protest the implication that he is discussing what he would like to do while babysitting, but his view of women old enough to be sexual allows him to refer to them verbally as little girl children. It's a clear message to teen fans.

## RACISM

Without black music there would be no rock & roll, let alone much original American music. Without racism, we'd have better and less reductive pop music and there would be many more black musicians enjoying the financial fruits of their labors. Motown, the black recording company, was a pioneer in promoting (though not always paying) black artists, and this led to the current recognition of more black and minority artists. By ripping off rhythm & blues, rock & roll at once exploited an oppressed minority, obscured its originators, and watered down a powerful, energetic musical form.

When The Crew Cuts "covered" The Chords' tune "Sh Boom," and Bill Haley took "Shake, Rattle & Roll" from Joe Turner, they led the way for generations of white musicians to extract fame and fortune from the works of blacks. Georgia Gibbs covered songs by Etta James and LaVerne Baker. Pat Boone covered Fats Domino, Little Richard, and others. Steve Lawrence, Andy Williams, The Rolling Stones, The Beatles, Grand Funk Railroad, and others, covered songs by Buddy Know, Don Covay, and Little Eva—to name just a few. Eric Clapton took "I Shot the Sheriff" from The Wailers and later appropriated the music for "Lay Down Sally" from King Sunny Ade. With their appropriations, these white singers were dishing up second-hand goods, courtesy of a racist music industry, for mass consumption by a white audience that (according to white industry marketing men) would have feared and rejected the high-powered and more interesting originals, if they had been widely available—which of course they weren't.

It is interesting (but not surprising) to note that although white rock & roll has appropri-

*continued on page 62*

# WHERE NO MAN HAS GONE BEFORE

## WOMEN AND SCIENCE FICTION

By Christine Kulyk

In 'Up the Walls of the World' (1978), by James Tiptree, Jr. (pseudonym of Alice Sheldon), huge soaring aliens who can "hear" light and read minds perpetually ride the "winds" of a giant planet with a thick atmosphere of swirling gases. Here, the lithe and energetic females "naturally" do all the adventuring and the hunting, while the much larger males raise the children, "fathering" them and mind-training them within their own mind-fields. In a desperate attempt at escape from an approaching disaster, these beings reach out telepathically, and make contact with a very unusual group of people on Earth, whose lives are never the same afterwards!

In Marge Piercy's 'Woman on the Edge of Time' (1976), a Chicana woman from a 20th-century New York ghetto finds a temporary escape from the violence done her by relatives and by minions of the state alike, when she is contacted by people from a future Earth civilization. In a strange, mystical existence, trapped halfway between one time and the next, she is able to spend part of her life with the people of the year 2137, a post-liberation society who live communally, sharing all that they have. Here, society is structured non-hierarchically, in small villages. Both men and women share in child-rearing—both can be "mothers," and each child has three mothers—"to break the nuclear bonding."

In 'The Clewiston Test' (1976) by Kate Wilhelm, a scientist is developing an anti-pain serum with the potential to relieve much human suffering. Her work is interrupted when her car crashes on the highway, causing injuries which confine her to bed and wheelchair, and constant pain. She discovers a new inner strength as she struggles to keep both industrialists and scientists (one of them her own husband) from perverting the integrity of her research for financial gain. When it's learned that one side-effect of the experimental drug is irrational behavior, she is suspected of having taken the drug herself to relieve her pain. DID she take the drug? IS she behaving "irrationally"? She begins to wonder herself...

In Ursula K. LeGuin's 'The Left Hand of Darkness' (1969), an interstellar ambassador to the frozen world called Winter discovers that his tolerance for cultural differences may be only skin deep, when he encounters the people of Winter. Although

similar in appearance to Earth humans, the people of Winter are ambisexual—sex-neutral until the periodic times of mating, when an individual will become, temporarily, either female or male—a biological process which occurs uncontrollably. Much to his distress, the human ambassador finds that he is developing an emotional attachment to ONE of them.

To write science fiction is to stretch the creative impulse to its limits—to create a whole new world, or even a whole new universe, extrapolating from the known to the unknown. The women who write science fiction have opened up the universe and made it large enough to contain their most far-reaching speculations about humanity, the future, the past, technology, the endless possibilities of the mind and the spirit, and (yes!) feminism.

Hold it! I can hear some of you already, saying, "Science fiction? Sci-fi? Isn't that that macho technophile junk with the bug-eyed monsters and the women in brass brassieres?" Well, as a matter of fact—you are right. Mostly. Most of SF is macho technophile stuff, written by men for men (actually, for adolescent boys and men), about men, where the men are MEN, and the "women" are only there to prove it.

But there are genuine gems among the dross. Much to my delight, I've discovered that, in SF, many of the brightest of those gems have been written by women. In particular, most of the non-sexist and/or feminist SF has been and is be-

ing written by women.

Ironically, it was a woman—Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley—who, in 1818, wrote what is generally acknowledged as the first true SF novel: Frankenstein: A Modern Prometheus. As the subtitle suggests, Shelley's book deals with the sociological implications of changing technology—does each new invention mean more progress, or does it plunge us, like Prometheus, from the fire into the frying pan? Modern movie-makers have emphasized the horrific aspects of the "monster," but Shelley's book is more than just a gothic horror story. Written at a time when many of the foundations of today's scientific philosophical beliefs were being laid, Frankenstein shows us a vision of the male desire to create life not-born-of-woman, resorting to artificial means, to technology. Shelley shrewdly exposes some of the fallacies of the concept of "pure" scientific research. Her ideas are equally relevant today, when we are faced with annihilation by man's technology and the results of "pure" science.

Mary Shelley also wrote The Last Man (1826), an end-of-the-world story in which humanity is devastated by a planet-wide plague. This novel stands as an early example of the now-popular "post-holocaust" motif in SF—stories in which a brave (or not-so-brave) new world is preceded by a world-wide catastrophe which causes "the end of civilization as we know it." Shelley was followed by many worthy successors in the SF

genre. However, unlike Shelley, who was British and a woman, most of her successors have been American and male. Nevertheless, much fine SF has been written by women as well as men, in many languages other than American English. It would be beyond the scope of this article to deal with all of it, so I've chosen to focus on English-language SF written by women, with a special emphasis on feminist SF.

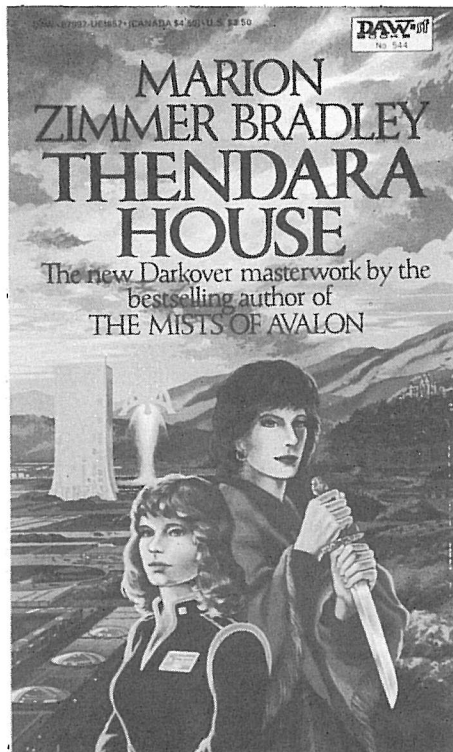
Among the early successors of Mary Shelley were the women who wrote utopian tales in the 19th and early 20th centuries. A recent anthology, Daring to Dream: Utopian Stories by United States Women: 1836-1919 (edited by Carol Farley Kessler, 1984), reprints excerpts from several utopian works. This book also provides an extensive bibliography of over 100 utopian works.

One of my favorite early utopian tales is Herland, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1915, rpt. 1979 by Pantheon Books, NY). Gilman relates, with a wry sense of humor, the misadventures of three men from early 20th-century America who "discover" a centuries-old all-women society hidden in a jungle. The women of this society are able to reproduce parthenogenically. Their reactions to the men's behavior are the high points of the book. I found myself chuckling and nodding "Right on!" as the women reacted variously with mystification, anger, or amusement at the men's strange (i.e., typical 20th-century male) behavior.

At one point in the novel, I found myself brought up short by a bit of Victorian-era science in action: Terry, the most macho of the three men, rebels against the idea that a society can function effectively when run by women. "Women," he declares, cannot cooperate—it's against nature." To which his comrade Jeff, attempting to defend womankind, replies, bibli-

cally,

"Go to the ant, thou slug-gard—and learn something... you know an anthill is nothing but a nursery. And how about bees? Don't they manage to cooperate and love one another? 'As the birds do love the Spring/Or the bees their careful king.'...I tell you, women are the natural cooperators, not men!"



Wait a minute! thought I. What's all this about a KING bee? Well, it seems that naturalists of the era, having observed ants and bees carefully, believed that (naturally) ants and bees were colonies of female workers, all serving a male king ant/bee. What a shock it must have been to them to learn that the truth is quite the reverse!

The early 20th century saw the birth of modern SF as we know it—the heyday of Buck Rogers and rocketships, bug-eyed monsters and time-travelers, with the "pulp" magazines proliferating in astonishing profusion. It was the time when many of the old-stand-by motifs

of "sci-fi" were developed, alongside the development of innovations in real-world technology. According to SF author James Gunn:

*Part of the reason for general prosperity in 1920 was the engineering genius and social invention of a self-taught engineer. His impact upon the nature of our society and the world was far greater than we recognize (Alternate Worlds: The Illustrated History of Science Fiction, 1975, Prentice-Hall).*

Gunn lists some of the themes of SF as "Man and the Machine," "Progress and its Opposite," "Man and His Society," "Man and the Future," "War," "Superman," "Man and Alien," and so on.

With an underlying philosophical structure such as this, it's not surprising that in SF, for the most part, it's very much a "man's universe." (Indeed, it would be more accurate to say that SF has depicted, for the most part, a white heterosexual man's universe, with a few very noteworthy exceptions.)

The "golden age" of science fiction, from the late 1930s to the early 50s, saw the advent of several outstanding women SF writers. Not coincidentally, many of them published under male-seeming names, such as Leigh Brackett (writer of numerous SF adventure tales and "space operas" with male heroes), C.L. (Catherine Lucille) Moore, E. (Edna) Mayne Hull, and Wilmar Shiras.

These were joined, in the late 1940s and 1950s, by authors such as Judith Merrill, Andre (Alice Mary) Norton, Margaret St. Clair, and Zenna Henderson. Despite the prevailing tenor of SF at the time, many of these writers did in fact create stories with strong female characters and heroines (such as C.L. Moore's Jirel of



Joiry), as well as dealing with sociological themes from a woman's perspective. Again, however, these were the exceptions, and even Leigh Brackett and Andre Norton, for example, have generally written about (and for) boys/men.

In her introduction to the excellent anthology, Women of Wonder (ed. by Pamela Sargent, Vintage Books, 1975), SF author Pamela Sargent refers to the "pulp origins of American SF..., designed, for all its scientific pretensions, as primarily an escapist literature for men and boys." She goes on to note that "young girls often found nothing of interest to them personally in science fiction...where men had most of the adventures and fun."

In a speech presented recently at WisCon 9 (an SF fan's convention in Madison), guest-of-honor Lisa Tuttle recalled how, at age 13, accustomed to voraciously reading practically everything in the house (including her father's SF books), she had nevertheless avoided the SF books in the young people's section of her local library. The books bore stickers with "little red rocketships" on their spines, and Lisa therefore deduced that they must be boys' books, like the sports books with the "little red baseball bats" on their spines. She didn't realize there was anything in them for her until another girl persuaded her to read some of them. "I wasn't interested in reading about boys racing hotrods, playing baseball, or fixing rockets," Tuttle explained. Once she did read them, however, she was hooked—and went on to become an SF author herself.

Today, a young girl following Lisa's footsteps to the public library could find dozens of SF books with female protagonists having adventures and doing things—many of which have been written especially for young people, and feature teenaged (or younger) heroines/heroes.

Women SF writers have used the SF genre splendidly to create new visions of human society, human sexuality, and gender roles, and to speculate about the possibilities for the development of the human mind and spirit, extended into the realms of telepathic communication, empathic communion, cooperation, and responsible uses of technology and the environment. As noted above, "utopian fiction" has been a popular sub-genre among women writers; many modern women SF writers have created vibrant feminist utopian visions, or (in their more pessimistic moods) anti-feminist dystopian warnings extrapolated from the present day.

Women SF writers have created fantastic, exciting, out-of-this-world great stories, with characters that live in one's mind long after the book has ended, and science-fictional ideas that delight the imagination. It can be, let's face it, very—well, liberating—to read a story in which women are free to develop our full potential as human beings, as thinking and spiritual beings, rather than appearing only as stereotypes or as the embodiment of male sexual fantasies.

In my years as an SF fan, I've read hundreds of SF books by men, and watched hundreds of SF movies and TV shows—the imaginative content was sufficient to keep me hooked on the genre, in spite of the sexism. Eventually, however, I did get tired of all the macho thud-and-blunder (otherwise known as "blood and thunder"). Luckily for me, the years from the late 1960s to the present have given us writers such as Joanna Russ, Suzy McKee Charnas, Elizabeth A. Lynn, James Tiptree Jr., Samuel R. Delany, Kate Wilhelm, and Ursula K. LeGuin, to name only a few of those who have written feminist or non-sexist SF.

Ursula Kroeber LeGuin has

given us novels and short stories of marvellously-detailed otherworldly cultures that hold a special appeal for the amateur anthropologist in me. She has also written one of the best Fantasy series of all time—the Earthsea trilogy.

Kate Wilhelm has created a succession of strong women characters with complex personalities, who face extraordinary challenges in gripping tales, many of which explore the possibilities of medical technology—cloning, longevity, behavioral research (e.g., Welcome, Chaos, The Clewiston Test, Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang, and "The Planners"). She has also written fine non-SF fiction about indomitable women, such as Fault Lines.

Suzy McKee Charnas created the riveting dystopian novel, Walk to the End of the World, a vision of a future in which woman-hatred has caused an extreme division between the sexes, and women have been relegated to the status of slaves and animals. She followed this with an uplifting sequel, Motherlines, which gives us not one but two all-women societies. She has also written one of the all-time great vampire yarns, The Vampire Tapestry.

Joanna Russ has given us the all-woman planet Whileaway and its remarkable citizens (in The Female Man and "When It Changed"), and the amazing space-time adventurers Alyx (in The Adventures of Alyx) and Irene (in The Two of Them). Russ's work displays, more than any of the others, a frank feminist consciousness, as well as being great fiction by any standards.

James Tiptree, Jr. (Alice Sheldon) has written dozens of SF short stories dealing with feminist themes, and a stunningly-imaginative novel called Up the Walls of the World. Tiptree's career in SF has been fascinating. She burst upon the SF scene with the publication

of several short stories which outshone almost everything else published at the time. Because of her male pseudonym, and her reclusive personality, she was believed to be a man, and her fiction was praised as an example of how a man could write believable, strong female characters while still writing "manly" fiction. SF author Robert Silverberg, praising Tiptree's skill as a writer, wrote:

*It has been suggested that Tiptree is female, a theory that I find absurd, for there is to me something ineluctably masculine about Tiptree's writing. I don't think the novels of Jane Austen could have been written by a man, nor the stories of Ernest Hemingway by a woman, and in the same way I believe the author of the James Tiptree stories is male (Introduction to Tiptree's short story collection Warm Worlds and Otherwise, Ballantine, 1975).*

Silverberg's Introduction went on to praise, in particular, the story "The Women Men Don't See" (an ironic title if there ever was one) as "something of a masterpiece of short-story writing." He was particularly impressed by this "profoundly feminist story told in entirely masculine manner (emphasis mine). It's interesting that, after Tiptree revealed her true identity, there was a lot of hemming and hawing, but very little recanting of previously-expressed opinions concerning the "masculine" nature of her writing.

Suzette Haden Elgin has written non-sexist SF adventures such as Star-Anchored, Star-Angered and Furthest. In her latest novel, Native Tongue, she creates a women's language [Editor's note: see article "Ladan, A Language for Women" in this issue of HOT WIRE] which is used as a tool of re-

bellion against a male-dominated society. Elgin has also written the fabulous, hilarious Ozark fantasy trilogy—being the adventures of the irrepressible Responsible of Brightwater and her sister Troublesome, in a world where magic is science.

C.J. Cherryh and Marion Zimmer Bradley have written enormously popular SF and "sword and sorcery" novels, with female protagonists possessing remarkable strength and abilities.



Carolyn J. Cherryh at the World SF Convention in Phoenix, Arizona.

The myriad facets of lesbian love and woman-woman relationships have been skillfully portrayed in books such as The Wanderground by Sally Miller Gearhart, The Demeter Flower by Rochelle Singer, Motherlines by Suzy McKee Charnas, The Shattered Chain and Thendara House by Marion Zimmer Bradley, The Female Man and The Two of Them by Joanna Russ, The Northern Girl by Elizabeth A. Lynn, and many more.

The list goes on. The remarkable creations of women SF writers, especially within the past two decades, have sufficed to turn more than one feminist into an SF fan (and perhaps, vice-versa?). If you are beginning to feel the urge to delve into SF, I recommend the three

Women of Wonder (WOW, for short) anthologies edited by Pamela Sargent, as well as all of the authors named above. That should be enough to get you started.

And me? I'm off to the local bookstore—I hear that Tiptree has just written a new novel, and I can't wait! ●

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Christine Kulyk is a long-time SF fan; she is also a freelance writer, and editorial assistant at 'Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de le femme' magazine. She has lived in Montreal and Edmonton, and now resides in Toronto.*

Science fiction has been dubbed "speculative feminism" by some feminist fans who recognize its potential as a medium for exploring the possibilities of non-sexist futures. There are two "fanzines" devoted to feminist SF: New Moon (edited by Janice M. Bogstad) and Aurora (edited by Jeanne Gomoll et al.). Both of these publications are available from SF3, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701.

Chris Kulyk

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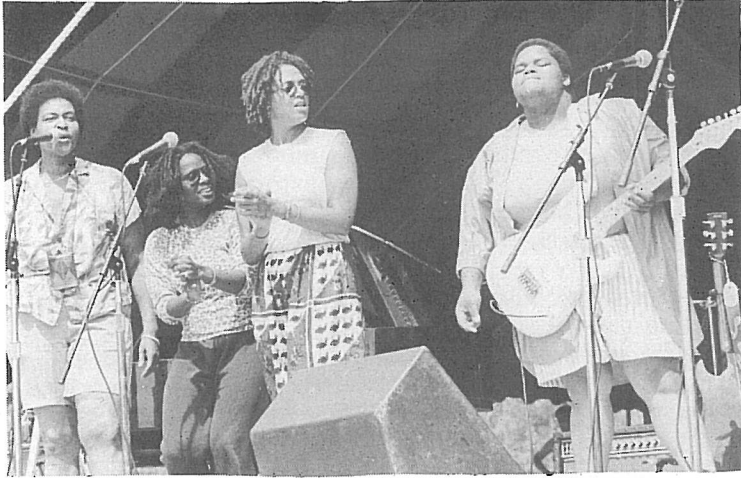
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### FLAMENCO from page 7

gan to reintroduce some of the flowing movements of the "feminine" style into her dancing. She used them to express more subtle, controlled emotions which could not be properly portrayed using the more aggressive dancing style.

Her skill in the whole range of flamenco dance styles is a clear demonstration of her amazing versatility, but that is not all. She was also a fine flamenco singer and an innovative choreographer. Amaya was one of the performers who popularized flamenco in the United States.



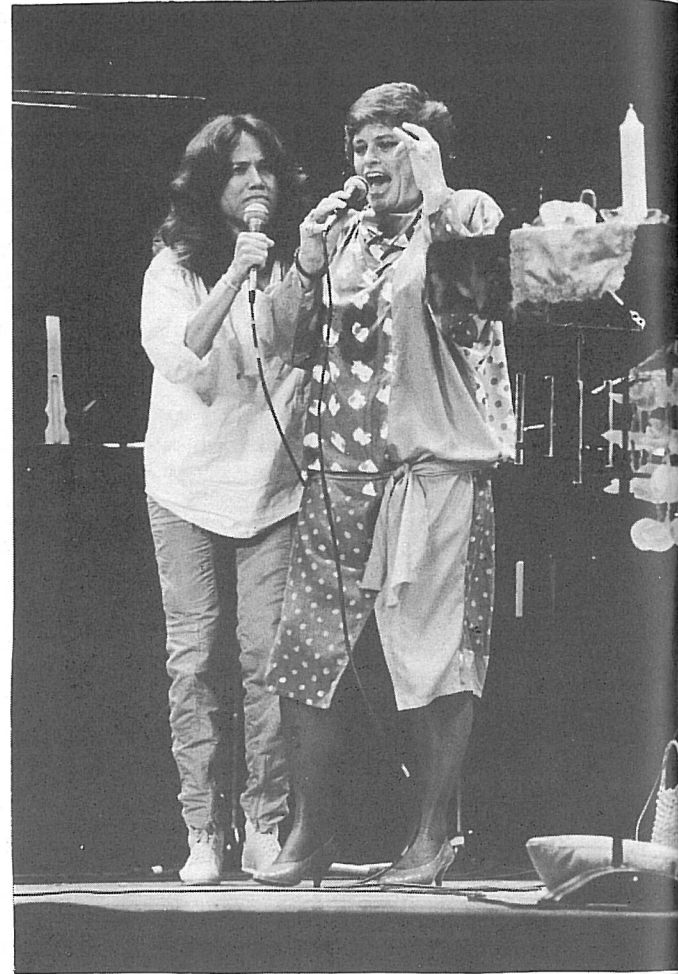
Tul, Casselberry-DuPree, and Toshi Reagon tearing up Michigan Day Stage

Marcy J. Hochberg



The outrageous Sue Fink

Marcy J. Hochberg



June Millington and rhiannon at the National Women's Music Festival

## 1985 FESTIVAL PHOTOS



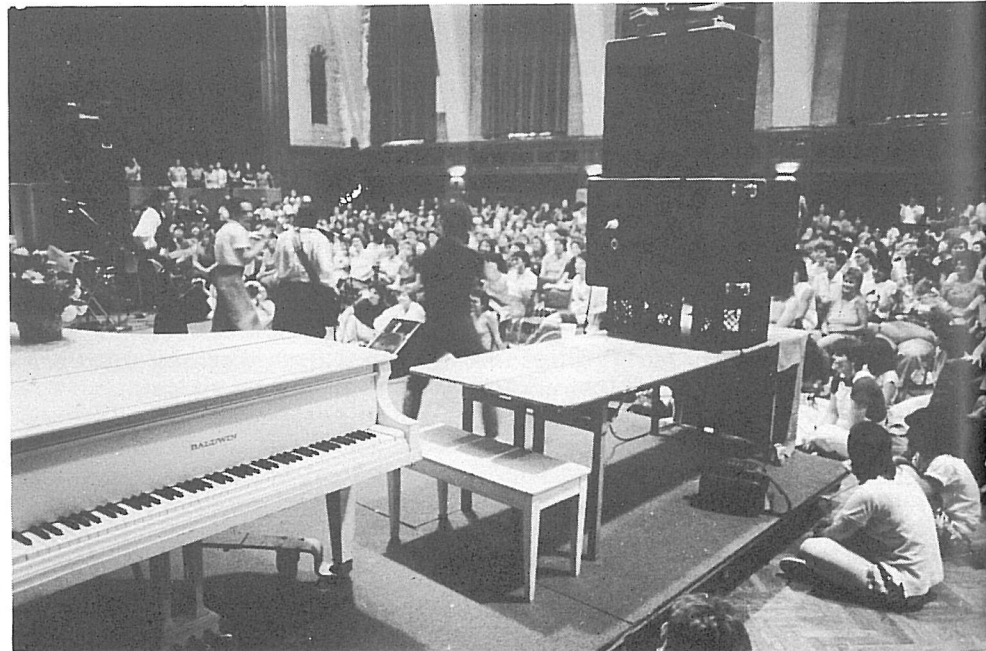
Noted ivory-tickler Julie Homi

Toni Armstrong



Beth York at Campfest

Carole Vaughn



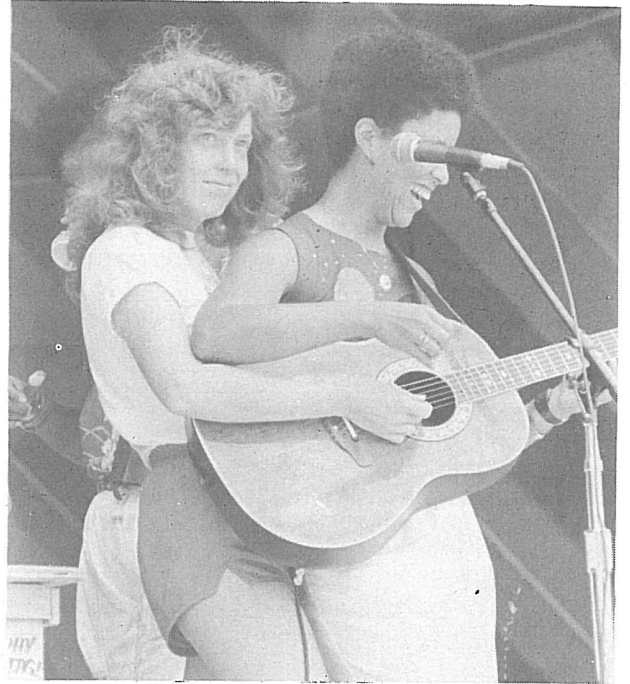
The NWMF Day Stage, featuring the "rock & role" music of the Fabulous Dyketones





Marcy J. Hochberg

"Here come the lesbians...here come the leaping lesbians..."



Toni Armstrong

Deidre McCalla with the ever-helpful Teresa Trull



Bonnie Cook

Linda Tillery: "We are the chosen ones, not just some of us, but all of us—every one."



Marcy J. Hochberg

Kate Clinton and the Michigan non-competitive "new games"



Marcy J. Hochberg

Edwina Lee Tyler & A Piece of the World

# Campfest '85

## Celebration, Comfort, and Connectedness

By CONNIE GILBERT-NEISS

How unique could a women's music festival be if it were held in paradise? The 750 of us who participated in Campfest '85 over the Memorial Day Weekend got a chance to find out, but surely the Goddess had a hand in it—because it almost didn't happen that way.

Situated at a deluxe children's camp in southeastern Pennsylvania, featuring tended lawns and superb recreational facilities, this year's celebration was—in setting if not in spirit—a striking contrast to Campfest '84 and to any other such festivals members of our coordinating committee have attended.

Conceived as a community of women over a decade ago in the Margate, New Jersey living room of co-producer Lee Glanton, born of over a year's hard labor by Lee and the other co-producer Geri Sweeney—and a dedicated committee—Campfest first appeared over Memorial Day Weekend '84 at a primitive, unused scout camp in rural southern New Jersey. Periodic drizzle and a full-fledged thunder and lightning storm heralded her arrival.

As with many festivals, tenting and cold water were the only options, and structures had to be built from the ground up. The site was so overgrown that 20 women labored for 10 working days to clear the brush, haul in dirt and gravel for the road they had to build, and work miracles just to make the area passable. But passable—even welcoming—it became, the battle cry being Lee's "Just a little more M & H!" (moving and

hauling).

The hard work, of course, was neither unique to our celebration nor unexpected. The handful of us—including Judy Zitter, an early visionary of the modern women's movement—who dreamed of a permanent community of women so long ago never imagined it would be easy. Neither did we imagine that a women's music festival might be the first step toward

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### Campfest '85 avoided repeating the \$24,000 loss of the previous year.

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our goal, but it seems to have turned out that way—largely thanks to Geri and Lee. Judy died in an automobile accident in November of 1982, characteristically en route to a NOW regional meeting. To those of us who loved her, Campfest is a continuing memorial.

But it might have been short-lived. A scant two months before Campfest '85, we were without a site. Early on, we had been denied the option of returning to the original setting. "The two women kissing on the caretaker's steps had a lot to do with that," Geri admits ruefully.

Another New Jersey camp was located, contracted for, and advertised. Nationwide outreach was begun, and registrations began coming in. Then that site fell through when the owners breached a number of contrac-

tual specifications, the most crushing of which was the guarantee of women-only space. Committed to a New Jersey location, Lee, Geri, and available planners scouted almost a dozen sites before finally finding Camp Saginaw.

A personal note: as the mother of young sons and a person whose idea of camping is (1) a Hyatt with a view of the woods, or (2) a gay male behavioral stereotype, I had spent years actively resisting the urge to attend a women's music festival. Half-seriously, I had based my participation in Campfest '85 on permission to bring a rented recreational vehicle on site, supposedly to provide a proper setting for my press briefings. The availability of Camp Saginaw, however, seemed a passport to paradise.

Campfest was originally conceived by the co-producers as a unique celebration, offering not only the high quality of music, workshops, womanmade products, and networking of other festivals, but organized sports and recreational opportunities as well.

Camp Saginaw is ideal, providing an Olympic-sized pool, multiple ball fields, miniature golf, scenic hiking, basketball and tennis courts, and stocked lake and stream fishing. It has an enclosed concert hall which we dubbed Radclyffe Hall in keeping with the practice of assigning cabin names from women's herstory and literature.

Then there were the cabins: I didn't need an RV when I could retreat to a solid cabin with beds and mattresses, hot

showers, and flush toilets. Press briefings were held in the dining halls. A little savvy about shutter management provided cool respite from the noon heat and warmth for the chilly nights. The weather was perfect this year—sunny and nearing 80° each day.

for example, without going through the craftswomen area. Vendors came from as far away as Vermont and Indiana, and reportedly business was fine.

The spirit of connectedness was originally planned to be emotional, and that family feeling is of vital importance to

"but" is that profits from Alix Dobkin and Kate Clinton concerts produced in Philadelphia went into Campfest—to say nothing of the endless dancebuffets, brunches, merchandise sales, and wine-and-cheese parties staged as fundraisers at every opportunity throughout



Carole Vaughn

One of the light-hearted challenges of the weekend was the creation of the "Living W" womyn's symbol.

Even confirmed tenting enthusiasts were pleased with the setting, which offered both woods and field (really lawn) campsites in close proximity to bathrooms. In truth, everything at Campfest '85 was close by, with the exception of the lake and the most far-flung ball fields. The accessibility was intentional. All elements of the celebration were planned with a sense of connectedness, from the special attention to "womyn traveling separately" (special cabins, events, meeting place, and staff coordinator) to the fact that one couldn't easily get from the communications tent, healing center, or pool,

Campfest organizers. Lee Glanton's Campfest credo states that the positive, transforming energy within each woman can "make magic," and we've all experienced that magic projected from the concert stage.

And we are growing. Registration was up 50% from 1984 and capital outlays (canvas, building materials, duplicating machine, supplies) were minimal. This—and the fact that inventories and accounting practices were professionalized—enabled the co-producers to avoid repeating the first-year \$24,000 loss.

"This year we almost broke even, BUT..." Geri says. The

the year.

To produce such a celebration, even on a small scale, obviously takes an astonishing investment—creatively, emotionally, and physically as well as financially—but it can be done. Even the creation of magic in paradise is not an impossible dream. If women from Broken Bow, Nebraska, or Naples, New York, or Key West, Florida, dream as we do: go for it!

*continued on page 61*

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Connie Gilbert-Neiss just marked the 30th anniversary of her life as an activist. A professional public relations consultant and Campfest's Press Liaison, she lives semi-communally in South Orange, NJ.*



# A Michigan Journal

What does it take to put together the Michigan festival? These journal excerpts provide a glimpse into the pre-festival preparations.

By Judy Robinson

MONDAY, JULY 22

Finally got here. I say finally because I've been counting the days since Easter. I'll be here for four weeks, which should be long enough to learn quite a bit about the magical process involved in the building of this village of womyn by womyn.

TUESDAY, JULY 23

Learned about the different crews today. My crew is the Land Crew, which means that we'll be responsible for the trails, campgrounds, and roads.

Outdoor inventory ("Lace Hardware") empties the barn where the furniture and other things (kitchenware, plumbing supplies, etc.) are kept.

Staff Central keeps the confusion down to a minimum for things like vehicle requests, equipment rentals, outland services—porta-janes, tents, and the like.

And the kitchen keeps us very well-fed.

There will be more crews added as it gets closer to festival time, but that's it for now.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24

Got to meet my crew today. We have seven workers and three coordinators. There seems to be enough similarity to ensure compatibility, but also enough variety to keep things interesting. Walked around and got acquainted with the land today. Fixed one of the roads after that. They are all sand, so they need periodic shoring up—which we do by digging a trench and filling it with gravel

and then putting the sand back over that. It's only temporary because eventually the gravel sinks down into the sand. But it will get us through the summer.



Marcy J. Hochberg

FRIDAY, JULY 26

Ever wonder how all those wood chips get on the trails? Wheelbarrows and determination! I'm sure the animals are quite amused by the yearly ritual of womyn huffing and puffing up the trails with wheelbarrows full of wood chips. Needless to say, it's quite a lengthy process to get all these miles of trails chipped.

Our crew is not the only one that's working hard. Everything is starting to move into high gear now—the carpenters are beginning to arrive and they need wood to work with, so Lace Hardware is busy bringing it here, and the kitchen is cooking for more and more womyn every day (and doing an incredible job of it!).

SATURDAY, JULY 27

Night Stage went into place today. It's an amazingly smooth process—the carpenters get the stacks into place and then we (whoever wants to help) lift the platforms into place under their

direction. It's kind of a yearly sign that things are really starting to move, and I hear tell we get to break it in with a dance once it's finished.

SUNDAY, JULY 28

We (the grounds crew) are still chipping trails—in addition to flagging campgrounds. Someone does walk all the way through the woods to identify the campgrounds and animal sanctuaries. It's really a good way to learn the land and get a sense of how big it really is.

Security Crew started full-time (24 hours) today to keep the boys away. It made me feel much safer, because some of the locals have been staring at us none too warmly (although for the most part, I must admit they're pretty friendly).

DART (which technically means "Differently Abled Resource Tent" but has come to stand for the group that handles all the facilities for the differently abled) has started to put their ramps (for wheelchairs) all around the area—no minor undertaking considering all parts of the festival will eventually be wheelchair accessible. From what I've heard, this festival is one of the most complete in terms of facilities and access for differently-abled womyn.

MONDAY, JULY 29

Went into town to help with purchasing. Every morning there are lists from all the different areas of things that are needed which can literally range from colored chalk to rake handles. The woman who is in charge

of doing the actual runs has to have the patience of a saint, because sometimes you need to visit five different stores before you find what's needed. And that can be just one item—like they say, it's a tough job, but somebody has to do it.

#### TUESDAY, JULY 30

Some of the big tents went up today. Now it's a little easier to get a sense of where things are going to be. Some of the "service" coordinators (Womb, Oasis, etc.) are beginning to arrive to set up their respective areas. The confusion really seems to be minimal, which amazes me. I keep waiting for things to get crazy, but so far they haven't. Staff Central is doing a fine job of keeping everything flowing smoothly ("everything" being 40-some crews and 200+ womyn).

The Workers Kitchen is doing an astounding job of keeping us fed. I'm a confirmed junk-food lover, and even I like the food here. The womyn who are vegetarians year-round are amazed at the variety. So much for losing a few pounds while I'm here.

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 31

Did some more purchasing today. I wonder what goes through the clerks' heads when two dykes walk up with carts full of kite string, duct tape, wading pools, and wrenches. If they only knew.

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 1

The adrenalin is really starting to flow. Most of us switch crews on Monday, so we only have four days to get the rest of the work done.

The Goddess statue was raised tonight. It was a really nice way to ground some of the nervous energy that's starting to be raised around here. The full moon made it seem even more magical.

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 2

Scaffolding for the Night Stage went up, thanks to Lace Hardware. DART is pretty well finished with their ramps. Grounds is still chipping trails, but the end is in sight now.

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 3

Fire pits for the main kitchen got started today—no easy task. Two pits, six feet deep and 20-25 feet long. They got finished in less than two days, which I hear is a record.

The rest of the tents (40+) also got raised today—a 12-hour job. It's hard to tell which was the harder job. Neither one was made easier by 90° heat and no wind...are we having fun yet?!

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 4

Finished chipping today!  
That's it for the Land Crew until post-fest. Tomorrow I move to the Main Kitchen. Most crews do some shifting during the festival—helps the workers to get a more complete experience and also makes room for festival-goers who want to do their work shifts in certain areas. Security, for instance.

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 5

Started helping set up the Main Kitchen today. Washing out 55-gallon drums so they can be used as serving containers really makes you realize how much food is going to move through here in the next week—not to mention womyn! I can't wait!

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 6

Unloaded some of the food trucks today. They ordered with 8,000 festival participants as a guideline. Keep your fingers crossed.

#### WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7

Made dinner for 6,500 womyn. Once again, I'm amazed at how smoothly everything is going. The kitchen staff has some womyn who have been here for

years—including the woman who designed most of the equipment—and their experience is making everything move so well even they're a little surprised.

#### THURSDAY, AUGUST 8

Forgot to mention that the technicians arrived in full force this past week. The Night Stage Crew has had extra work to do, thanks to rain. These womyn are quite dedicated to be willing to put up with not only the usual production hassles, but also with the unpredictable Michigan summer weather. Brava!

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 9

Went into full force today and started cooking for 8,000 (just hearing that number makes me excited, but also tired).

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 10

Walked around some today, and was struck by how complete Lisa [Vogel] and Boo [Price] were in planning this. And the fact that Lisa was only 19 when all this began is cause for even more incredulousness. It's really exciting to see all these weeks of hard work pay off in the form of thousands of womyn enjoying themselves—some for the first time, but several for the fifth, sixth, or even tenth (!) time. It must have been pretty amazing to have seen it from the very beginning.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 11

Last day today. Kind of sad to see another festival come to an end, but also satisfied with a job well-done. Very well-done according to the festival-goers who have made a point of stopping by to tell us workers how amazed and impressed they were with the way everything was handled. It's really a good feeling to get that kind of positive feedback.

*continued on page 62*

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Judy Robinson is planning to return to school in the near future to obtain a journalism degree.*

# THE MUSIC INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

## THIRD ANNUAL GATHERING AT NWMF

By C.W. Guse

The NWMF is the oldest women's music festival in the world—this summer marked its eleventh year. Kate Clinton calls it "the festival for the rustically challenged," for those who "don't do tents." And indeed, the indoor setting is an attractive feature for women who find camping to be physically taxing or a nuisance. Headquarters is Read Center, a mammoth dormitory on the Bloomington campus of the University of Indiana, and the festival's activities take place in Read, in several academic buildings nearby, in the Student Union, and, for the Mainstage shows, in a large indoor concert hall.

Being able to take hot showers, sleep in real beds, sit on chairs, and come in out of the rain has definitely had an influence on the way this festival has evolved. Because of the amenities of civilization of the NWMF environment, and maybe, too, because its focus has always been national rather than regional, it's been possible to make this festival into one that hosts a wide range of conferences in conjunction with the music.

The largest of these conferences, at this point, is the Music Industry Conference (MIC), now going into its fourth year. The MIC is designed to be a working conference for women who make their livelihoods—or would like to—in women's music, and it brings together the women who run the women's music business. Even though women's music is still dwarfed by mainstream

pop, women's music has become a million-dollar business, with over 50 record labels involved. Approximately 50 concert producers attended the 1985 MIC, two of which make their living as producers.

The no-nonsense feminist entrepreneurs come together for the annual series of professional meetings and workshops, to confer face-to-face, make new contacts, and to touch base with everyone in the industry. In addition to concert producers and record labels, members of the Women's Independent Label Distributors (W.I.L.D.) meet a full day earlier for their distributors' conference. Performers, managers, bookers, and women from many other businesses also participate.

This year's MIC held its first annual banquet, emceed by Kate Clinton. It featured the presentation of awards: Redwood Records honored Terry Grant of Goldenrod Distribution [see "Behind the Scenes" in this issue of HOT WIRE] for the most on-time payments; Merle Bicknell and Betsy York of Horizon for highest sales of Redwood products; and Merle Bicknell for the best in-store display. Betsy York presented awards to Liz Snow and Terry Grant to commemorate their 10 years as distributors; the NWMF conferred a lifetime pass to the festival and a plaque recognizing 10 years of commitment to the advancement of women's culture and three years of coordinating the MIC to Toni Armstrong. Toni's



Comfortable university rooms are a primary attraction of the National Women's Music Festival in Bloomington, home of the MIC.

Susan Wilson



mother also received a corsage for the enthusiasm and support she shows to women's music.

There were several "honorable mentions" given by Kate: all bookers were invited to come to the front of the beautiful banquet room and participate in a game which involved identifying the area codes of specific cities (this was the final event in the "booker triathlon" and the winner was Penny Rosenwasser); NWMF producers Mary Byrne and Dino Sierp were given the "synchronized production" award; and the "performer pack-off" award (packing the most stuff on tour without breakage) went to Sue Fink and Diane Lindsay.

One unique aspect of the Music Industry Conference is the Block Booking/Artist Promotion area. In the lobby of Read Hall, the main thoroughfare of the festival, approximately 40 artists set up table and wall displays. It is an excellent way for performers to gain visibility. During specific times, producers and performers meet in the Block Booking area to discuss tours and prospective tours. "Block booking" means trying to coordinate a tour within a limited geographical area; if an artist is coming to Madison in October, travel and sometimes promotional expenses can be minimized if she can get gigs in Chicago, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and St. Louis in October. The MIC is the only festival that provides such structured networking opportunities.

The emphasis at this year's MIC was on developing professional skills. Experienced producers, bookers, distributors, publicists, publishers, and performers gave presentations, open discussions, skits, and panel discussions which provided concrete "how-to" information.

Important issues in the network that continue to generate discussion and controversy include how to move from the



Bonnie Cook

**Kate's Name That Tune**, during which contestants kiss her to indicate that they can name the tune she hums.

red to the black financially; the slow but steady increase in the number of men who want to be a part of the women's music business; the decrease in explicit "woman-identified" performance material; and how to build coalitions with other groups and not sell out or be co-opted.

The Music Industry Conference is expected to remain an integral part of the NWMF. Denise Notzon, publicist and promotional specialist, will replace Toni Armstrong as coordinator of the MIC beginning with the 1986 festival. Dino Sierp will continue in her job as MIC coordinator. All women interested in participating in the 1986 MIC should address correspondence to Denise (1450 Sixth, Berkeley, CA 94710) and Dino (P.O. Box 2907, Indianapolis, IN 46206). ●

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*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: C.W. Guse, amateur acupuncturist, lives with her boxer dog Babs. They both enjoy looking for attractive women.*

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## HOT WIRE FIRST ANNUAL READERS' CHOICE AWARD

Each year at the Music Industry Conference (held at the National Women's Music Festival), awards are given to women who work in the women's music business to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions.

As of 1986, HOT WIRE will present an award to the individual, group, or organization that our readers have selected by majority vote.

At this time, we ask our readers for nominations. The ballots will appear in the March issue of HOT WIRE. Please write the name of your nominee, and explain in 25 words or less why she/they should receive this honor. Please specify their outstanding achievement or contribution to women's music and culture.

Send your nominations to us so that we receive them no later than January 5, 1986.

**HOT WIRE**  
**1417 W. Thome**  
**Chicago, IL 60660**

We sincerely hope you will join us in our effort to applaud the important contributions that are made each year by women for women in the interest of advancing women's music and culture.

# KEYNOTE SPEECH

## 1985 Music Industry Conference

By Trudy Wood

I'm very happy to be here today, and to welcome you to the third annual Music Industry Conference. It is our yearly reminder of our strengths, both combined and individual, and that we are not alone in all of this! So much of the work that we do is solitary—alone on phones, at desks, on stages—that it's a thrill to be together like this.

I want to begin by telling you a story. It runs in the family!

When my friend Rachel was growing up, her father ran numbers. He was a bookie. Now those of you who know anything about this also know that bookies keep all their bets on flash paper. Anyone here know flash paper? Well, flash paper is special paper that is highly flammable and will burn up immediately upon contact with a spark, leaving no ash or residue when the cops come in unexpectedly. One day Rachel's father had a visit from the local vice squad and didn't even have time to throw a match on the flash paper, so he quickly threw it into the toilet to get rid of it. That night, as he did every night just before bed, he took the evening paper into the bathroom to read while he sat, smoked a cigarette, and did his other business. When he finished the cigarette, he threw it in the toilet. Rachel's mom, who was already in bed, said she heard a big explosion and then her father cursing and swearing. Seems like the flash paper hadn't been flushed earlier, and when he finished his business and threw the cigarette into the john, it went up in flames and burned his ass something good! He wouldn't go to the emergency room; how would he explain it? And his wife was laughing so hard she was no help, so he suffered by himself with a sore ass and an even sorer ego!

This story is only for an explanation of what flash paper is.

It used to be a lot of us did our writing, kept our lives and businesses, on flash paper. Always ready to get out if we had to. We no longer do that.

Last year the WILD distributors, who have already been meeting this week for two days, had combined sales figures of well over 200,000 units, grossing over \$2 million for retailers. 100 labels were distributed to major chains, record stores, and alternative outlets. Both WILD and Ladyslipper were written up in *Billboard* magazine, and among recent anniversaries, Terry Grant and Liz Snow just celebrated their tenth year as distributors.

We are not only not talking flash paper

here, we are also not talking flash in the pan!

This year *MS.* magazine decided to honor ten outstanding women for their contributions and achievements. One of those women so honored, for her creativity, performing, her cultural work, and for living the message she teaches was Holly Near.

For 1984 the Bay Area Jazz Awards gave, for an unprecedented two times in a row, their award for Best Female Vocalist to the same woman who won it last year: Linda Tillery.

*The Boston Globe* chose the following three as their tie for first place album of the year: Bruce Springsteen, Prince, and Ferron. *Shadows on a Dime* made many other Top 10 LP of the Year lists in major papers around the country too.

Kay Gardner's latest release, *Rainbow Path*, sold 10,000 copies in its first six months, making a significant crossover into the New Age market.

*MS.* may have had Geraldine Ferraro on the cover of their October issue, but inside, with a full page feature, was Kate Clinton as one of the new female stand-up comics in the country.

*Frets* magazine, the trade journal for folk/bluegrass, named as Best New (interestingly enough!) Talent of 1984, Robin Flower. Last week at the national NARD conference in Philadelphia, Best String Band LP of the Year also went to Robin.

We are not talking flash paper in these cases either.

This year we also saw a wonderful number of new solo albums released: Nancy Vogl, Ronnie Gilbert, Deidre McCalla, Diane Lindsay, Sue Fink, Robin Tyler, Judy Fjell, Ann Reed, Judy Small. . . just to mention a few.

We are entertainers, publicists, promoters, labels, producers, and distributors getting major national media coverage and attention. We have created, from our large dreams and small amounts of money, models that are being held up for other women and the world as examples. As we have always known, it is we, the women, the dreamers and schemers, coming up with the interesting and innovative solutions for the future.

We are growing and expanding, as you can see just in this festival which this year now includes not only this MIC, but also the Writers Conference, Third World Conference, Spirituality Conference, the WILD Annual Conference. . . not to even mention the Booker Sisters' Annual Hot Tub Soak

and Conference!

We are here for this conference because we believe in the future. We believe in the goodness of women working together, of women getting their words and songs and messages into the world to change it. We are the ones who do it and we're here to talk about how. We have all made adjustments in our lives and our schedules to be here together. We are here as businesswomen, artists, strategists, to ask the questions that need asking.

We are here to address ourselves to the problems at hand. In a political environment where major funding to the arts is being slashed, and what is left is largely misogynist and homophobic, we need to look seriously at the future. As an example, three years ago Virginia Commonwealth University had an \$18,000 women's programming budget that many of us reaped the benefits of. This past year, in keeping with national sentiment, they were given \$1,800. Barely enough to run a film festival. Unfortunately, as you know, this is only one example. We face both conflicts and horizons wider than ever before. We need to realistically evaluate our industry and our individual situations. We need to face the questions of development, production, marketing, and money. We need all of our resources and all of our strengths.

What began as one thing has changed. Meg playing to 150 women in the basement of the YWCA and making \$100 (on a good night), producers making nothing, and everyone being happy is not the case any more. We are faced with the necessity of growth. Always, of course. We need to seriously consider our audience and markets and develop them further. Because the three, or four, or five performers that began those many years ago traveling this circuit did their job so well, they have encouraged many more to do the same. Given courage to others to try. We have a proliferation of extremely talented women now, many of whom you'll see here this weekend on all of the performing stages. We need to now accurately address the challenge of expansion. I do not believe there are any obstacles standing in our way, except our own lack of imagination. One of Eleanor Roosevelt's rallying cries was, "It's up to the women!" She was right. And because life consists of sending everything forward, everything, we are looking and finding the innovative ways of

*continued on page 60*

# STAYING SANE ON THE ROAD

I know I'll always be writing and playing music—it opens me up, gives me release for emotional and psychic energy. I've promised myself that in order to be the best I can be, my health and sanity need to be top priorities when I'm on the road. Needless to say, it takes some work to make the "touring musician" lifestyle be one that can nourish me, rather than drain my vital energies.

By Debbie Fier

"Being on the road and staying sane" sounds like a contradiction in terms. Touring takes quite a bit of work, often more work than the actual performances themselves. Being on the road is one of the best educations I've gotten in my life.

I sometimes feel like a troubador, carrying all kinds of news along with my music from city to city all over the country. I'm able to tell communities in one place what's going on in other places—it's great. A lot of times we don't have information being passed on between our communities.

I love making friends with women I meet on tour. The more I go to different areas, the more I make friends. I have needs for consistent intimacy—and not always sexual—and that can be hard to find when I'm

ing lover relationships. And there are friendships I've had to let go of because people can't deal with all my comings and goings. I can't always be relating to people exclusively in the context of "me and my music." I need to have contact and communication with other women.

Being on the road is stressful in other ways, too. It's exhausting. It's very high pressure, having to deal with tight travel schedules, possible airline strikes, and being dependent on producers' reliability.

One of the most harrowing on-tour experiences I ever had began three days before the gig when the producer called and left a message that no one would be able to pick me up at the airport to get me to the 8 p.m. gig. I got on the plane

helped with calls; finally, we were able to line up a ride for me from the Ohio airport to the gig. I arrived at 7:30, and played at 8.

A kind word about our network: it was through the local women's record distributor and women's bookstore that we eventually found transportation for me. The (male) producer was of no help whatsoever.

As a mostly solo act, my endless responsibilities vary from making sure I'm at the airport on time to keeping track of all the different names and faces I encounter. I have to make sure that all the equipment works at soundcheck, work out financial details, and try not to be crabby with anyone no matter how things are going for me. It's an incredible amount of work for one person

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## Sometimes musicians get caught in the crossfire of local politics, and it costs us a lot of money.

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away from home for extended periods of time.

I know that when I'm going to play somewhere and I have friends there, I get really excited. Even if I don't know these women very well, one familiar face in a crowd of strangers can be very comforting to me. One major plus of touring is meeting women with whom I develop a certain kind of warmth and sense of connection.

Traveling so much takes its toll on all relationships, includ-

in Minneapolis at 6 a.m. We weren't in the air more than 10 minutes when we had to turn around and go back due to plane problems. That was finally taken care of, and I flew to Chicago where I was supposed to catch a plane connection that would take me to the city where the gig was. Turns out there are two airports in Chicago, and in order to make my connecting flight, I had to take a bus to get to the other airport. It's afternoon by now. I was on the phone, and a friend

to do, and people often don't stop to think about all the pressures that are on a lone performer out on the road.

It's much better when I travel with Alix Dobkin and River Lightwomoon [The Party Line Dance Band]. We share responsibilities, so pressures on each individual are less. One of us might handle the finances while another deals with the equipment. We split driving, doing up flyers, and things like getting a motel.

We go out on the road for



up to two and a half weeks at a time. I love it. We can travel together, play music together, and take care of each other. If I could, I would always take one or two musicians with me when I tour, but I can't afford it right now.

When I go on the road by myself, it can be for as long as six weeks at a stretch. In that time I'll probably do 10-15 gigs. Here are some things I do to take care of myself.

### **TAKING CARE OF MYSELF**

I try to check in with myself or meditate pretty consistently, to stay present with myself and affirm that what I'm doing is not completely

try to arrive at the gig city the night before the show so I can sleep in and relax some on the day of the show.

It's hard to perform well after being en route more than six hours on the day of the show. It's amazing how even only sitting for that long—be it in a train, a plane, or a car—is exhausting, really a wipe-out. Performing takes a huge amount of energy, and I feel like the more that I can prepare myself for the day of the show (by relaxing), the better my show is going to be that night. Many times it's more important for me to relax than it is to practice, because when I'm relaxed I'm going to put on the best show that I can do.

when I arrive. I usually suggest certain meals. People are generally very nice about complying with these requests.

Sometimes it seems like a luxury to eat well while traveling, but it's nearly impossible to function otherwise. When I feel exhausted or burnt out and I eat a good high-protein meal, I just feel alive again. I'm a vegetarian and I don't eat much dairy while touring (it creates mucus in my body which clogs my throat and nose). My dietary needs make it even harder to get good food—good tasting food and high-protein food. I'm now at a place in my life where I won't even bother eating—even if I'm extremely hungry—if I can not get decent food, because

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## **THE PRIVACY ISSUE IS ONE THAT NEEDS TO BE HANDLED WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DELICACY.**

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bizarre or crazy—which is not always easy. I remind myself that this life is something I'm choosing, that I can stop any time I want, and that if I stay relaxed I'll really enjoy myself a lot more.

I have some friends who send postcards and letters to me while I'm traveling, and this is terrific because it reminds me that I have friends and a life outside of roaming the country. It's very easy to feel isolated, traveling from place to place alone. Sometimes it's very hard to remember that I do have anchors in certain parts of the country, in many different communities. I correspond with these people, and sometimes make phone calls. Otherwise I just feel like I'm in this little vacuum by myself, traveling around and wondering what's going on everywhere else.

I'm also very clear on my performing limits. Three shows in a row is my maximum at this point, and then I need about one or two days to be able to rest and sleep. I usually

Many of us coming from alcoholic or drug-dependent pasts—myself included—are working in our lives to relax and slow down without drugs, and even to party without drugs. But when you party without drugs, you do need to sleep sometimes (the chemicals aren't keeping you awake).

It's very important to me that more and more women continue to acknowledge and understand these choices many of us are making to be drug-free. For me, it's a necessity for my own happiness. When I'm feeling bad on the road and fantasize about doing drugs to escape my feelings, I remind myself that if I actually did the drugs I'd feel worse in the long run, and I'd be more out of it. And I would probably do worse shows.

### **EATS**

Another necessary item is good food. In my contract, I ask that there be food at the house where I'm staying for

I end up feeling worse. If I'm in a city where there's a health food store, I'll buy nuts (which have protein in them) and carry them with me. There's nothing worse than getting stranded in an airport and having to deal with the ridiculously expensive food there, which is generally pretty bad.

It's really important for producers and people housing artists to realize that we are traveling constantly, we're not at home, and therefore we can't take the time ourselves to cook good meals. Yet it is so vital to our health—mental, physical, and emotional—to eat well. I know that I put out lots and lots of energy when I perform, and afterwards I'm ready for a full high-protein meal, because that's what gets me to my next show the next day—along with some sleep, too, if that's possible.

These are factors I don't have much control over, because when I show up in a city, I'm at the mercy of the producer who's housing me. Sometimes

people don't think in advance about these aspects of bringing a performer to town.

## HOSPITALITY

The "community housing" we stay in is always the wild card in the deck for those of us who aren't housed in hotels. This is an area where we are—like with meals and transportation—pretty much at the mercy of the producer who's made the arrangements.

In my contract, I ask in advance for a bedroom with a set of clean sheets on the bed and a bedroom door that shuts. No kidding: I know performers who've been expected to sleep on gross—bloody—used sheets.

The privacy issue is one that needs to be handled with a certain amount of delicacy. From the moment I arrive in town, women are excited, friendly, and usually very talkative. The energy is high. Of course I prefer this to coldness, but it can take its toll on someone who's been traveling and meeting dozens of women. At some point I have to communicate my desire to be alone for awhile. If I am in a bedroom with a door that shuts, it's much easier for me to be diplomatic.

Also, when I'm housed in a living room, people are coming in constantly—or at least often enough to make sure I never completely relax and rest. It's easier to stay centered and to get psyched up for a show when we have access to privacy.

While we do have certain stated expectations about the quality of the hospitality we want, there's a lot of room for surprises. The house might be so cockroach infested that you have to worry about the bugs getting into your suitcases. The pets might be aggressive. And on the positive side, the women might provide conveniences and courtesies that are above and beyond the call of duty—such as letting me borrow a car, or

having a good selection of high-protein foods in the house. You just never know what to anticipate.

## MONEY

One of the most difficult issues of being on the road is the financial one. Amazingly enough, the myth of the "easy lives" of musicians still runs rampant. And unfortunately, we are like other women—teachers, accountants, ice cream parlor workers, whoever you are—in



Toni Armstrong

**"I'm very clear on my performing limits."**

that we have to pay rent, we have to eat, and we have to pay travel expenses while we are on the road. I perform because I'm drawn to it. I love to make music. I feel like my message is to share, and to get out to people. But I work my butt off, and the actual performing that you—as audience members—see me do on the road is about 10 percent of all the work I do for each show. There is negotiating, and phone calls, and practicing—and sometimes when I'm on tour and the money situation is shaky, it's very easy to take it personally and

lose some sense of self-worth.

It's important for me to constantly talk to other touring musicians just so I know that it's happening to other people, too. It's real important to separate out work stuff from our personal identities, and not let it get us down. It can be hard to hold onto our integrity when we're being asked to put ourselves out for not much money. It's terribly awkward if a production company loses money on my gig, and asks me to give money back. I've worked just as hard for the show that lost money as I have for the show that drew in hundreds and hundreds of people. And I still have to pay my bills.

Sometimes touring musicians get caught in the crossfire of local politics, and it costs us a lot of money. Once I went to do a gig in a club, and when I got there I was informed that the women's community in that town was boycotting the club because of some problem they were having with the club owner. It was very difficult for me to do the show when most of my fans refused to come to that club to hear me!

With all the unpredictable things that can happen in the area of finances, it's essential that the contract is very clear about what sort of compensation you will receive. Many of us have to work for a percentage of the money that comes in at the door, an amount which can be affected by weather, local politics, and whether or not the production company did adequate publicity. You can see why we try to negotiate a standard fee.

If musicians have made an album, and they are touring to promote the album, they may

*continued on page 63*

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*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Debbie Fier has two albums completed. She has performed at several of the women's music festivals, alone and with the Party Line Dance Band.*

# THE WOMEN'S MUSIC ARCHIVES

*Preserving our musical heritage*

By Kim Kimber

The documentation and preservation of our women's musical heritage is the primary goal of the Women's Music Archives. Individuals who are engaged in researching most aspects of women's involvement in music quickly discover how difficult it is to locate information pertaining to women's roles in and contributions to music. This, of course, is not unique to the area of women's music, but is true of most all areas—whether one is studying the herstory of women in art, politics, health, or sports. We are certainly aware of how women have been basically ignored by male historians, scholars, and writers who refuse to recognize and acknowledge the contributions made by women.

The Women's Music Archives was not an instant creation. It evolved gradually over the course of a three-year period from 1975 to 1978. I was first introduced to "women's music" during the summer of 1975. A friend—Kathy Lewis—and I were

and experienced our first live women's music. And what an experience it was! The performers included Margie Adam, Meg Christian, Ginni Clemmens, Maxine Feldman, Kay Gardner, Jade & Sarsaparilla, Holly Near, New Harmony Sisterhood, Willie Tyson, and Cris Williamson. We had taken along a small lap-sized tape deck with which we recorded the entire two days of concerts. In those days nobody thought to ask if it was permissible to record. Today we record no concerts without artist permission. Ever since that first festival, we have attended and recorded every concert we could get to.

In 1977 we attended our first National Women's Music Festival (the 4th), which was then located in Champaign/Urbana, Illinois. It was there that we met Ruth Dworin from Toronto, who was also recording the festival concerts. After meeting and talking with Ruth at several more festivals, we soon realized that we were ac-

the fall of 1975, we have been collecting any and all materials which relate to women's music. When people ask what we mean by "women's music," it's difficult to narrow it down. We are not interested in collecting items just because they are done by a woman who is in the music field. Our primary focus is on the "women's music" that has evolved as a definite entity since the early 1970s. This is woman-identified, woman-made music—primarily, though not exclusively, feminist and lesbian in orientation. We do collect jazz and classical as well as pop, rock, folk and other styles. Rosetta Reitz has released numerous albums in her Women's Heritage Series, including groups like The International Sweethearts of Rhythm. We are interested in documenting where the present day women's music movement came from, but we are mostly interested in preserving "women's music" as we know it today.

The task of archiving is not

**The task of archiving is not an easy one, and is not without its problems—like time and money.**

paying our annual summer visit to two friends in Maine who insisted that we listen to some record albums they had recently discovered. Upon listening to Meg Christian's I Know You Know, Alix Dobkin's Lavender Jane Loves Women, and The Deadly Nightshade, we were instantly hooked. Two months later, we attended the First Boston Women's Music Festival

culminating quite a valuable collection of tapes. We discovered that, to our knowledge, there was no established organization which was collecting and preserving women's music materials. This discovery subsequently led us to the formal creation of the Women's Music Archives in the fall of 1978.

Since the creation of the Archives, and in actuality since

an easy one, and is not without its problems and limitations—not the least of which are time and money. Since the three directors of the Archives work at different jobs, there is never enough time to devote to all the organizing, filing, correspondence, and cataloguing required. Since we have not yet achieved tax-exempt status, expenses must be paid from personal





Noel Furie

**Kathy Lewis and Kim Kimber**

funds. This naturally limits the extent to which new materials may be purchased for addition to the collection.

Another difficult area has been to establish a network of women who are willing to assist in collecting materials or recording events for us in areas outside of the Northeast. It is obviously physically impossible for us to personally cover the entire country.

Our collection of photographs and sheet music/scores is very minimal. This is another area we want very much to expand. We recognize that these are costly items, but if photographers and composers would be willing to donate copies of their works they would be most gratefully received.

One particular area which has proved to be a recurring problem for us is the issue of credibility. We have made every effort to establish a reputation as a reliable and conscientious organization. When we request permission to record an event, we are very clear about our established policy: no copies of our materials are ever made nor are our tapes loaned out, used for broadcast or for any other purpose (commercial or private), without direct permission from the artists.

With particular respect to festival recording, we feel that it is vitally important that a complete record exist of all performances at these events. In fairness to the vast majority of performers, most artists are very eager and willing to have their performances recorded.

Since the creation of the Archives, and in actuality since the fall of 1975, we have been collecting any and all materials which relate to women's music. The present collection (early summer 1985) includes some 270 albums, 60 commercially-produced cassette tapes, and more than 600 live concert and festival tapes. We have some reference books, 35 songbooks, and extensive collections of publications such as *Paid My Dues*, *HOT WIRE*, and *Sing Out!*. Our collection also includes numerous concert programs, posters, flyers, performer press packages, media articles, and reviews.

**AS OF AUGUST 1, 1985  
SOME OF OUR MOST  
VALUABLE ACQUISITIONS**

1. Complete collection of *Paid My Dues: Journal of Women and Music* (1974-1980)
2. Test cuts of songs for Therese Edell's *From Women's Faces* album (1977) and final test pressing (1978)
3. Complete live tapes of all concerts presented by the New England Women's Symphony during their *only* season (1978-1979)
4. Several copies of Therese Edell's first album *Prophecy's Child* (circa 1970)
5. Live tape of the only performance by women playing two piano ragtime together: J.T. Thomas and Nurit Tilles (1980)

**SOME OF OUR MOST  
UNUSUAL ACQUISITIONS**

1. The majority of issues of *Troubadora*, the women's music journal published in Germany (1978-1981)
2. Live tape of Antonia Brico, conductor of the 1978 National Women's Music Festival orchestra on which she talks about whether "women musicians can cut it."
3. Tape of Ginni Clemmens and friends playing the *Oven Rack Suite*—recorded live in Maine (1977)
4. "Collector's item" copies of *Women's Music Calendars* from only years of publication (1981-1982)
5. Live tape of Holly Near's early attempts at improvisation/scat with rhiannon in New York City (1978)

*The Women's Music Archives is located in Fairfield, CT. Its directors are Kim Kimber, Kathy Lewis, and Ruth Dworin. To offer feedback, give suggestions, make donations, or to receive additional information phone (203) 255-1348.*

*"Blues are the songs of despair, but gospel songs are the songs of hope."*


Mahalia Jackson (1911-1972)  
Am. gospel singer

However, there are an occasional few who, for whatever reason, refuse to permit their performances to be recorded. Since the Archives tapes are never used for any purpose without direct permission from the artist—and since the Archives also purchases most all of the artists' record albums—it is difficult to comprehend why some do not wish to have their performances preserved for the future.

One final area of concern for us is that of planning for the future. Careful consideration must be given to arranging for custody and location of the Archives materials when the present directors are not longer able or available to manage the collection.

Meanwhile, keep those items and women's music momentos coming! ●

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Kim Kimber has been a director of the Women's Music Archives since its inception. For the past five years, she has also been a member of the planning committee of the New England Women's Musical Retreat. She is a public school speech therapist.*



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# THE CRITICAL EYE

*How can we review alternative culture without mindless worship or mindless trashing?*

By Ellen Elias

Many critics have never acted in a play, sung in public, or danced on stage. They write as educated observers, shedding light on art forms they have never experienced personally other than sitting in a seat.

Other critics, who are producing artists as well as being writers, bring a behind-the-scenes perspective to their critiques. No one appreciates the details of a painting as much as another painter.

A third group of critics includes those who have been professional artists and then find themselves drawn more to writing about their art than to doing it.

The critic's background has great impact on her writing. The reader may be completely ignorant of the weight the writer's values and attitudes have on the critique she produces. But ignorant or not, the reader will be affected.

I've been aware of the effect critics have on me since I read a rave review of Diane Keaton's performance in Looking For Mr. Goodbar. Always a fan of Keaton's, I went to the movie, only to be sickened by its anti-woman violent message. My attitude toward reviews was changed permanently from that day on.

Now when I read criticism, I read as much between the lines as the lines themselves, and I ask questions. What is the writer's value system? Does s/he care about violence towards women, about racism?

Is s/he sensitive to homophobia, to anti-semitism?

While critics reveal their prejudices through their writings, they may not see themselves as making political statements. Consider this excerpt from a 1981 Washington Post review written by Richard Harrington:

*The result (of a late night discussion) was Olivia Records, for whom [Cris] Williamson still records although she is not strictly a feminist.*

It's difficult to imagine that Cris Williamson is not a feminist, but it's easy to imagine that a male critic might prefer to see her as less political because it might be less threatening or alienating to him. This

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**Is the Lily Tomlin review glowing because Lily was brilliant or because the reviewer is in love with Lily?**

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is conjecture on my part; I do not actually know about Harrington's value system. But readers need to wonder what is being implied by what is stated in the review and by what is omitted.

While reading alternative, women's, and gay/lesbian criticism, I ask additional questions. Is the writer educated about the subject matter at hand? By "educated" I don't mean formally schooled—I mean knowledge-

able, articulate, and well-read. Why is the writer choosing to write about this particular subject? Is her Lily Tomlin review glowing because she's suddenly in love, or because Tomlin is brilliant? Is her Holly Near critique scathing because Near was not in top form, or because she's angry that Near is performing with men? More reading between the lines gets the complete picture.

The three-fold function of criticism, I believe, is to report, to educate, and to elucidate. The critic's background can help make sense out of non-sense. The critic can bring together the many threads of history for an entire art form, creating order out of what might seem to be a series of isolated events.

Criticism need not be negative, and can investigate many different aspects of the work being discussed. The more each element is explored, the more the art and artists' essential truth will emerge. Why would one choose to write about a festival and only mention the musicians, when there are workshops, crafts, comics, dancers, food, and weather to report?

Interestingly, although we members of the women's community are fond of doing such examining and probing in countless committees, collectives, and

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ellen Elias was once a dancer, and now writes about the arts. She recently moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where she is enjoying the culture and women's community.

groups, we aren't always so analytical when it comes to criticism of women's art. Such criticism can be labelled "picky" or "negative." Friends may be heard saying, "Why can't you just enjoy it?" When this happens, we critics might be heard sighing, and vowing under our breaths that next time we'll go to the show with others of our own kind.

Two kinds of criticism in the women's press do us all—artists, writers, and readers—a disservice. The first kind is typified by the review so glowing it reads like public relations material. The writer often lacks a discerning eye, or any knowledge about the art form. She may hold the artist in such awe that it would feel heretical or presumptuous to write a "negative" comment. Or she may have fears that are politically-based, such as a white reviewer who is afraid to apply pointed criticism to the work of women of color—because she's nervous that it will be interpreted as racist.

The second kind of unhelpful review can reveal ignorance as well, but its tone is far from the reverence of the first. This writer has an (often old) axe to grind, and her review is the place she does it. Her critique

fails to elucidate much besides the thorn in her side.

How does it hurt us to read or write such criticism? After all, don't we need to support our cultural workers? And, on the other hand, don't we need to hold them up to public scrutiny? Yes, we do, but we need criticism that can do both, without mindless trashing or mindless worship. Only then can artists, readers, and writers look to critics for ways to grow, understand, and ultimately build women's culture.

I have some advice for aspiring critics: read top-notch, professional criticism. Try The New Yorker or The Village Voice. Read them keeping your own critical and political eyes on the lookout. Don't let them off the hook when they fail to see sexism and racism, or all the other -isms to which you are so attuned. But study these writers' skill, analytical intelligence, sense of history and context. Then write your review, bringing all of yourself to the task at hand. ●

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# THE D.C. AREA FEMINIST CHORUS

**Women's choirs and choruses exist throughout the United States and Canada, linked together in the Sistersingers Network. This is the story of one such community chorus.**

**By Susanna J. Sturgis**

Only a few days before the D.C. Area Feminist Chorus's annual Memorial Day weekend retreat, our conductor Caroline Foty was still down with something that looked a lot like mono. Even with a conductor present, high spirits and rowdy good humor—not to mention our tendencies toward chronic tardiness—sometimes made Thursday night rehearsals exasperating and chaotic. Wondering what we could possibly accomplish without a conductor, I considered skipping the weekend.

I needn't have worried. Even with the temptations of perfect spring weather and West Virginia's beautiful Canaan Valley all around us, we rehearsed as often as four times each day, sometimes in full chorus, sometimes in sections. Individual singers took responsibility for keeping us on schedule, leading warm-ups, keeping time, and listening critically for pitch and balance. We managed to cover the ambitious musical agenda that Caroline had sent with us.

Independence has been integral to the Feminist Chorus since Flo Hollis founded the group in 1978, motivated by a singing workshop led by Holly Near during the city's Gay Pride festivities. Few early members had formal musical training, though many had sung

in high school or college choruses. Long-time member Marcia Knott remembers a dozen or so women gathering in the living room of a lesbian group house. "We took turns leading warm-ups and teaching each other songs, things that were familiar from Holly's workshop or from women's music records."

When the fledgling chorus launched its first conductor search, members had to recognize and clarify their differing views of what role a conductor should play in a feminist musical group. Asked for her view of the conductor's role, one woman auditioning for the job said simply, "A conductor conducts."

"That attitude scared us," said Marcia. "We weren't ready for that." The group chose Deborah Weiner, a former music major who was willing to take on the challenge of directing a chorus that was determined to make its own musical decisions.

Deborah conducted the chorus through four crucial years of musical development and increasing community visibility, often finding herself in the difficult position of having ultimate responsibility but unclear or insufficient authority. She became de facto business mana-

ger, booking agent, and librarian. In theory, all members could bring in new music; in practice, Deborah recalls, "it was entirely on me to bring in new stuff."

She left the chorus in 1982, ready for a change.

Asked two and a half years later what her goals at the time were for the Feminist Chorus, Deborah replies, "First of all, to sing very well. And I wanted women to be able to listen to the music and hear how other women have lived their lives." She adds with a smile, "We didn't always meet these goals, but I've always been very proud of the group, of being part of the group. I learned a lot about conducting, about vocal music, and about working in groups. There are some things I regret; I wasn't able to introduce more outside influences, or bring in more outside artists to work with us."

In early 1983, the chorus hired Caroline Foty, who says that at the time she was an "idealistic music school graduate from Mount Holyoke." By training and experience, Caroline is both a vocalist and choral conductor. Also a self-taught and extremely capable arranger of choral music, she is currently working with Bernice Reagon, leader of Sweet Honey in the

Rock, to develop choral arrangements of Reagon's songs, one of which—"We All, Everyone of Us"—is in the chorus's current repertoire.

After Caroline took over as conductor came the expected honeymoon period, when, Caroline says, the group pulled together well. The change in conductors, though, eventually brought about shifts both in musical priorities and in personal style. Some members found the new ways congenial, and some did not. Within a

the hard times. It sang at the annual Washington Gay Pride celebration, then did three full sets the next weekend at Sisterfire as "street musicians." It performed from a diverse repertoire, ranging from the reliable crowd-pleaser "I Want a Girl (Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad)" to the labor song "Bread and Roses," from the Macedonian "Shto Mi E Milo" to Holly Near's "Fight Back."

While I still lived in Washington, I sang with both the

the current repertoire of the D.C. Feminist Chorus came from a music store, because none of them have been published.

The difficulty of selecting appropriate music is compounded by the strongly held and articulated politics within the chorus: it is just about impossible to please all of the singers musically and politically all of the time, and some are reluctant to sing anything they can't agree with one hundred percent. As first soprano Valerie Blane



D. Hinekle

"I Want a Girl (Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad)," 1984 Holiday Concert, Caroline Foty.

short, intense period during the winter of 1984-85, a number of those who did not left. Because the chorus is a tight personal network of friends, lovers, and ex-lovers, women with a shared history, these departures were wrenching for those who stayed as well as for those who left.

The chorus's demanding and successful June performances made it clear that the group had done more than just survive

Feminist Chorus and the Gay & Lesbian Chorus of Washington. My "bi-choral" experience has made it impossible for me to forget how hard it is to find choral music that reflects women's experience from a feminist perspective. Because the GLCW did not choose to specialize in works by gay or lesbian composers, a chorus member could walk into any music store and be overwhelmed by the available selection. No arrangements in

says, "Periodically the chorus becomes very narrow-minded about what it will sing and what it will not. A new piece will be introduced, some women will object, and then we never see it again."

*continued on page 63*

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Susanna J. Sturgis set out to write an article about the D.C. Area Feminist Chorus and almost immediately found herself singing in the second soprano section. She is currently living on Martha's Vineyard and trying to write a novel.

**CAN A COLORED GIRL BORN IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND RAISED IN THE U.S. ARMY FIND HAPPINESS AT SEA LEVEL ON THE GAY BAY OF RIIS BEACH IN NEW YORK CITY WHILE MARCHING TO THE BEAT OF THE EVOLUTIONARY REGGAE DRUM?**

*An article about music and life*  
By J. Casselberry

I'm a fourth generation African-American woman—an end result of different races, classes, and experiences, with my own particular lesbian identity. Much of my drive comes from being told all my life by "dem crazy bald heads" that my position socially, economically, and spiritually should be at the bottom. I owe it to all my ancestors and myself to explore all areas that interest me, not just those expected of me.

Musically I've been influenced and inspired by Nina Simone, Nancy Wilson, Odetta, Laura Nyro, Buffy St. Marie, Bob Marley, Judy Mowatt, Jose Feliciano, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Bettye Casselberry Vance (my mom), Richie Havens, Jimi Hendrix, and Nona Hendryx. The biggest influence, however, has been and continues to be Jaque DuPree. Our friendship and musical relationship exceeds 17 years now, and it is truly fulfilling to work with such a talented and giving sister.

Music is how I communicate with others. I enjoy many styles of music: reggae, gospel, black folk, folk, jazz, blues, country & western, rock, soft rock, salsa, funk, and new wave. And I like to reproduce those styles. What I reproduce effectively, I perform.

My music, my life, and my politics are about serious coalition building. Coalition building comes from each of us finding the commonalities in each other

**MULLING IT OVER** is a forum for discussion of connections between art and politics. Each guest columnist discusses her personal politics as they influence her art.



**"Many people come here from other places because there is more freedom of self-expression. However, if you are not what the art police consider mainstream, the ability to live off your art is almost non-existent."**

and working with those, while respecting the differences. One listener might not be inclined toward a particular song style, yet that listener might tune in to a second song style because it is one she or he can relate to—even though lyrically the songs can be similar. This diversity of style has helped me grow as an individual, and has helped Jaque and me build a wider audience. This has always been one of our main goals. What we really want to do is to have our thoughts communicated across all lines, to all types of people.

I also like to choose music that communicates my positive observations, feelings, and experiences in life. I want my music to express how happy I am to have come to the realization of the joy of life. Through music I want to show that my political, spiritual, physical, and mental growth are all one forward motion. I want

to convey the increased realization of my personal power and inspire others to do the same.

Finally, I need to reflect my determination to fight all oppressors of positive creative self-expression, be it on a personal one-to-one basis or on a large-scale institutionalized basis. Facism can come in many forms and can be found in nearly every area of life. It occurs in personal relationships when one person has a paranoid fear of another person truly expressing herself or himself. That same paranoid fear of the self-expression of others, magnified many times, motivates governments such as the apartheid regime in South Africa or any of the repressive regimes in Central America that sanction the oppression of creative flow. In the U.S. this repression takes a subtler form. Many people come here from other places because there is more freedom of self-expression. However, if you are not what the art police consider mainstream, the ability to live off of your art is almost non-existent.

*Emancipate yourselves  
from mental slavery,  
None by ourselves  
can free our minds.*

Bob Marley,  
"Redemption Song"

*You who dream of liberty  
must not yourselves be fooled,  
Before you get to plea  
for freedom,  
You've agreed to be ruled.*

Ferron,  
"It Won't Take Long"



I choose songs that lyrically are about spiritual and social redemption. When we look at the human condition and try to come up with solutions to make a better life, a better way for all instead of for a few, I feel we first have to examine our spiritual awareness, our awareness of ourselves, our awareness of our own personal power, and our awareness of God in our lives. As we gain power to live our lives to the fullest, the power of outside influences diminishes. The victory in any situation, in any struggle, is first won in the silence of our own souls, for without visualization and faith we cannot manifest our desires.

Now don't get me wrong. I'm not saying we can just think our way through changes. It takes a lot of concrete, practical work. But first we must be clear within ourselves. It's crucial that we see positive images of black women, showing our pride, strength, and humor. Part of our concrete work is to remain visible and counter the media's misrepresentation of our true selves. We have to be an inspiration to each other and serve notice to the world that Aunt Jemima has jumped off the box.

The fire for change will be made by each our individual

sparks—and these sparks come from within. They come from each of us realizing that we who have been bound for so long are no longer asking for freedom. We are no longer asking for our God-given rights, we are taking them. Our freedom is something we must take responsibility for; if we do, we will really know how to cherish it.

Life is a gift and we are obligated to make the most of it. And we must refuse to let anyone or anything stand in the way. And that's what my music is all about...Life, Liberty, and The Pursuit of a Real Good Time. ●

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: J. Casselberry presently resides in New York. She gives special thanks to her dear friend Hattie Gossett for assistance with this article.*

#### WRITING from page 13

sidered words, but I sometimes forget that the woman who spoke them or wrote them has gone on past those words, is not limited to them, no matter how true those words may be. I get a sense of what a writer must be like from her words, but I mistakenly assume they are all-inclusive, her "last word" on whatever subject she is writing about. This is dangerous. As a writer, it can become a ponderous business, and certainly stifling to creative thought, to try to fulfill such assumptions for the reader, and to try to say only those things you think you can defend for-

ever. Some writers avoid publication entirely because of just such anxieties.

The unpublished writer is often under pressure to show her work before she feels comfortable about it. She is under pressure to publish because publication is seen as such a form of validation. And it is. But often even your best friends won't believe that you are a "real" writer until your book is waved in front of their faces as proof. Merlin Stone (author of *When God Was a Woman* and *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood*) pointed out to me recently that published writers are under pressure too, of a different sort: everybody is waiting to see if their latest book "lives up to" the standard set by the previous one. This opinion barometer can be just as devastating as the pressure on the unpublished writer. As my mother used to say, paraphrasing the second law of thermodynamics (that is, entropy), "You can't win."

For novelists, it's often especially difficult to see light at the end of the tunnel. It's easy to let doubts and distractions encroach upon your work, since it takes so long to complete. I fight my own internalized skeptics in several ways. I give readings of small sections of my novel, and I write articles and reviews for newspapers as a freelancer on a fairly regular basis. In this way I maintain a sense of audience, and I provide "proof" of being published and publishable, even though my magnum opus is still, shall we say, under wraps. I have a big file drawer full of my newspaper clips, and every now and then I leaf through them and marvel. It's like I have some kind of selective amnesia—"I wrote this? Hmm, yes, it does seem familiar..." The same thing happens with my stacks of journals and notebooks. "I've done all this writing? Hey, I have, haven't I?" Even though I cringe now to see some of the things I've written, both published and unpublished, when I feel insecure it helps to review all this, to get a perspective on what I've done and what I'm in the middle of.

I think that talent is not some vague attribute that may be there no matter

*continued on page 61*

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# BANANAS, PRODUCTION NOTES, AND PRESS KITS

By KAY GARDNER

I howled when reading HOT WIRE's article about producing touring artists and fulfilling their offstage needs "even if it's a request like getting a banana for breakfast." [From the article "Women's Coffeehouses: Operating Your Local Goldmine" by Rosenblatt & Armstrong, July 1985 issue.]

Yes, I'm a bananas-are-a-necessity artist...any others out there?

And this leads right into this column's subject: production notes and press kits.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

It's important to provide your producer with a page or two about your production and personal needs. This way, she may prepare well in advance—and will have few (if any) last minute surprises on the day of your appearance.

I like to include a diagram of how my stage should be set up, i.e., one straight-back chair with no arms, a small table for my flutes; what sound equipment is needed and where it is to be placed; where the piano is placed; and what "extras"—like rugs, lamps, or plants—are needed and where they are to be placed on the stage.

What may seem like common sense to the seasoned performer may be brand-new information to an inexperienced producer. Production notes provided by the artist can be the difference between a smooth, happy show and a nightmare that will make the performer and producer both shudder for months to come.

**FREESTYLE:** the musings of Kay Gardner



A paragraph requesting specific lighting needs is necessary. Most of the time I have not had the luxury of performing in a hall where there is an intricate lighting system. But I do have an idea what my basic lighting needs are, so I list these in my production notes. Do you play piano? Then you may want to mention that the piano's keyboard should be completely lit. If you move around a lot on stage, you may want a follow-spot, or that the light focus be kept wide. Mention it if you have particular colors you prefer.

In a coffeehouse or church performance space, your lighting options will be limited, but you should at least be able to request specific gel colors (gels are the colored cellophane papers which fit over the lights). Some performers travel with their own gels; I don't, but I have often found myself wishing that I did. One producer could only find red gels, and—since leaving them off was blinding to both me and the audience—

I had to perform in an atmosphere reminiscent of Hell! Then there was the time I saw a sister-performer's show in which she was bathed in a dark amber light. She looked as if she had an advanced case of hepatitis, or had been on a three-week banana diet! So, remember that lighting sets a mood and is just as important as good sound.

My advice on sound needs will be minimal, as I am an acoustic performer and I use sound only at large outdoor festivals. Know your equipment needs if you don't travel with your own sound system. Try to have someone whose ear you trust present for your sound check.

If you'll need an interpreter for the hearing impaired, be sure to tell your producer about it in your notes. Also, this would be a good time to send lyric sheets so that the signer may have time to learn your vocal material.

Your producer should know of your idiosyncracies—do you perform in your bare feet? Do you often ask unannounced local or national performers to come up and join you onstage? Keep surprises to a minimum, or you will have a harried and/or resentful producer on your hands.

Finally, your production notes should list your housing needs (hotel? motel? community housing? tepee?); your exercise needs (swimming? weights? yoga? finger wrestling?); your pre-concert and post-concert needs (solitude before and party-time afterwards or vice-versa); and your dietary needs (here's where the banana comes in).

[Editor's note: See article by Debbie Fier in this issue on staying sane while being on the road.]

Try not to sound too snotty or demanding in your production notes; nobody likes a prima donna. Just stress that being on the road is exhausting and disorienting, and that you're at your best when surrounded by familiar things (like bananas) and when you're involved in familiar routines (like eating them).

Include your production notes and lyric sheets with your press kits when you send them six to eight weeks in advance of your gig.

### PRESS KITS

Your press kit says a lot about who you are as a performer. Hopefully, it captures your artistic essence, so get an eye-catching folder cover. An Arkansas artist had designed such a fantastic poster for one of my concerts that I asked if I could use the design for press kit covers and T-shirts. Fortunately she said yes, and now I have a beautiful full-color silkscreen image on my press kits. You may have to pay the artist for her design, but if it is really right for you, it's a good career investment.

Some ideas about posters: most of the time the producer is responsible for making and printing them. You can have your own posters printed if you want to, especially if you are promoting a new recording and want to carry the theme throughout your tour. This can be prohibitively expensive. Another idea is to print up a batch of 11" x 17" posters in black and white, saying just "ME IN CONCERT" and a logo. Send one copy to your producer for her to duplicate. She can add all the pertinent information in the blank space.

Within your press kit be sure to include: 8" x 10" black and white glossies of yourself (ask the producer how many she will use), an article or two about you and your work, and a review or two. A page of quotes about you from reviews, articles, and/or well-known performers is also useful.

Don't include too much. Much to my dismay, press kits often wind up discarded in the

*continued on page 61*

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Kay Gardner, M. Mus., is a composer/performer and a teacher of the healing properties of music. She has been deeply involved in women's music since 1973, including the New England Women's Symphony, Urana/Even Keel Records, and WiseWomen Enterprises. She has extensive recording and performing credits.*

## Womansong Gerri Gribi

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# Playing the Conference Circuit

By GERRI GRIBI

Four years ago a local women's club asked me to speak at their annual dinner. I accepted, not quite sure what they expected me to do, and decided to sing instead. I prepared a 45-minute program of folksongs by women, giving them the chance to laugh and sing along with classics like "Single Life," interwoven with a bit of feminist history.

The group liked it so much that I soon received more requests for the program, and discovered a wonderful new outlet for my music: conferences.

Americans love conferences. From service clubs to professional and trade organizations, women comprise many conferences. Quite often mainstream feminists, these women come together for two or three days to attend workshops, gain new information in their field, network, tend to internal organizational business, and to have a good time away from home. "A good time" is where you and I can fit in.

I offer basically three types of presentations. One workshop explores the "lost" women in music and art, complete with a bibliography and resources. I give a 30-45 minute "after dinner" program of music and narrative. And I do full evening concerts.

The workshop is booked primarily for generalized, "self-improvement" types of conferences offered by colleges and service clubs. The concert programs have been booked by



Joyce Fritz

**"Generally for me each gig spawns at least two others."**

educational conferences, health practitioner conferences, trade conferences; the sky is really the limit here.

## GETTING STARTED

Take a fresh look at your experience, skills and knowledge. How might you channel your talents into a workshop or presentation, a dramatic reading or a play? If you need ideas, grab hold of a few conference brochures and peruse their offerings, or sit in on a few after-dinner speakers.

When you have a workable idea, test it out locally; chapters of the American Association of University Women, the National Organization for Women, Zonta, and even church-women's groups are always in need of meeting programs. Expect to volunteer at first, or charge a nominal fee; your goal at first is to fine-tune your presentation and to build a network of supporters. Remember that each of these groups plugs into state, regional, and national groups.

This is also the time to de-

velop and test your publicity piece. When I started, I used the deluxe IBM Selectric at my local printer to create pilot flyers. Run in small quantities of 10-20, printed on rag-bond paper with my letterhead, they looked professional but required very little investment. I'd enclose them with my regular brochure, and after revising them a few times over a couple of months, I'd found the most workable formula and format. I then felt confident enough to have a high-quality, professional brochure designed which spoke directly to the conference circuit.

Creative people hate to be pigeon holed, but presenting yourself in a nice, neat package is important here. Program planners wear many hats, and quite often this conference is a one-time, volunteer job. Don't make them sift through tons of verbiage to decipher just what you're offering and how it applies to them. Be concise and clearly descriptive.

Give your programs a title, and a crisp 2-3 sentence description. Bear in mind that this description and title will probably end up word-for-word in their conference publicity materials and printed programs. List groups that you've performed for, and include quotes. Give two or three paragraphs of biographical information which support your qualifications to make these program offerings: college degrees or certifications, work experience, awards, recordings.

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

## PROMOTION

Finding the conference planners is the toughest part, for they are almost always in rotating positions. It can be done, however, through a combination of networking and direct mail.

Contact your local women's organizations, and ask about conferences locally and regionally. There is probably a directory of such groups at your YWCA, Women's Center, or Chamber of Commerce.

Contact your local college or university. If they're part of a larger system, you're in luck because they can give you names of conference planners at other campuses. If not, you can also be reasonably sure that your brochure will find its way to the proper person if you just address it to the college in the name of "Adult Education" or "Women's Center." Your best bet is to get a name, however, and don't hesitate to mail several brochures to the same college.

Librarians are a great help when compiling mailing lists. Tell them what you're trying to do, and they can recommend statewide directories and obscure resources you won't find on the open shelves. Remember that some predominantly female organizations might not be listed as "women's" organizations: secretaries, nurses, teachers, and bank-tellers all have associations.

I've found early fall to be the best time for mailing; late spring-early summer mailings are a waste of money. I mail out 150 brochures annually, and I know now that the brochure could lie in a file for two years before I'm called, or get passed around through several departments. So don't be discouraged if your phone doesn't ring off the hook immediately.

When you get a booking, take your brochures and plan to do some more networking. This is your best place to book

future gigs because most women belong to more than one organization. Generally for me each gig spawns at least two others.

I confine my mailings to an area within a day's driving distance, because I've found that to be booked beyond that distance for a conference generally requires "stepping-up." I must first perform for the smaller unit (my own state) and then step-up to the larger unit (my 5-state region).

## COMPENSATION

Money eventually becomes an important issue. I'm proof that the conference circuit can be lucrative: presently, about 50% of my performance income comes from conference gigs—and they account for about 75% of my album and tape sales. For example, I sold 70 Woman-song albums at the AAUW convention.

I maintain a sliding fee scale based on my needs and the resources of the group. I usually come out ahead if I say "What were you expecting to pay?" when queried about my fee; invariably they offer more than what I would have requested, accustomed as I am to the meager folk-circuit fees!

If you're not a national headliner or other "big name" draw, you can expect a fee of \$75-\$200 per hour, plus expenses. These might include meals, accommodations, and mileage. Most conferences have separate budgetary categories for these items, so it works better to quote a price on a fee-plus-expenses basis rather than just one lump sum. These expenses can make a big difference in your total reimbursement, so be sure you understand their standard rates (sometimes they are regulated by a governmental agency) and have it spelled out to the letter in your contract.

Some points to consider are:

(1) Are your accommodations to be in a hotel room, a dorm, or a living room? Most planners will prefer to lodge you in the conference facility at their expense rather than hassle with trying to find home hospitality for you. Others might not have budgeted for this expense.

(2) What is their established mileage rate?

(3) Will you be reimbursed for food receipts you turn in, or compensated at a flat daily rate?

(4) Will you be paid on the spot, or (more commonly) will you have to wait six or eight weeks for the check to be processed?

(5) Will they provide sound?

## FINAL WORDS

Performing for conferences is very different from performing in the women's circuit or the folk circuit. Quite often you will be the group's first exposure to an "alternative" culture, and it can be both exhilarating and frustrating. But if you like building bridges, and have the patience to meet women at their own level of awareness, this sort of work is very rewarding. ●

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## RESOURCES

National Women's History Network  
P.O. Box 3716  
Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
(707) 526-5974

*Your \$20 membership fee will get you and your history-related program into the national directory; the directory is an excellent source of conference prospects. Other benefits are newsletters, curriculum kits, catalogs, and much more—all with a multi-cultural approach.*

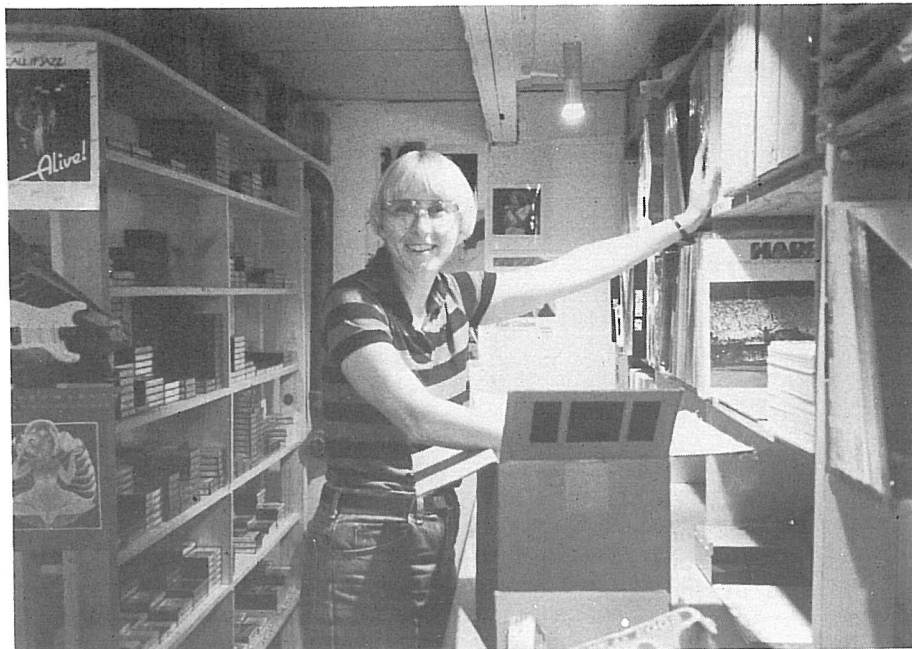
Encyclopedia of Associations  
Denise S. Akey, Ed.

*Two volumes with listings and descriptions of thousands of national organizations.*

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Gerri Gribi specializing in collecting and performing folk music by women, and recently rereleased her third recording, Woman-song. As a former Girl Scout Program Administrator, she has had much experience on both sides of conference planning and booking.*

## BEHIND THE SCENES

by Lucy Diamond



Terry Grant, Goldenrod Distribution/Act II Productions

"I am a daycare teacher, with a bunch of three and four-year-olds, five days a week. After work I step into a telephone booth and take on my alter ego as women's music concert producer!" says Bostonian POLLY LAURELCHILD. With her current partners Diane Harris and Ruth Davidson, Polly provides events to the Boston area under the title of Allegra Productions.

Allegra Productions was first "conceived in a little yellow Datsun hatchback," as Polly and two friends drove to the National Women's Music Festival held in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, in 1977. That festival was an incredible experience for her and Polly believes it changed her life. It was the combination

of that festival—and a request by a former housemate (Debbie Lempke of Berkeley Women's Music Collective)—that got Polly officially on the road of concert production.

In October of 1977, Allegra did in fact produce their first concert with BWMC, and have been going strong ever since. Allegra has now produced over 100 events. Most of the productions are music events, but they have also included dance, films, theater, and storytelling during their eight-year history. Polly sums up the kinds of events Allegra has produced: "Stylistically, everything from funk to fairytales; financially, from losing our shirts to getting out of hock. Audiencewise, very diverse."

Polly was born in Dayton, Ohio. She lived in Champaign-Urbana before the National Women's Music Festival began, and claims a Midwest background. Polly's father was her

chief musical influence, as he would many a night sing her and her brother to sleep with folk songs. Her mother she describes as "one of the most solid people I know, with incredible integrity and caring." In 1976, Polly moved to the Boston area and attended her first women's music concert, which she remembers as an almost euphoric experience. "I'd never seen so many neat women in one place in my life, even counting supermarket checkout lines!" It was at an Artemis Productions concert, with Holly Near and Meg Christian, in the fall of 1976, that Polly first became interested in what a producer does.

When you ask Polly what keeps her in the women's music network, you get two definite answers: unbridled lust for money and power (!) and the side effect of a little-known disease, Telephone Dependency Syndrome (TDS is best described as a disease in which "the patient becomes distraught and nervous if the phone isn't constantly ringing, and ultimately winds herself inextricably in the telephone cord"). On a much more serious note, Polly really has no trouble describing her commitment.

"The women's music network offers a unique combination of people, politics, and performance. The network is endlessly challenging, and it is fascinating to deal with numerous different political groups. It's a positive, constructive, and concrete way to help make the world better. And," she says, "it keeps me off the streets." Except, of course, when she is out pestering the Boston area for her next Allegra event.

Polly loves the great strides

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



women's music has made. She admires the phenomenal talent available, and the commitment of the bookers and managers who provide a vital link within the network. Polly's personal commitment to the network is shown to us all year after year as Allegra continues its good work. Her outstanding sense of humor and deep caring for other women working behind the scenes continues to strengthen each of us who work in the network with her.

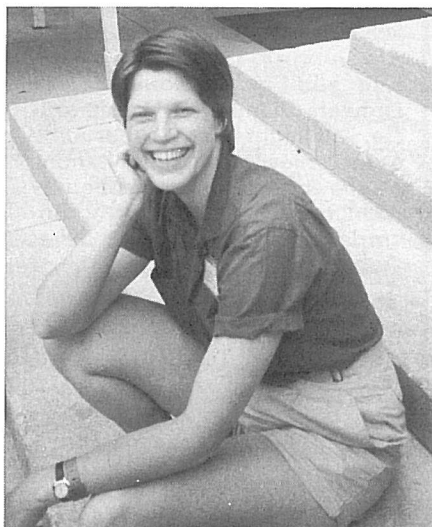
"Distributing women's music is a labor of love. A retired distributor once characterized distributors as the streetfighters for women's music, whose tools of survival were their love (obsession) of the music and their business."

TERRY GRANT of Goldenrod Distribution in Lansing, Michigan, is perhaps one of the finest examples of a streetfighter for the women's music network. She has been fighting for the music since May of 1975 when she began Goldenrod Distribution. It wasn't until 1982 that she could call it her full-time occupation. In 1977 she expanded her skills into the area of production, as many distributors do, and formed Mellow Muse Productions. She and her partner produced under this name until 1981. During that time, they had a total of 50 shows to their credit. Currently, under the name of Act II Productions, Terry produces on a sporadic basis to keep her production skills current.

Terry does not consider herself a musician, though she conducted many a symphony in front of her bedroom mirror as a child. From the third grade through high school she played the violin, and what she describes as "Girl Scout guitar." Terry was born in East Boothbay, Maine, where her grandfather was a lobster fisherman. She and her five younger sisters were raised in Bangor.

Terry was first smitten by the spirit of women's music when she heard Meg Christian's album *I Know You Know* in 1975. "It was the first time I had ever stood up all the way through a new album. I kept looking at the picture on the back cover saying, 'Who are these women?'"

Music by women has always been in Terry's house, and it was an important part of her life. "To have music that talked about the womyn-loving part of my life was so unexpected and exciting," she says. That excitement grew when she heard Meg was coming to her town. She wrote to Ginny Berson of Olivia Records and offered to make the music available at the



Linda Dederman

**Polly Laurelchild, Allegra Productions**

concert. Terry's enthusiasm about Meg's music was something she wanted to share with every woman. When the concert was over, she again contacted Olivia to return the unsold records. Ginny suggested that she keep them and take them to some local stores and sell them. Terry did—and thus her beginnings as a distributor. At that time, Terry's career plan did not include being a record distributor. In fact, she really had no plan outside of the "gym teacher fantasy." Terry de-

scribes her decision to be in distribution by quoting two familiar phrases: "If it weren't for the music" and "There's something about the women in my life."

Since 1975, Goldenrod Distribution has grown from one city to nine states. Her distribution territories include Ohio, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia, western Pennsylvania, and eastern Canada. She employs three women on a part-time basis. In addition, Terry is a professional tax preparer and business consultant. She has a B.A. in psychology and a Masters degree in criminal justice. Doing the work she does with Goldenrod means she is self-employed and doing something that is important to her. She says, "I can do this [distribution] because every day I can do work that has some impact on—and contributes to—changing women's lives or increasing awareness."

The life of a streetfighting record distributor is not necessarily easy. Terry does have some hard times, but she has plenty of positive stories from women to keep her going. "They tell me how women's music changed their lives, how important it is to their survival, how excited they felt when they first heard it—that's enough to keep me going!"

At the 1985 Music Industry Conference—held as a part of the National Women's Music Festival each year—Terry was the recipient of two awards. She received a plaque honoring her tenth anniversary as a distributor, and an award from Redwood Records for being the distributor who makes the most on-time payments. ●

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

# COPYRIGHTING YOUR SONGS

By Katharine Kay

"How can I get my song(s) copyrighted?"

"What's a lead sheet?"

"How does a writer copyright the lyrics if someone else wrote the music?"

"Can my friend copyright a song even if an established publisher hasn't agreed to publish it?"

"If someone else buys a songwriter's song to use on their album, who then owns the copyright?"

## YOUR SONG IS WORTH COPYRIGHTING

After producing my first original works album last year, members of my company and I began to encounter a number of women performers who had written some exciting, touching, sensitive and/or educational songs but who had either not had the time or the needed information to copyright their songs. Usually close friends or new managers of these artists, recognizing the value of these women's songs, would approach and ask one or more of the above questions.

Even if your plans to make an album are far in the future, it would be wise for you to become familiar with copyright procedures and protect your creative work as you produce it, or at least know what the possibilities are for doing so.

"Protection" of original works of authorship by copyright gives the owner of a composition the exclusive right to do and to authorize others to

- (1) reproduce the copyrighted work in copies or records

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

**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. If you are not pressed for time, you can write to Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559.

**In addition to some of the circulars mentioned in this article, you might wish to order some of the following:** R1b Limitations on the Information Furnished by the Copyright Office; R12 Recordation of Transfers & Other Documents; R15 Renewal of Copyright; R15t Extension of Copyright Terms; R34 Copyright Protection Not Available for Names, Titles, or Short Phrases; R22 How to Investigate the Copyright Status of a Work; R73 Compulsory License for Making & Distributing Phonorecords; R75 Licensing Division of the Copyright Office; R99 Highlights of the New Copyright Law; form CA for Supplementary Copyright Registration for Additions, Corrections; form TX for non-dramatic literary work.

- (2) prepare derivative works
- (3) distribute copies or records
- (4) perform it publicly and
- (5) display it publicly.

Considering our present administration's view on human rights, associating "protection" with government may seem a little incongruous to some of us. However, some government offices still do work to keep the paperwork of our lives

flowing. If you ever had to settle in court concerning your song, you would need that little © that our laws make available as a form of protection to the authors of original works.

The Copyright Office registers claims to copyrights and issues certificates of registration. Under updated laws, copyright protection starts from the time your song is created in a fixed form (on paper, tape, or vinyl). Then the registration of your song with the Copyright Office is a "legal formality intended to make a public record of the basic facts of a particular copyright."

If you are a songwriter with uncopyrighted songs, you simply need to look at your situation to determine how you want to handle the process of protecting them.

If you are limited for time, or if all government forms irritatingly remind you of the IRS, you could sing your song onto a tape or make written notations and send it to a qualified person or firm to do the copyrighting for you. Of course, you would have to pay them a fee for their services.

If you prefer to handle it yourself, have the time, and want to spend the minimum amount of money, then by following the next few steps you can copyright your own song(s) for just the investment of a phone call, postage, and a \$10 fee per application.

To copyright your own songs you will need:

- (1) One complete copy of your work, which, according

to the Copyright Office, means "everything that is to be covered by the registration." This copy is called a "deposit" of the work, and is kept on file by the Copyright Office. It is non-returnable. It can take the form of either a lead sheet (which is simply a written notation that indicates the melody line, chord changes, and lyrics of the song and how they fit together), sheet music, or a phonorecord (meaning either a disc or a tape). On all written material submitted, your copyright notation will be ©. On an album or other sound recording, you can copyright not only the material but also that particular performance of it—in which case your copyright notation will be ℙ.

(2) the correct registration form: PA for songs, SA for sound recordings.

(3) a \$10 fee per application form.

You will also want to get copies of copyright circulars R1 Copyright Basics, R50 Copyright Registration for Musical Compositions, R56 Copyright Registration of Musical Compositions & Sound Recordings, R15a Duration of Copyright, and some of the other circulars listed below. You will need to read the circulars to determine if you want to put one song per application or group them into a collection under one form for one \$10 fee.

After you have all the forms filled out, be sure your payment is stapled to the application. You will need a money order or check made payable to the Register of Copyrights.

Copyright registration is effective the day it is received at the Copyright Office, so be sure to mail your application, song, and check by either certified or registered mail. Since the Copyright Office receives over 500,000 applications a year—that's about 1400 piece a day—you will probably not receive your certificate of regis-

tration immediately; you should receive either a letter, phone call (if clarification is needed), or certificate within three months. So be sure to purchase a return receipt when you send in your application. This will provide you with proof of delivery, and you will know exactly what day your song arrived at the Copyright office.

Once you have copyrighted a song, you can feel fairly safe against the illegal use of your work. Usually a copyright registration is needed before any infringement suits may be filed in court, but you may have heard of other agencies which offer similar protection to authors of songs. Let's compare elements involved to determine which protection to buy.

The National Academy of Songwriters (NAoS) will register your song(s) at their agency for \$5 per song or the first in a collection of songs, and \$3 for each additional song (rates as of March 1985). The U.S. Copyright Office charges \$10 per application, which could include one song, more than one, or a collection.

Now let's say you have ten songs to protect. You can send your tape, album, or lead sheets to NAOs for a fee of \$32. If you send the songs to the Copyright Office, putting all the songs on one form as a collection, the fee will be \$10. (If you need to file one of those songs separately for some reason at a later date, you can do so, but you will need to file another application and fee).

"Well," you say, "what if I only want to register one song? Isn't the NAOs cheaper?" Initially, yes, but when I asked the NAOs representative about protection in case of a court situation, he told me that even though they follow the same legal process as the Screenwriters Guild (which is a good means of protection for out-of-court settlements), anyone


even thinking about approaching an in-court situation needs a U.S. government copyright.

He quickly added, however, that "Whereas you may not receive your registration from the government for three to six months, your song is registered immediately with NAOs upon receipt." But by requesting a return receipt when you mail your song to the Copyright Office, you will know of its arrival. Remember: protection starts from the time you put your song in fixed form.


Considering what expenses could become in the long run, this songwriter opted for the U.S. Copyright Office. But if you are interested in learning more about the NAOs, their address is 6772 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, CA 90028; phone (213) 463-7178.

In a world which seems to offer so little protection, copyrighting is one way we have of at least protecting work valuable to us. So get to work and get those inspiring songs copyrighted! ●

*ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Katharine Kay is a musician and songwriter. She works as a consultant through her company Greenbriar Productions.*



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## MIC KEYNOTE *from page 40*

that forward movement. In large part due to the early, courageous, revolutionary steps that many women in this industry, many of whom are sitting in this room today, and many who aren't, it is possible for women outside our circles, women like Cyndi Lauper, Tina Turner, Chrissie Hynes, and most recently Annie Lennox with Aretha Franklin singing "Sisters Are Doing It For Themselves," to speak and sing of their independence and existence as women. We are a proud historic mixture of politics and business, always balanced by the generous climate of possibility that we as thinking women bring to our work.

A few months ago, Karen Gatzler and Pat Reddemann pointed out to me, in a conversation we were having about all of this, the difference conceptually between how the mainstream traditionally looks at this business and how women usually do. The mainstream is a linear model, which maybe goes:

*consumer-booker-store-distributor-label-artist*

In women's culture, our biggest strength is that the model looks like a wheel with spokes. The innate problems that also go along with that interdependence, however, is how to build on to an insular model? I am not implying that we can't, but raising the question for all of us to figure out: how?

Reinventing the wheel is neither necessary nor required. We have already built a strong base; let's accept that and go on from here. We do need to proceed knowledgeably, in full understanding of what we're up against and working toward, where in the larger scene our allies are, and where we want to go. We are part of a larger industry, an industry of recording, distribution, entertainment, and promotion—with guidelines and operating procedures—that our futures are tied to in large or small ways. We need to use what we can to get what we need.

My attitude toward business keeps changing as my involvement gets bigger, both emotionally and financially. If you had told me five years ago that I would be doing what I am now—that I would know intimately the various stages of record pressing, the exact ad deadlines for national publications, which airlines give the best unlimited mileage deals, which telephone answering machines have beeperless remotes, the difference between pink 51 and peach 43 gels, how many names off my mailing list will fit onto one computer disk, or that I would be writing checks for expenses for the first four months of this year that exceeded the total income of our first two years in this business—I would have told you that you were crazy! I now only hope that such craziness continues! We are women of great integrity and foresight. I believe that we can not only illuminate a path for ourselves and those coming up behind us, but also be a model for the mainstream market to look at and follow. And we can continue doing it, all the while bringing in new blood, as women do.

How many here today consider their work in this industry their primary work? And how many of those consider this industry as their major source of income? We have some serious money matters that need discussing. More than anything else this year, it seems to me that when two or more of us have gotten together, the topic has turned to our financial situations. How can we stay solvent? How do we keep going? Are we using all of the resources available to us? How can we combine interests to benefit both parties?

All of our costs are going up. There is hardly any such thing as a "small" production any more for producers. Distributors now have huge territories that take an enormous amount of money to get to, service, and stock. Overhead for labels gets higher and higher as promo and publicity, manufacturing, and production fees increase. Performers are spending large percentages of their fees on travel, promotion, record production, and—like everyone else—staying afloat. We have built ourselves into major businesses, with employees, taxable incomes, and large overheads with the need for more and more income. Many of our financial futures within this industry are precarious at best.

Change is essential, inescapable; the burden is to calculate the probable good against the possible bad and then for each of us to decide if the change is worth the risk. For some, such changes are worth it, for others, not. We are not all in this for the same reasons, or with the same degree of commitment. Let's not shy away from the fact that we have differing expectations and priorities.

Some of us make our livings solely from the work we do in this business. Others don't. The expectations those two bring to the same situation are quite different. Within the groups it also differs, of course, with every possible gradation.

We are a varied lot, with a various array of problems, but with just as many solutions. It seems to me that we have brought the best of all we've been through—from separatism to coalition—forward and are now forming the next step, which is a bold mixture of that past which is forming a new entity.

So I encourage each of you to give freely of your knowledge and information, to share the perceptions of your experience, and to participate in the questioning that we are here to do. We are free at every moment to choose the tradition we will bring into the future. We must invoke a rigorous positive, that will enable us to imagine our choices and to make them, and always the audacity to speak and act for more choices, more freedoms, more imagination, more action.

So...if we used to write our stories and businesses on flash paper, I say we now are the flash paper. And our job is to start as many fires under as many asses as possible! May we take our sparks and in our wisdom, continue leading the way! It has been my pleasure to welcome you to the third annual MIC.

**The signals of the century  
Proclaim the things that are to be—  
The rise of woman to her place,  
The coming of a nobler race.**

Angela Morgan (1874-1957)  
Am. poet, writer, lecturer

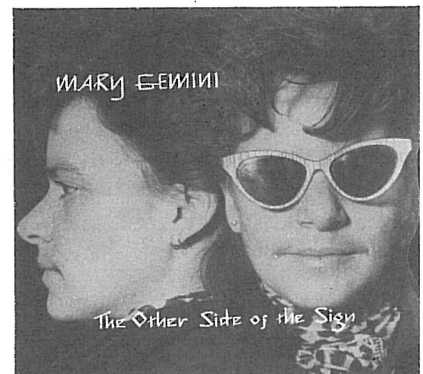
**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** *Trudy Wood owns and runs WhysCrack Records, manages and promotes humorist Kate Clinton, and was one of the five members of The Booker Sisters!*

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**PRESS KITS** from page 53

wastebasket. The people who will see your press kit often see dozens at a time—and they are easily bored—so give them the best you've got, be sure everything is printed neatly and cleanly, and be brief!

This brings the How-To-Be-Your-Own-Agent series to a close. I hope these three articles have been helpful to you. If you'll invest in the list of publications and resources printed in the previous issues of HOT WIRE, you should have a headstart on managing your own career.

what you do or neglect to do. It must be nurtured and directed—and the best way to set about directing it is to be true to yourself. Some writers can work under any circumstances; some have to find the right conditions before they can really focus. Every one in awhile a writer may need to stop and evaluate her own working methods. And every writer who comes up against self-doubt must find ways to give herself or get from others the support she needs to encourage her to continue.

Sitting alone at a typewriter or desk for long hours can be isolating. It's helpful to know that there are others out there doing the same thing. For me, joining the Feminist Writers Guild has been of great help. Through the Guild I've met many wonderful women writers and gotten much encouragement for my work. Comparing writing experiences, methods, discoveries, and problems with writers with whom I also share social and political perspectives has been very valuable for my own development as a writer.

Writing does take energy, effort, a love of language, and maybe most importantly, perseverance. Each writer must find whatever works for herself and build on it. The process of becoming a writer or artist of any kind is one of discovering your own values, strengths, and visions, and developing them as far and as well as you can.

the introductions, announcements, and opening act?

Sound check/light check. Be there. Now is the time to meet the performer if you haven't already. Meet the stage manager and technical staff. Check your placement on stage in relation to deaf people's seats and your lighting and the sound. Tape your set list to the floor.

Share Your Skills. Encourage other interpreters to work together. If a concert has an opening act, explore the possibility of an up-and-coming artistic interpreter doing it. If an interpreter has never been onstage before but wants to, make sure she's seen stage interpreting and discussed what she should be prepared for onstage. Interpreting introductions and announcements is a good beginning stage experience for aspiring artistic interpreters.

Pre-Show. Many deaf people enjoy a brief pre-show—held in the theater 30 to 60 minutes before the performance—to learn new or specialized signs that the interpreter may be using, read some of the written lyrics, and in some cases meet the performer. The interpreter and/or deaf liaison could facilitate this.


Gather feedback from your audience. One successful method of feedback employs evaluation sheets placed on the seats in the reserved section. People can anonymously answer questions about style and translations, seating, lighting, and ticket availability. Also have a mailing list sign-up, and encourage people to help publicize the next interpreted event. A very popular touch is a post-show introduction and question-answer session with the artist.

Our performing arts—music, dance, poetry, theater, and storytelling—bring pleasure, inspiration, and strength. They also remind us of our dissatisfactions, our resistance to injustice, destruction, war, oppression, and the need to keep working, the need to not sink into despair. These are messages we want to broadcast to the entire earth. By incorporating interpreters into our concerts, we also send the message that we care about and try to include every woman in our culture.

**CAMPFEST** from page 35

Happily, staff, performers, and campers alike valued the "magic" connection. Beth York, Ginni Clemmens, Sue Fink, Kay Gardner, Sandra and Sharon Washington, and June Millington spent much or all of the weekend initiating and enjoying a variety of activities—from collaborations on Night Stage to raps outside the communications tent to June's workshop on the recording process. When I reluctantly dragged myself away late Monday afternoon, Ginni was leading an impromptu sing-along by the pool. Other performers appeared in spite of brutally tight schedules: Gayle Marie flew in for Sunday Night Stage and had to reluctantly leave at dawn; Beverly Carpenter arrived almost sleepless from Atlanta on Monday.

It was a special time for us all. For those few days, we were part of a sun-filled star-spangled women's community. Our challenge is to preserve that atmosphere even as we grow from hundreds to thousands. At this point, we are hoping to sign a five-year contract with Camp Saginaw.



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**Sept. 27 – LaCrosse, WI**  
UW-L Fine Arts Center – 8 p.m.  
Out & About Women Productions (608) 783-0069  
Mail Order info – Send SASE to P.O. Box 2794, LaCrosse, WI 54602

**Sept. 28 – Minneapolis, MN**  
The Children's Theatre – 8 p.m.  
MN N.O.W./WhyCrack Records (612) 827-1809

**Oct. 5 – Indianapolis, IN**  
Hedback Theatre – 7 & 10 p.m.  
DinoMite Productions (317) 637-2906

**Oct. 26 – St. Louis, MO**  
The Learning Center – 8 p.m.  
Wired Women Productions (314) 776-8502

**Nov. 16 – Milwaukee, WI**  
Centennial Hall – 8 p.m.  
Hurricane Productions (414) 342-9177

**Nov. 24 – Chicago, IL**  
The Park West – 8 p.m.  
Midwest Music (414) 278-0066

Fall 1985 Tour Schedule

9/27 LaCrosse WI (608) 783-0069 9/28 Minneapolis MN (612) 827-1809 10/4 Columbus OH (614) 299-2580  
10/8 Indianapolis IN (317) 637-2906 10/12 Los Angeles CA (213) 470-0898 10/13 San Diego CA (619) 291-2529  
10/19 Ann Arbor MI (313) 769-1298 10/26 St. Louis MO (314) 776-8502 Also in Oct. Little Rock AR (501) 676-2477  
11/4 Washington, D.C. (202) 234-9308 11/2 Richmond VA (804) 233-6699 11/4 New York NY (212) 929-1585  
11/9 Denver CO (303) 444-2078 11/16 Milwaukee WI (414) 342-9177 11/22 Northampton MA (413) 584-2637  
11/23 Boston MA (617) 541-1378 11/24 Chicago IL (414) 278-0066 12/1 Vancouver BC (604) 879-2931  
12/6 Portland OR (503) 234-7080 12/8 Seattle WA (206) 322-9247  
12/11 The Great American Music Hall, San Francisco CA (415) 885-0750

Tour and Booking Information — (315) 655-3308

## SEXISM-RACISM from page 27

ated intact, along with the sound, the male content of the blues, it has almost totally ignored the female sensibility in black music of survival. With notable exceptions—some early Motown so-called "girl groups" and the disco queens of the 1970s (Donna Summer still champions the working woman), popular music left out a mainstay of the blues: the independent black woman who refused to bow down to men, who refused to be a victim. The voice and self-respect of the assertive black woman was too strong (according, once again, to those ubiquitous marketing men) for those who required that women be passive objects and/or willing victims. The popularity of Aretha Franklin proves that limited viewpoint.

Not satisfied with appropriating black musicians' work, white men go on to write their own "portraits" of women and men from other races. The Rolling Stones, for example, provide us with both racist and sexist lyrics in "Brown Sugar," a song about black slave women:

*Hear him whip the women  
Just around midnight  
Brown sugar you dance so good  
Brown sugar just like a  
young girl should*

and in "Some Girls":

*White girls think they're  
pretty funny  
Sometimes they drive me mad  
Black girls just want to get  
fucked all night  
I don't have that much jam  
Chinese girls are so gentle  
They're really such a tease...*

Genesis, in their album released in 1983 called *Genesis*, present a libelous stereotype of the "illegal immigrant"—a man who spends his time drinking and lives by pimping for his sister:

*Got out of bed, wasn't feeling too good  
With my wallet and my passport,  
a new pair of shoes  
The sun is shining  
so I head for the park  
With a bottle of tequila  
and a new pack of cigarettes*

(Chorus)

*It's no fun being an illegal alien  
It's no fun being an illegal alien*

*Keep your suspicions,  
I've seen that look before  
I ain't done nothing wrong,  
now is that a surprise?  
But I've got a sister who'd be  
willing to oblige  
She will do anything now to help me  
get to the outside*

### ALBUM COVERS

Albums by male musicians graphically depict men in authoritative, straightforward, sharp, and power-taking images. If women are pictured, they are objectified, anonymous, and dominated by men, either explicitly or by implication of their appearance on an all-male group's cover. Women's bodies, and various parts of the female anatomy, are used as metaphors

(often for something evil) and/or as jokes. On their own album covers, women artists have been presented in soft focus or looking wistful—inevitably waiting for a man to make them complete, real. Familiar scenes with the clothed male contrasted with the naked or partially clothed female posing in a vulnerable, subservient position leave no doubt as to who has the power. Equality between men and women is as rare in the visual packaging of rock & roll as it is in the lyrical content.

Black and minority cultures on mainstream labels are often portrayed as particularly savage and cruel, and these portrayals promote racist stereotypes. It seems that only the power white men have been willing to share with men of color is the power to abuse and objectify women. White image-makers apparently feel that it is more acceptable for black men to humiliate (black) women than for whites to do so, just as black artists were, in earlier rock & roll, "permitted" to be more sexually explicit in their language than whites.

In spite of the efforts of men to keep women busy taking care of men's every need so that they could pursue more rewarding work (music, perhaps?), women and people of color continue to demand a voice and activity in the world, and this applies to popular music as well. The days when it was unthinkable for girls or women to play drums, bass, lead guitar, or lead anything, are gone. It is now thinkable (thanks to the women who are involved in the music industry). But, women's participation is still overwhelmingly male-defined.

The new genres of popular music have already had a profound impact on our culture and its music. Joe Jackson, Cyndi Lauper, the Annie Lennox-Aretha Franklin duo, and gender-mixed groups such as Talking Heads and The Parachute Club (from Toronto) are introducing a refreshing new perspective into the stale narratives of popular music's "White Boys' Club," though large-scale media events such as the Live Aid concert serve to underscore the points made in this article. Still, the newer artists represent a thoughtful and responsible sensibility, a sensibility which takes women seriously, which wants more quality and less reductive fundamentalism in their lyrics and in their relationships. Women-identified music and content are gaining a foothold in the current popular music scene. The popularity of Lauper's "Girls Just Want to Have Fun" or Pat Benatar's "Love is a Battlefield" or Donna Summer's "She Works Hard For The Money" indicates that pop audiences are capable of accepting something more than male-defined music. The inclusion of all of the above artists—and their tunes—on the current pop charts may even mean that audiences want progressive lyrics and new roles for women in pop music. As Lorraine Segato from The Parachute Club sings in "Rise Up":

*The spirit's time has come  
Women's time has come  
Everybody's time has come!*

[Special thanks to the Canadian FUSE magazine for allowing this reprint.]

## MICHIGAN from page 37

MONDAY, AUGUST 12

Tore up the kitchen today—kind of surprising to see how quickly it all comes down.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 13

Started mulching and re-seeding today. Lisa and Barbara are very careful to make sure that the impact on the land is as minimized as possible (but it's still considerable). It's really special to be a part of this process and see the destruction become the reconstruction. Makes it feel like the cycle is complete.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 14

Cleaned up the Night Stage bowl. Care to guess how many cigarette butts 6,300 womyn (the final attendance figure) can generate? Too many!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15

More tearing down. Several of the crews (Childcare, Security, etc.) have ended, so those womyn are helping load the trucks and take it all back to be stored for another year.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 16

There are fewer and fewer of us every day. I intend to stay until the very end—which they are guessing will be Tuesday.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 17

The bonfire is tonight. Every year they burn all the old plywood and signs that aren't needed any more as a kind of closing ritual. It's down to around 50 womyn now, with more leaving every day.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 18

Helped pack the lumber shed today. Never knew that three stages could all fit inside a 20'x20' shed—not to mention sound mixers and other miscellaneous things.

MONDAY, AUGUST 19

All of the crews will end officially today, so now it's only those of us who aren't ready to leave yet. There are still a few tents up and a few more loads of things to be moved, but for the most part we're finished. The pace is a lot slower now, due to a combination of burnout and melancholy. The 20 or so of us who are left are torn between wanting to stay until the very end and yet not wanting to see the end come.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20

The last of the tents came down today and there are only two or three more loads left to move. Now it's down to around a dozen of us left. I'm kind of enjoying this part because it's so low key and relaxed compared to the Pre-fest (and During-Fest) pace.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21

We're done, and I'm told that this was one of the faster years in terms of breakdown time. Kind of hard to believe it's all over. Two weeks ago today everything was in high gear, and now it's just 10 of us sitting around a campfire. The gates came down today, which means the boys will be coming through to check it out—so I'll be leaving in the morning. Hope I can come back next year—and the year after that and the year after that and the year after that...



## TOURING from page 43

have just spent up to \$40,000 to produce the record. They literally cannot afford to lose more money on the tour.

## FINALLY, LISTS...

One final way that helps me preserve my sanity on the road: without fail, I now use a packing list. If I use that list, I always have everything I need. It works every time, from bringing plane tickets to candles and incense. It makes it much less stressful not to have to make mental lists, and knowing that I won't forget to bring the contract or my performing shoes.

It's a very exciting and different lifestyle. If I wasn't in touch with others doing the same thing, I might believe I was really nuts. I must say that I've been mostly very well taken care of in the lesbian communities where I stay. I do not personally have as many horror stories to tell as some of my friends do. I feel thankful for how well I've been treated.

It's really a wonderful exchange I feel when I perform in a community and then I'm put up and taken to the local bookstore. It makes what I'm doing feel very worthwhile to me. And that's one of the reasons that I'm doing it. It's one thing to do my music, and it's another to be with people and communicate on a one-to-one level rather than always on a performing level.

I know I'll never get bored with this lifestyle. It's definitely a source of constant challenges. ●

## CHORUS from page 49

Valerie notes that "Conscientious Objector"—an anti-war poem by Edna St. Vincent Millay that was set to music for Mary Travers in the 1960s and arranged for women's voices by Caroline Foty—almost didn't make it into the repertoire because members objected to some words in the song. The controversial words were changed, and "Conscientious Objector" has become a favorite with both the chorus and its audiences. Valerie believes that the chorus is more receptive than it was a year ago to new music.

From the beginning, the Feminist Chorus's membership has been mostly lesbian as well as feminist, a fact that has been reflected in the group's choice of music. Would a mostly heterosexual chorus choose to sing "I Want a Girl (Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad)"—and would a mostly heterosexual audience crack up laughing at the opening line? Many labor and suffrage songs reflect the heterosexual experiences of the women who wrote and sang them; should a mostly lesbian women's chorus sing them as they are? Should one change the lyrics of a 19th century labor song to fit the sensibilities of lesbian feminists of the 1980s?

Several chorus members noted that the group is long overdue for a discussion of lesbian/heterosexual feminist issues, especially as they affect the chorus's selection of music.

Asked what she would like to see in the chorus's future, Caroline Foty answers with little hesitation, "I want our membership to grow, and I want the repertoire

to expand, both in theme and in quality." In the spring of 1984, the Feminist Chorus traveled to New Haven to perform with the all-women Yale Slavic Chorus. In November, it played host for a joint concert with Philadelphia's Anna Crusis Choir. Both projects brought new songs and different styles into the DCAFC repertoire. Caroline wants this inter-choral communication to increase at the same time the Chorus continues to develop "a higher profile in our own community." ●

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## SOUNDSHEETS

### "TIME AND AGAIN"

Written by: Beth York  
 Performed by: Beth York (piano), Karen Sassman (oboe).  
 From: Transformations

Ladyslipper  
 P.O. Box 3124  
 Durham, NC 27705

Originally available on cassette only, Transformations was pressed into an LP this year. Beth's compositions are eclectic in style and form—unique instrumental arrangements interspersed with innovative vocals.



**SOFTWARE**

### "TRUST IN ME"

Written by: Herder/Steinmetz  
 Performed by: Marg Herder (synthesizers, vocals), Dianne Steinmetz (rhythm machine programming, synthesizers), Terry Decker (bass), Susan Lowell (vocals).  
 From: Future is Now (cassette)

Softsound  
 5653 E. 62nd Place  
 Indianapolis, IN 46220

This tune is one of 10 from Software's second release. All material was written by group members Herder and Steinmetz. Their tight vocal harmonies are consistent throughout a variety of tunes, complemented by skillful electronic techniques.

### "THE JOURNEY"

Written by: Debbie Fier  
 Arranged by: Mary Watkins  
 Performed by: Debbie Fier (piano), Mary Watkins (synthesizer), Nydia "Liberty" Mata (percussion), Marilyn Wilson (oboe).  
 From: Fire Light

Ladyslipper  
 P.O. Box 3124  
 Durham, NC 27705

This totally instrumental recording also features Jean Fineberg on flute and soprano sax. Read Debbie's article about touring on page 41 of this issue.



**BETH YORK**

### "CIRCLE CHANT"

Written by: Linda Hirschhorn  
 Performed by: Linda Hirschhorn (vocals), Laurie Lewis, Ellen Robinson, and Linda Hirschhorn (backup vocals).  
 From: Skies Ablaze

Oyster Albums  
 P.O. Box 3929  
 Berkeley, CA 94703

Skies Ablaze is also distributed by Redwood Records. It is an acoustic album of political material, produced by Suzanne Shanbaum. Refer to the "New Releases" column in the July 1985 issue of HOT WIRE for more information.



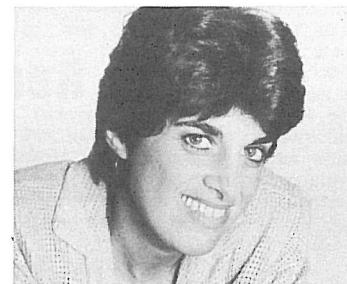
**DEBBIE FIER**

### "A SHADOW CROSSING THE LAND"

Written by: Anne Hills  
 Performed by: Anne Hills, Pat Fleming (guitar), Stuart Rosenberg (violin), Larry Gray (fretless bass).  
 From: Don't Explain

Hogeye Records  
 1920 Central St.  
 Evanston, IL 60201

Don't Explain is also available through Flying Fish Records. Anne's article "Midnight Special" (about women's radio) appeared in the March 1985 issue of HOT WIRE.



**LINDA HIRSCHHORN**

### SOUNDSHEETS

Carefully remove the soundsheet. Do not bend. Place the soundsheet on turntable, set speed at 33 1/3 rpm. A coin placed on the label where indicated prevents slipping. If your turntable has a ridged mat, placing the soundsheet on top of an LP may be advisable for maximum performance. Material is recorded on both sides in stereo.

**NOTE:** The separation bands are "play through" — unlike those on the March-issue recording which locked (requiring a manual re-set to play the next cut).

Questions and comments about soundsheets? Contact Marilyn Wilson c/o HOT WIRE. Recording specifications and costs will be mailed upon request.

## CLASSIFIEDS

New HOT WIRE project

### "ADOPT A FEMINIST BUSINESS"

Many women's centers, women's music radio programs, publications, and other worthwhile feminist businesses have written to request free subscriptions to HOT WIRE. Their operating budgets just do not allow them to be able to subscribe to publications that would be very useful to them in their cultural work.

HOT WIRE, also on a shoe-string budget, can't afford to honor most of these requests (some involving countries that are outside of the U.S. and therefore require extra postage).

To remedy this situation, HOT WIRE would like to match these organizations with philanthropic 'Matrons of the Arts' who will "adopt" specific businesses and pay for their gift subscriptions.

Interested? Businesses and individuals wishing to participate in our new program should send a self-addressed stamped envelope for an application form to:

**HOT WIRE ADOPTIONS**  
1417 W. Thome  
Chicago, IL 60660

**LOST.** Two striped kneesocks. Literally ripped off at Bullwinkel's during NWMF '85. Generous reward. You name it, you can get it. No questions asked. Contact: Desperately Seeking, Box 007.

**WANTED:** Performers (in music, dance, mime, theater) who do shows for kids. Send promo & recordings to Dino Sierp, P.O. Box 2907, Indianapolis, IN 46206 for future resources and possible bookings.



**WOMYN ONLY.** Chicago's own Mountain Moving Coffeehouse, open Saturdays 7:30-11:00 p.m. Performers are encouraged to send demo tapes and bio info for possible bookings. Contact: Joy Rosenblatt, 828 W. Leland, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-6899.

#### FRONTRUNNERS

...a non-competitive club for lesbian and gay runners of all abilities. Chicago chapter operating since 1982. Frontrunners/Chicago is the 9th gay track club to be established nationwide. P.O. Box 1617, Chicago, IL 60690 for information.

### ATTENTION MOBILE WOMEN

OUR SUBSCRIBERS MOVE TO NEW LOCATIONS AT AN INCREDIBLE RATE. IF WE ARE NOT NOTIFIED IN WRITING OF ADDRESS CHANGES PRIOR TO OUR MAILING OF THE MAGAZINES, THERE IS NO WAY WE CAN GUARANTEE DELIVERY.

SOMETIMES MAGAZINES ARE RETURNED TO US, AND SUBSCRIBERS CAN GET THEM RE-MAILED (BY US) FOR A POSTAGE & HANDLING FEE. MORE OFTEN, THE MAGAZINES ARE LOST FOREVER.

'HOT WIRE' WILL NOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOST MAGAZINES IF WE WERE NOT NOTIFIED OF ADDRESS CHANGES IN ADVANCE.

THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

**JAZZ WOMEN** postcards: Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday, The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, others. Send SASE for sample sheet. 50¢ each. Rosetta Records, 115 W. 16th, New York, NY 10011.

**PAID MY DUES** back issues now available through HOT WIRE. Original Milwaukee as well as Chicago volumes. Send SASE for complete price list for these collectors' items. Paid My Dues c/o HOT WIRE, 1417 Thome, Chicago, IL 60660.

## 1985 INDEX-DIRECTORY OF WOMEN'S MEDIA

Extensive listing of resources, primarily mainstream feminist: radio, TV, presses/publishers, video, cable, film, speakers bureaus, library collections, etc. International listings include 150 feminist periodicals. A steal at \$8.00.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE FOR FREEDOM OF THE PRESS  
3306 Ross Place NW, Washington, D.C. 20008





Susan Wilson

**Gayle Scott, Sharon Washington, and Ferron electrify the crowd at the 11th National Women's Festival. This issue of HOT WIRE features coverage of several festivals.**



Susan Wilson

**Sister Mary Kate, "Our Lady of Psychological Warfare."**