

HOT WIRE

THE JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE

**RONNIE
GILBERT**

HUMOR

MARGA GOMEZ

CARTOONISTS

WHO WEARS
THE TUX? QUIZ

MOVIES DIANE
GERMAIN WOULD
LIKE TO SEE

CARTOONS BY
ALISON BECHDEL

ON SABBATICAL

DEIDRE McCALLA

ALIX DOBKIN

NANCY VOGL

*CONNECTIONS OF
THE HEART MUSICAL*

WOMEN MAKE
MOVIES

WOMEN'S FESTIVALS

BRAINY GIRLS

NOTE BY NOTE

PAM HALL

VIDEOS ABOUT
MOTHERS &
DAUGHTERS

LIVING & WORKING
TOGETHER



Susan Wilson

STEREO RECORDING INSIDE

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

THE 'HOT WIRE' EDITORIAL PHILOSOPHY

HOT WIRE specializes in woman-identified music and culture, primarily the performing arts, writing/publishing, and film/video. We strongly believe in the power of the arts to affect social change, and we enjoy documenting the combination of "creativity" and "politics/philosophy." We are committed to covering female artists and women's groups who prioritize feminist and/or lesbian content and ideals in their creative products and events. We enjoy helping to both spark and strengthen the international community of those who love the creativity of women. *HOT WIRE* is the only publication devoted to the women's music and culture industry; it is an organizing tool for our community as well as interesting reading material. Each sixty-four page issue includes a two-sided stereo recording, so we (and future generations) can hear the music and poetry as well as read about it.

GOODBYE, PAL

I feel especially sad to report that Lori Twersky, editor/publisher of *Bitch: The Women's Rock Mag With Bite*, passed away last November. I've always considered *Bitch* to be the sister publication (evil twin) of *HOT WIRE*, and Twersky and I had many a discussion about the women's music scene, the women's rock scene, and all the endless permutations thereof. She was one of a kind, and will be missed.

HI THERE, BRAINY GIRLS

With this issue we welcome a new column, entitled "Brainy Girls A Go-Go" [see page 18]. Future articles in this column will explore topics pertaining to gifted and talented females, plus interesting essays by/interviews with women who are widely respected as intellectuals.

IS IT JUST ME...

...or does anyone else out there think that Mary Stuart Masterson is destined to be the Patricia Charbonneau of the 1990s?

MAKING COPIES

I've gotten many requests lately from women who want to photocopy articles from *HOT WIRE* for distribution to groups (choruses, festival planning committees, classes, etc.). While we appreciate the courtesy of the calls, we need to remind everyone that we are barely making it economically—especially in this recession—and it's crucial that we sell issues of the magazine. If you have a group and everyone needs



My Fiona: In the January issue, we put out an all-points bulletin in search of three women named Fiona. Within a couple of weeks we'd found two, and soon thereafter found our third. (Fiona McEwan/Westlake, Ohio; Fiona Martin/Oakland; and Fiona Cooke/Northampton. The three speedy Fionas will receive color 5x7s of the above photo, autographed by their admirers (photographers Marcy J. Hochberg and Toni Jr.). And who was the original Fab Fiona, for whom these tattoos were created? A creative contributor to the Canadian women's rock band Mustang Sally.

copies, we can give you a good deal on buying a bunch of *HOT WIRE*s. It's disturbing to think that women who would need one particular article wouldn't be interested in the rest of the issue, so please respect the copyright. We promise we'll try to work with you to make it a "win-win" situation—economical for all concerned. [Call Lynn at (312) 784-0817.]

LOOKING FOR A PRINTER?

...the living, breathing kind, not the computer laser kind. We work with a fabulous woman

ON THE COVER

Ronnie Gilbert has been a powerful force in the entertainment world for more than forty years, beginning with her days as part of the influential singing group The Weavers. She has recorded several albums and been in numerous theatrical productions. She and the women's music audience met each other when Ronnie began collaborating with Holly Near in the early 1980s. Ronnie has never stopped raising her voice in support of social justice and good fun.

and would like to see more feminist businesses benefit from her print shop services. She is professional, dedicated, respectful of women's music and culture, and reliable about deadlines. We constantly get compliments on how good *HOT WIRE* looks; she gives us high quality and the most reasonable price in town. She's looking to work with more women, even if they don't live in Chicago. Contact us if you'd like more specific details.

MAKE ME LAUGH

HOT WIRE is featuring an ongoing series of articles on women and humor. Special thanks to Laura Post, who conceived the idea.

SPEAKING OF BARGAINS...

Have you been thinking of getting some back issues, but just haven't gotten around to it? Now's the time. We're offering a special on back issues: buy two, get one free. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope addressed to "HOT WIRE Back Issues" for details.

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Isn't This A Time—The Legend Continues

RONNIE GILBERT

Interviewed by Toni Armstrong Jr.

Ronnie Gilbert's working class immigrant background gave her early access to a rich musical heritage, full of political and ethnic diversity, including the music of union organizing. In 1939, at age twelve, she won an audition to sing for 'Rainbow House,' a children's radio program in New York. At eighteen, she met Fred Hellerman at camp Wo-Chi-Ca (short for Workers' Children Camp) where they both worked as counselors, and they later began singing with Pete Seeger and Lee Hays—a group that was to become famous as The Weavers.

In 1950, The Weavers hit the charts like a musical tidal wave. Their first record, "Goodnight Irene," sold nearly two million copies. Concert appearances followed, plus hits like "So Long, It's Been Good To Know Yuh" and the South African "Wimoweh." Two years later, however, it was over. During the "McCarthy Era," the entertainment industry was decimated as the House Un-American Activities Committee "identified" people who were supposedly subversive Communist sympathizers. Amid charges of being "un-American," careers were ruined. People from the music, film, theater, and writing communities were blacklisted and could no longer find work. The Weavers were among the casualties.

Still, The Weavers had a sellout Christmas show at Carnegie Hall in 1955. Encouraged by their loyal fans, they toured on a limited basis for the next eight years. Keeping the music alive, reaching out to college kids and old time fans, they paralleled the spectacular rise and commercialization of folk music in the mainstream, which they had helped to initiate. Their fifteenth anniversary show at Carnegie Hall is available on CD, entitled 'The Weavers Reunion at Carnegie Hall • 1963.' They broke up that year.

Ronnie made three solo albums in the '60s: 'The Legend of Bessie Smith' (RCA Victor), 'Come Go With Me' (Vanguard), and 'Alone With Ronnie Gilbert' (Mercury). She toured and did theater in New York, London, and Paris; she was in 'The Man in the Glass Booth' on Broadway; in the Canadian produc-

tion of Caryl Churchill's 'Top Girls'; and in the Yugoslavian film 'The Loves of Isadora.'

Ronnie Gilbert met Holly Near in the early '70s, a year after Holly's 'A Live Album' (dedicated to Ronnie) came out. 'Wasn't That A Time,' the 1980 documentary about The Weavers, included sizzling footage of Holly and Ronnie singing together; it was so well-received that two national tours and two albums together on Redwood Records—'Lifeline' (1984) and 'Singing With You' (1986)—followed. Ronnie also recorded 'The Spirit Is Free' (1983) on Redwood.

In addition to her recent recordings, Ronnie can be seen in the movies 'Running on Empty' (1987) and 'Crossing Delancey' (1988). Her most recent album is 'Love Will Find A Way' (1989, Abbe Alice Music), and her one-woman musical about Mother Jones is being presented at the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre April 3 through May 17.

YOU HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF BEING ACTIVE IN SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS MUSIC. HOW DID YOU BECOME PART OF THE WOMEN'S MUSIC SCENE?

The question is, why would one place me in the women's music and culture scene? I ask myself—is it because I sang with Holly? Because I'm a lesbian? Or is it because I'm a woman who's lived her life in music and culture?

When I first sang with Holly, I was not a lesbian. I invited her to join me in *Wasn't That A Time* and at a couple of rallies for nuclear disarmament because I saw in her the woman-strength of her generation. It was a social phenomenon that was new and thrilling to me. I found it enormously exciting that the politics of earlier eras were alive and thriving in Holly and in others of her generation. But what drew me to her above everything else was that her songs were not only filled with her identification as a progressive, but as a progressive woman. This was the thing that thrilled me, that I insisted on showing The Weavers' audience at our

last concert and in the film.

HOLLY'S IDENTIFICATION AS A PROGRESSIVE WOMAN WAS THRILLING—IN WHAT WAY?

For me it was proof that we Weavers were blessed with spiritual offspring who carried the torch of our deep belief in social justice and social change, and who were also lighting up places we had never looked into.

PLACES LIKE...?

...like the "Woman Question," as it was called by the Left when I was young. I never noticed any change whatsoever in the lives of women, even Left women, from contemplating the "Woman Question." However, since the Civil Rights movement, women were not only exploring our political/personal lives in depth, but were making enormous changes in our consciousness and our lives.

In my simple-minded way, I had thought that my progressive old Weaver buddies would want to celebrate that in our first appearance together in twenty years. In fact, it turned out to be a bit of a battle, as the film *Wasn't That A Time* suggests. But in the end, we did sing Holly's "Hay Una Mujer Desaparecida" and "Something About the Women" at the concert—which, incidentally, brought the house down. "Hay Una Mujer" made it into the film; both songs are on the record.

WHEN DID YOU START PERFORMING IN WOMEN'S MUSIC VENUES?

I encountered the women's audience for the first time when I was invited to tour with Holly back in '81 or '82. And they encountered me. Maybe they took me into their bosom as warmly as they did because they assumed I was a lesbian, either a new one or an old one just coming out, or whatever—I don't know. Thinking back on it now, I'd guess a lot of women were thinking something like that. Maybe I was too unconscious, but it didn't trouble me

that I was a hetero-oriented woman, and that many of the women in the audience—and certainly the producers of these shows—were clearly and proudly lesbian. I thought it was wonderful, and I felt very honored to be trusted and accepted by the community.

And the audiences were electrified by our appearances together! We sounded wonderful—anyone could hear that—but little by little I began to see that what we were doing added up to something a lot bigger than what we were putting into it; it was a true phenomenon. Whether the parts were musical, political, or sexual, the end result was greater than the sum of all those parts, and that's the magic of a truly phenomenal collaboration. The Weavers had it, and Holly/Ronnie had it.

By 1984, Holly and I were a duo capable of filling very large venues. We joined Arlo Guthrie and Pete Seeger to form HARP. We did several notable concerts, which were recorded and issued by

(the governor), their children, and members of their staff singing up a storm in the first row, having a grand old time.

AS A SOLO ACT, YOU NOW HAVE CONTROL OVER THE MATERIAL YOU PERFORM. DO YOU DELIBERATELY SELECT SONGS ABOUT WOMEN'S LIVES AND ISSUES?

Yes, certainly. Women's lives have become as energizing and provocative to me as anything I have ever sung about. I want to sing about them, celebrate them. In fact, when I consider any song, the major issue for me is: how will this song impact on women; how does it speak to women's sensibilities, women's lives? Even in the old Weaver days, I tried to find songs about woman-strength. But the songs we sang as a group then could be fairly unconscious about women, even if they were strong in the areas of peace and social justice. The song "Wasn't That A Time" is that kind of song—an important

women—on the oppression and dismissal of women, and of children.

I don't want to contribute to that in any way anymore. Today, when I consider a song, the first thought is probably: is this a fine tune and lyric, and is it in the range of what I feel I can do well? Immediately after that decision come these considerations: is this a song that can be sung by either a woman or a man; is it gender inclusive? Does it encourage strength and courage and humor in personal love, rather than misery and hopelessness? Believe me, every love song encourages something! If "beautiful woman" is a factor in the song, is it beauty in all our womanly diversity—inner and outer—or has the writer bought into what the ad agencies tell us is beautiful? And for me—a woman of sixty-five years—if it's a song about age, it better be one that confirms the life force in "oldness" and not our disposability. Of course I sing songs that are about sadness and melancholy and badness—but there has to be some redeeming aspect to it. I may want to mirror the rottenness of society sometimes, but I don't want to join it.

EVERY WOMAN HAS HER OWN IDEA OF WHAT WOMEN'S MUSIC IS AND ISN'T. WE COULD PROBABLY ALL AGREE THAT FRANK SINATRA ISN'T WOMEN'S MUSIC, EVEN IF HE PACKED HIS LAS VEGAS SETS WITH SONGS BY MARGIE ADAM AND ALIX DOBKIN. BUT SHORT OF THAT, EVERYONE INVOLVED HAS HER OWN IDEA OF WHAT CAN BE CONSIDERED TO BE WOMEN'S MUSIC. WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

Frank Sinatra packing his Vegas sets with songs by Alix Dobkin is one of the more startling images I have ever considered! But anyway, when it comes to songs, no matter who wrote them—man or woman—I judge them by the standards I mentioned before. My line otherwise is probably a fairly movable one. I sometimes work with great women musicians, such as Julie Homi or Libby McLaren; other times I have male accompanists—it largely depends on who's available. To go back to the question I raised earlier—I have asked myself, were Holly's songs "women's music" when they were sung by me and three men [The Weavers]? I'd hate to think that working with men takes me and the songs I sing out of the realm of women's music, but I have heard arguments from some quarters that would support that idea. Personally, I think we can



Susan Wilson

Ronnie Gilbert and Donna Korones: they met on a plane en route to a HARP concert, and have been partners ever since.

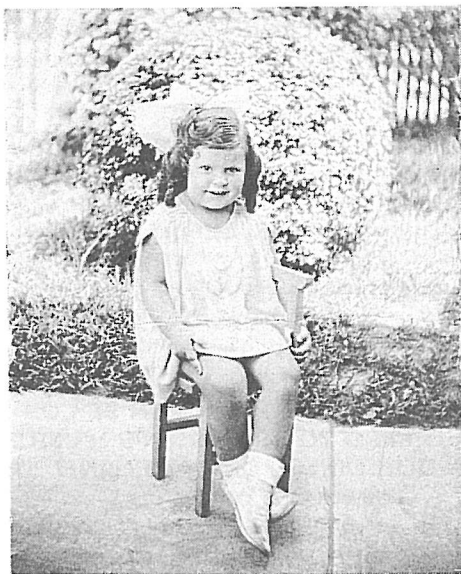
Redwood Records. For various reasons, the group couldn't and didn't last very long, in spite of the fact that many people thought it was an historical collaboration. There's some justification in thinking that it was—for one thing, we sang at the Ohio State Fair, which had blacklisted The Weavers thirty years earlier and refused to honor a contract we had with them [during the McCarthy era]. HARP sang at the fair, and we had the great pleasure of watching Dagmar Celeste, her husband

song, a powerful song in the history of The Weavers and the blacklist. But the first verse starts, "Our fathers bled at Valley Forge..." and ends, "their faith was brotherhood." How can I sing that song today, when I know in my heart and my brain that a culture where women are not important enough even to be mentioned is a culture where the ideal of social justice for everyone can never be a reality? What's the foundation of all the oppression in the world, where does it start? On

really divert ourselves out of business with that kind of hair-splitting, and I'd rather not do it.

My current musical theater piece is about the great American labor agitator Mother Jones. This amazing, contradictory, powerful woman—once a household name—has been written out of even *herstory*. I aim to put her back in. My collaborator on this piece is Si Kahn, one of the few truly feminist men I know—he's the writer of "Woman to Woman," a lesbian rallying song I wish I'd written. So, when I perform our play at the Milwaukee Rep, will I be presenting an example of women's music and culture? I deeply hope the audience will take it to be so.

GIVEN THE PERSPECTIVE YOU HAVE FROM BEING INVOLVED IN DECADES OF SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS MUSIC, WHAT DO YOU SEE WHEN YOU LOOK AT WOMEN'S MUSIC AND CULTURE? YOU'RE IN A POSI-



Little Ronnie Gilbert grew up with music, especially the music of union organizing. (Pictured in 1930, four years old.)

TION TO SEE THINGS MORE COMPREHENSIVELY THAN THOSE OF US WHO ARE SO MUCH YOUNGER.

Movements come and go—even gigantic ones, as recent world events have shown. I myself withdrew from the movements of my time when I found that I had to trim my reasoning power into the shape of the school uniform in order to "belong." As far as I'm concerned, the Left in this country disempowered itself by always emphasizing the differences between its

factions—Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats, Trotskyites, etc.—and hardly ever reaffirming common hopes and goals. This is an attitude born of a dominator mentality. To the extent the women's music and culture movement can throw off this conditioning and explore its own core, its own woman-generated possibilities, we can thrive. Otherwise, not.

What's encouraging to me is that women—performers and audiences alike—seem to identify themselves with something called "women's music," even though this something is *not* clearly defined. There is a sense of something happening, of the coming together of a community. And to the extent that this community can contain diversity and make room for it, that is the extent to which this will be a rich and empowering community, and have an impact on the world.

When I take a song like Laura Berkson's "Marie" out into the world, to an



Grade school graduation (1940). "They made us make our own graduation dresses," recalls Ronnie. "My mom finished it!"

audience that is not strictly a "women's audience"—say one that's more connected to the folk music world—I feel that I have the strength and backing of my community, and that the audience can feel that. It gives me enormous pleasure and joy to do that. And I don't know how many ears hear it—how do you ever know? But I know I'm doing it, the same way years ago we Weavers dared to bring songs of peace into a general audience of people who were maybe a little scared to

hear it, but who were *wanting* to hear that other people were thinking that way, too.

AND LITTLE DID YOU KNOW BACK THEN THERE WAS LITTLE HOLLY OUT THERE SOMEWHERE, LISTENING TO YOUR RECORDS AND SINGING ALONG.

There was little Holly, there was little Charlie King—there were a lot of little folks out there who got touched by it. And Holly was also touched by women's music—by Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, and Margie Adam. That, plus her enormous sense of the need for struggle for social justice, was a really marvelous combination for her. That's what ultimately attracted me to *her*, to her work and to her songs—an upward spiral, I like to think.

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF WOMEN'S MUSIC THAT'S DIFFERENT



Life after The Weavers has included theater. (As Pope Joan in the London, Ontario production of Caryl Churchill's 'Top Girls,' 1988.)

FROM PROGRESSIVE FOLK SITUATIONS?

A place where I belong, where what I do now feels to me as much valued as the legend of "The Weavers" that clings to me. Also, as a singer I have always felt in absolute awe of instrumental musicians, but I don't feel intimidated by them in the women's music community like I do among men in the folk world.

It hurts me in the folk world to see so few woman-identified women. I

don't mean necessarily lesbian women, but women with strong feminist or "womanist" identification, to use Alice Walker's great phrase.

THAT'S TRUE FROM MY EXPERIENCES, TOO. I'VE BEEN ASKED MANY TIMES, "WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO CALL THEMSELVES A FEMINIST? WHY CAN'T WE ALL JUST BE HUMANISTS?" THESE PEOPLE BELIEVE IN EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK, ARE AGAINST SEXISM AND RACISM, AND USUALLY ARE NOT HOMOPHOBIC—YET SOMEHOW THE IDEA THAT THE WORD "FEMINIST" MIGHT BE APPLIED TO THEM REALLY BUGS THEM. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS?

I think it's because there has never been a true collaboration—a true cohesive sense of belonging to each other—between lesbian women and heterosexual women. I think that split has been very destructive in that it limits the potential for gathering people in. I don't mean to blame... heterosexual women may have sympathies with lesbian women, but don't want to be associated—well, they don't want to be thought to be lesbian themselves. The word "feminist" has gotten that kind of implication in it now, women who hate men and all that stuff—you know. A lot has been written recently about this; if you ask women about agendas, they're absolutely in favor of equal rights and health care for women, etc., but ask them if they're "feminist"—absolutely not.

WALKS LIKE A DUCK, TALKS LIKE A DUCK, BUT DON'T CALL IT A DUCK.

Right, but there's more to it. Lesbian women—having been given such a hard time—are often reluctant to open up the circle. I think that may change. I hope it will. I'll tell you what else disturbs me a lot—that we can't seem to be critical of one another and supportive at the same time. Reading the women's press, especially the letters in it, sometimes feels like being in an endless maze of charge and counter-charge and acrimony.

SOME PEOPLE DON'T DO ANYTHING BUT PROCESS. THEY'RE SORT OF LIKE THE CORPORATE RAIDERS OF OUR COMMUNITY; THEY PRODUCE NOTHING—THEY MERELY FEED OFF THE WORK OTHER WOMEN HAVE TRIED TO DO. WHAT THEY DO IS MOSTLY CRITICIZE IN THE NAME OF

ANALYSIS. IT CAN BE VERY DEMORALIZING...

...as I said about the American Left. One place I feel the women's music and cultural movement can look at itself in this regard is in the area of reviews and critiques. I'd like to see the snot taken out of reviews. The sneering, smart-ass sort of review that the boys are so good at is not something that is going to enhance our community. Intelligent, supportive criticism is what women should be training themselves to do, and to expect from our publications.



At the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, where she also participated in the New Jewish Agenda Havdallah Service and Concert (with Ruth Pelham, Alix Dobkin, and others).

I ABSOLUTELY AGREE, AND THIS IS A MAJOR REASON WHY 'HOT WIRE' DOESN'T DO REVIEWS. YOU HAVE HAD A LOT OF EXPERIENCE WITH COMMUNITIES—ALSO WITH ARTISTIC COLLABORATIONS AND THAT KIND OF COMMUNITY. LET'S TALK ABOUT MUSIC FOR AWHILE. HOW DO YOU FIND SONGS?

Well, aside from what I've said about picking songs that relate to women's sensibilities, I love stories. I'm a sucker for a good story song. Beautifully crafted poems are my passion. Irreverence pleases me—"question authority," a great lesson from the '60s. I love to laugh and to make an audience laugh. And love, love, love in all its possibilities. I used to sing blues with The Weavers, and I'm doing some more of that now, old fashioned stompy blues especially. My taste is pretty eclectic, I guess.

When I look back on the pop songs I used to love when I was a teenager (pre-folk era), they were all torchy, love-lost, all-alone-by-the-telephone stuff. The sob in the song is what got to me, the exquisite pain of it all! I've heard k.d. lang do the Patsy Cline versions of this type of song, but it seems to me that k.d. does them with her tongue well in her cheek. You recognize the pain, you share it, going "Oh yeah, yeah!"—and at the same time you get to share the joke in it. This is very different from the way this stuff was dished out when I was a girl—very serious, we were supposed to suffer a lot. A new and very female sensibility is represented here: the ability to both feel deeply and laugh at ourselves. Why do we love Kate Clinton (besides the fact that she's intelligent, witty, and gorgeous)? Isn't it because she validates both our pain and our sense of our own absurdity? Maybe we women have survived eons of social battering partly because we can laugh ourselves silly after a good cry.

HOW DID YOU PICK "THE GIRL IN THE RED VELVET DRESS"?

It's such a wonderful kind of old-fashioned love story, and I instantly thought about Donna and me.

DONNA KORONES?

Yes. Seven years ago, on a plane on the way to one of those HARP concerts, I met Donna and fell in love with a woman

continued on page 56

ABOUT THE WRITER: Toni Armstrong Jr. has full-time careers in both special education and women's music & culture. Interests include movies, sign language, female vampires, sports cars, neurophysiology, pinball, 'The Brady Bunch,' and the occasional nap. It pleases her to think of how the girls being born now will be able to step into their young adulthood in a much more woman-friendly world, thanks to the work all of us are doing today.

SOAPBOX

Congratulations on another great issue of *HOT WIRE*. A few years ago, Alison Bechdel's *Dykes to Watch Out For* laughed me right out of the convent. I greatly missed her cartoon in the January 1992 issue. I hope to see it again.

Elizabeth M. Orrell

Editor's note: We face the same problem every issue—so many articles, so little room. We always have to cut something due to space considerations, and it's always an agonizing decision. Last time it was Alison's turn, but she's back [see page 31].

There was some special joy in seeing Margie Adam on your cover. I see her in my mind's eye at her first concert appearance in Kansas City, on a twin bill with the equally-young Cris Williamson, in a church basement. There are maybe thirty women present. The year is 1974. We have wonderful pictures from that concert. The last concert I saw her in was in Kansas City in 1980, the year we [Naiad Press] moved to Tallahassee. She filled an auditorium by then. The world changes... glad she is back. *Barbara Grier, Tallahassee*

The best thing about *HOT WIRE* interviews is that the women open up in depth about important things. They are vulnerable without being sappy and thought-provoking without being pointlessly provocative. The interview with Margie Adam in the latest issue was no exception. Margie, thanks for the honesty. (And for the cute baby picture.)

M.K. Brunelleschi, Cambridge, Mass.

What a refreshing thing to hear someone who's actually excited about women's music! Thanks Margie, for the uplifting comments. So many others have dismissed women's music as dead. You made me feel not stupid for still liking it.

Jan D., Yellow Springs, Ohio

I was most interested and receptive to what Margie Adam was saying about how she is being psychically drawn back

LETTERS may be edited for clarity and/or length. Send to SOAPBOX/HOT WIRE, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Women were thrilled to read in the January 1992 issue about Margie Adam's long-awaited return to women's music.

into the creation of women's culture, and how many of us will be coming back into it more and more. Bonnie Morris ["The Importance of Documenting Women's Music Festivals"] was also saying some things that are very important to me about the invisibility of the creation of women's culture to mainstream media or academia. Feminist historians being published today are not writing histories of the last twenty years in which I recognize my experiences. The histories are full of flattening categories and lifeless descriptions of different ideas, taken out of context of anyone's experiences. The whole move to create women's cultural community is dismissed in book after book in a few sentences. I am working on a course description and reader so that I can convey some of this to the next generation in women's studies courses. I would like to contact others who share this interest; perhaps to discuss it in Michigan?

Thyme S. Siegel, Kensington, California

"Hotline" is the first thing I read in every issue. It's just the right combination of news and gossip, without ever really getting trashy or too personal. I also appreciate that you include women's culture people as well as mainstream. I especially like to read that Submissions part; I'm not a professional writer, but so many of those things will accept stuff from amateur writers like me. I bet every *HOT WIRE* reader would be just plain interested in all the things women are trying to get together.

Pamela Justin-Hopf, Elmira, New York

HOT WIRE always seems to accentuate the positive. I like that. I really liked the way Jewelle Gomez said such nice things about other women writers in her latest "...point to a line..." column.

Barb Mendosa, Redondo Beach, California

What can you tell me about Ksenia Mack, who performed with Ferron in Provincetown? My project is locating Ukranian lesbians, and I am guessing that Ksenia Mack is Ukranian. Can anyone find out how to reach her?

Ksenia Friden, 1217A N. Salsipuedes Santa Barbara, CA 93105. (805) 963-8252.

I love the tush push and I love *HOT WIRE* and I can't decide if I love Marina or Maile the most.

Karen Pottsmyn, Bloomington, Indiana

Who says feminists have no sense of humor? I laughed out loud several times just reading about Venus Envy's *I'll Be A Homo For Christmas* album. I sure hope they'll be touring and be at festivals. The article makes me think their show will be very fun.

Lynnette Sandstone, Ames, Iowa

I still think Kate Clinton would have a great career on TV and even in movies. Maybe the stand-up comedy club circuit requires doggie jokes and catering to straight people, but Kate now fills pretty big halls. Her acts are a good mix of feminist, lesbian, and general topical material; she's no longer limited to playing comedy clubs to get attention. With the over-the-

top material done by comics today, she's not even outrageous enough to be taboo. I just don't get why she's not a major big name star.

Maureen O'Grady, Washington, DC

As a heterosexual feminist, I have to say I responded well to Judith Sloan's article. I'd like to add to the discussion by saying why I like to go without my feminist husband to women's events. First there's the fun element; women together are fun to be with! And there's so much good music, so much variety. Next there's safety—in women-only environments, the threat of violence is next to none. ("Women might start a rumor, but not a war," to quote Marga Gomez). It's exhilarating to be able to walk around at night, maybe even without clothes, and feel absolutely safe. Next there's politics—I learn a lot in feminist environments, about all sorts of things. No matter what anyone says, what feminists are doing as a community is really different from what's going on anywhere else, including in progressive political circles. Finally, there's just a feeling I can't explain...the world makes me feel like my husband and I are one, which is a nice feeling, since I want to be his partner in life. But it feels fantastic to be in touch with *just myself* from time to time. When he's there, of course I relate to him, just like my lesbian friends relate to their girlfriends if they're there. So it's nice to be totally independent, without his feelings or opinions to consider. Except for my first festival (years ago), I've never felt uncomfortable in lesbian-dominated settings. I know I'm not the enemy, and I understand that they don't want to hear me rave about what a great feminist guy I'm married to. It works out great. Thanks, Judith, for the article. I'll be making an extra effort to catch your show.

Sharon M., Canton, Ohio

Profiling Lea DeLaria and Kate Clinton in the same issue was a great idea. What a contrast! *Deb Aerad, Carbondale, Illinois*

Reading about Sea Gnomes Home was sweet. We fantasize that such havens exist in this world, and sometimes we find out that they actually do.

Grace Petrillo, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Thanks for the update on Meg ["Seldom Scenes"]. She'll always be my favorite. Her records are as meaningful today as they were when they first came out.

Carole Siegbahn, Atlanta, Georgia

Inquiring WimMinds Want to Know

For Alix Dobkin: I heard a rumor that you are retiring from women's music. Is it true? If so, why?

**Margie Oldenbarneveldt,
East Orange, New Jersey**

We have received many inquiries regarding this rumor. To clear up the confusion, read the article on page 38 and this letter we received from Alix.

Dear Toni and the rest of you gals,

I got the latest *HOT WIRE* and have read and especially loved the pieces by Judith Sloan and Bonnie Morris, as well as the ones on Margie [Adam] and Shelley & Myrna ["Behind The Scenes"]. The issue looks splendid; congratulations and kudos to you for keeping on keeping on. Now that I'm off the road (loving being home but hating not traveling), I'll be able to read the whole magazine in less than sixteen sittings. Not to mention that I'll now have to rely upon the likes of y'all to get news of international cultural doings.

My news is that Ladyslipper and I will be releasing a cassette and CD compilation of selections from my five albums plus two unrecorded tunes. As you may recall, one of them—"My Lesbian Wars"—got me into deep trouble with countless women in the mid '70s when I asked non-Lesbians to leave for it at the end of my show. It was a truly innocent judgement on my part that the subject was strictly Lesbian-only business and of interest only to Lesbians. Little did I understand what I was stepping into. But I learned fast, and abandoned that practice within a few months. I can't believe I thought I could get away with it; youth, I guess.

But I digress. The other previously unrecorded entry is one I wrote and taped in September 1970 when I was eight months pregnant, pre-feminist, and certainly pre-Lesbian. It's a vague sort of philosophical-spiritual-inspirational number which I personally find

quite touching. Although heterosexually-identified, the shadow of my future direction seems apparent in the lyric, twenty years later.

This "Best Of" summary of two decades is slated for June release, and will have just as many tunes as I can cram into the formats—which, as you know, has been standard operating procedure all along. It's hard to decide which songs to leave out, especially from *XXAlix*, the midpoint (1980) of this period, and my strongest album song-wise.

That's my news, now here's yours: Enclosed is a check for a two-year sub. I'd love it to be more, but being off the road means being off an income source, so I'll have to wait on more prosperous days for that. (A Bette, Barbra, or Madonna recording of "The Woman In Your Life" would no doubt mean big bucks to you.)

XX Alix Dobkin, Woodstock, New York

For Maile Klein/Marina Hodgini: My girlfriend Susan says I should listen to more women's music and less of the country radio station, but I really enjoy the sound of country music. Can you recommend albums by women I can obtain? (I already have everything by k.d. lang.)

Lynn Siniscalchi, Chicago
"You'll probably enjoy the greatest hits albums, especially by the more contemporary women artists," says Maile. "On almost all of the albums, I find some songs that are useable and others that are too he/she oriented. Try *Down at the Twist and Shout* (Mary Chapin Carpenter); *One Time, One Night* (Sweethearts of the Rodeo); *Time Passes By* (Kathy Mattea); The Judds' *Love Can Build A Bridge*; *Straight and Narrow* (Wild Rose); *Honky Tonk Angel* (Patty Loveless); and *Talkin' 'Bout Men* (The Forester Sisters). Happy listening, and say hi to Susan for me."

HOTLINE

Compiled by Joy Rosenblatt, Annie Lee,
Alice Lowenstein, and Toni Armstrong Jr.

TRIVIA CONTEST NEWS

Numerous women have turned out to be trivia experts in the area of identifying women's voices, but the fastest to do so was Margaret Johnson (Binghamton, New York), who knew that Debra Winger is E.T., Nancy Cartwright is Bart Simpson, and Mercedes McCambridge provides the ultra-creepy voice of the possessed Linda Blair in *The Exorcist*. Margaret donated her prize (a *HOT WIRE* subscription) to her pal Laurie Ryan in Tampa, Florida. This summer's trivia contest number one concerns two more women with memorable voices: Last spring, Cris Williamson and Tret Fure toured what used to be the USSR. Exactly how and when did Cris and Tret meet? When and where was their first show together? The first woman to correctly answer these questions will win an Amazon Army knife. Trivia contest number two: "Before there was Thelma and Louise, there was Asta." What does this mean? Answer correctly and speedily, and you'll win any three back issues of *HOT WIRE* that we still have available (your choice of issues).

OUR FIONAS

Yes, we've found our Fionas. Read all about it in the Editor's Desk section (inside front cover).

NEWS

In response to the Boy Scouts of America's gay ban, **GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA** issued a statement endorsing personal privacy. "We value and respect our volunteers and staff, and we don't investigate into their personal matters. We don't have any policies that involve the individual's sexual preferences," says spokeswoman Barbara Smith.

The first all-woman **ANTARCTICA EXPEDITION** is expected to start October 1, covering 1,700 miles in four months. This will be the first one on skis, without the use of dogs or tractors. Each woman will pull a Kevlar sled loaded with 200 pounds of provisions, and will use wind-propelled canopies or snow sails to traverse the ice when possible. "Every Long

HOTLINE presents capsule reports of past happenings, announces upcoming events, and passes on various tidbits of info. This column is dedicated to Donna Allen, who has dedicated a great deal of her life to facilitating and promoting the type of connections between women that "Hotline" is all about.

Journey," written by Ann Reed to honor the expedition, has been performed by the Denver Women's Chorus.

Former UPI reporter Julie Brienza has filed a lawsuit charging that a group of right-wing religious broadcasters orchestrated a **SMEAR CAMPAIGN** against her, designed to compel UPI to fire her because she is a lesbian and does freelance writing for a gay/lesbian newspaper. Not only did the religious group encourage listeners to complain to UPI about her employment, they threatened to cancel their contracts with the financially troubled news service if they wouldn't fire her. They referred to her employment at UPI as "a case of lesbian penetration of the United Press International."

The San Francisco Zoo offered a Valentines Day "adults only" sex tour of the zoo at \$15 a ticket last February. Among the animals highlighted on the tour were two **LESBIAN, NEARLY MONOGAMOUS PENGUINS**.

Five women employees are **SUING THE STROH BREWERY** over the "Swedish Bikini Team" ads for Old Milwaukee beer. They charge that the ads foster a work environment that encourages sexual harassment. "These ads tell Stroh's male employees that women are stupid, panting playthings," said attorney Lori Peterson in *Time*, contending that her clients have been confronted with pornography, taunted with lewd remarks, and slapped on the rear.

WOMEN

At presstime, **CRIS WILLIAMSON and TRET FURE** were scheduled to take their music to the Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the USSR) February 19-March 9. The tour was planned to start in St. Petersburg, with two concerts for Farmer '92, the annual nationwide festival. Then they planned to travel by train to Yaroslavl, Vilnius, and Smolensk, with the culmination being a concert in Moscow celebrating International Women's Day (March 8). According to Olivia Records, Cris and Tret would return in time for the seven-night Caribbean Olivia Cruise.

ALICE WALKER has purchased a photocolage by artist **JOAN EDA** to grace the cover of the tenth anniversary edition of *The Color Purple*. She says she wants to give readers her own concept of what Celie looks like and of how she evolves during the novel, rather than

letting the Spielberg movie version stand as the definitive image.

KAREN THOMPSON and SHARON KO-WALSKI have finally won the right to be together again. After an eight-year battle to be permitted to care for Sharon (who is now a quadriplegic following an auto accident), Karen was finally appointed Sharon's guardian by a Minnesota state appeals court, overturning a lower court appointment of a family friend after Sharon's father resigned as guardian. The court called them a "family of affinity, which ought to be accorded respect."

BARBARA BRANDON is the first black female cartoonist to get nationwide exposure. Her strip *Where I'm Coming From* views life as seen through the eyes of a group of black women friends. According to *Time*, early complaints from cartoon syndicates came because the strip was all women and focused on African Americans. Rather than alter her work, she waited two years until she found a syndicate that would let her do it her way.

Speaking of cartoonists...**LYNDA BARRY's** book *The Good Times Are Killing Me*—an interracial comedy about two girls growing up in the '60s—has been brought to the stage as a musical comedy, as has **NICOLE HOLLANDER's** *Sylvia's Real Good Advice*. *Good Times* premiered at the Minetta Lane Theater in New York, *Sylvia* at the Organic Theater in Chicago.

OPRAH WINFREY is now entertainment's wealthiest woman (earned \$42 million in 1991), and her daily program is TV's highest-rated talk show ever. Future projects include a movie version of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

Oklahoma State Rep. Leonard Sullivan has written a letter to **ANITA HILL's** boss, trying to get her fired. "We must get left-wing extremist influence off the campus before it spreads further. We can't afford to have a high-profile professor on campus that millions of Americans...believe is a fantasizing liar," he wrote. Letters in support of Professor Hill can be sent to Pres. Richard Van Horn, University of Oklahoma, 300 Timberdell Rd., Norman, OK 73019, and to Prof. Anita Hill, University of Oklahoma, Dept. of Law, 660 Darrington Oval, Norman, OK 73019.

Attention **Zelda** fans: attorney **SHEILA JAMES KUEHL**, most famous for her charac-

ter Zelda Gilroy on the TV show *The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis* (1959-1963), came out publicly last year on October 11 (National Coming Out Day).

Production companies of the rich and famous: **GEENA DAVIS** (Genial Productions), **OPRAH WINFREY** (Harpo Productions), **SIGOURNEY WEAVER** (Goat Cay Productions), **KIM BASINGER** (Mighty Wind Productions), **LINDA ELLERBEE** (Lucky Duck), and—our favorite—**BETTE MIDLER** (All Girl Productions).

The October 1991 cover of *Women and Guns*—published by the Second Amendment Foundation in Bellevue, Washington—featured the hottest picture yet of **LINDA HAMILTON** in her *Terminator 2* role.

Performance artist/composer **LURIE ANDERSON** is involved in the creation of a New Age theme park called Realworld. If the thirty-six acre site near Barcelona, Spain is approved, she says there may be attractions like sixty-foot tornadoes at the entrance and a giant black cloud that triggers talking trees. The park is intended to be a high-tech, computerized place with interactive simulator rides and lots of special effects.



A few friends: Mimi Baczewska, Laura Berkson, Sue Fink, and Leah Zicari were among those who flew to Tucson to help Jamie Anderson (top row, third from left) with her new album 'Center of Balance.' While they were there (January 30-February 2), they performed to sold-out crowds in Phoenix and Tucson.

PENNY MARSHALL continues as Hollywood's top woman director. Her movies *Big* and *Awakenings* were solid hits at the box office, grossing \$110 million and \$51 million respectively, and winning five Oscar nominations between them. The former sitcom queen

(*Laverne & Shirley*) now gives us *A League of Their Own*, the women's baseball league film starring **GEENA DAVIS** and **MADONNA**.

TAMMY WYNETTE was offended by remarks made by **HILLARY CLINTON** (overtly feminist wife of Democratic hopeful Bill Clinton). "I'm not some little woman, 'standing by my man' like Tammy Wynette," Hillary said on *60 Minutes*. The country music veteran raised a ruckus, and Hillary called to apologize. "Nowhere in that song did I say, 'Be a doormat. Take any abuse,'" fumed Tammy.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

"The women in this country are in a very peculiar state right now," said **JESSICA LANGE** last winter in *TV Guide*. "I was amazed when the polls showed more women believed Clarence Thomas than Anita Hill. It's a Stepford Wife mentality...How could women not believe Anita Hill?"

"I feel like I'm home. I've jumped from a pool of testosterone to a pool of estrogen," said **JAN HOOKS** in *Entertainment Weekly* about switching from *Saturday Night Live* to *Designing Women*. "There's no more male place than *SNL*,

GREENE left the NBC show because she was upset with the lesbian plot lines in store for her character Abby. She firmly denies the allegations. "They made me seem like this incredibly homophobic person," she said recently in *People*. "I resented that. I left because my contract was up, and after five years I figured they were not going to have a writing renaissance with Abby."

Studio execs wanted to rewrite **KATHLEEN TURNER's** big boat rescue scene in *V.I. Warshawski*, considering it "unfeminine." Kathleen is quoted in *Movies USA*: "You're not going to take this away from me. If I were Clint Eastwood, would you have someone come along and save the girl for him? I can do it! I'm going to do it!" *V.I. Warshawski*, based on the character created by Sara Paretsky, is Hollywood's first truly hard-boiled female detective movie; there isn't even really a male co-star.

GROUPS

Every year **RHYTHM FEST** takes money raised through the craftswomen's raffle and donates it to worthy groups and causes. According to producer Mandy Carter, the first Rhythm Fest sent money to North Carolina Vote '90 (the lesbian/gay effort launched to defeat Jesse Helms' U.S. Senate re-election bid). Last year, the money was split between the Association of Women's Music and Culture (AWMAC) and *HOT WIRE*.

WOMEN IN THE SOUTHERN MISSOURI OZARK MOUNTAINS are securing a forty-acre piece of land, according to Mimi Baczewska. Bordered on two sides by women's land and referred to as "The Mound," it is the highest point in the county. Two raffles have been held so far to help raise money for the purchase. Donations/inquiries to The Moundation c/o Greentree, Rt. 1 Box 392, Ava, MO 65608.

CIRCLES OF EXCHANGE, a Goddess-centered correspondence and creativity network active since 1984, welcomes new participants. SASE to Nan Hawthorne, COE, 9594 First Ave. NE #333, Seattle, WA 98115.

SISTER HOMELANDS ON EARTH (SHE) is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to helping women create land communities around the country. The group works for safe, affordable housing that allows women to live self-sufficiently, in harmony with nature. The first sisterland, Saguardo, has been created in Arizona. SHE, P.O. Box 5285, Tucson, AZ 85703. (602) 883-9085.

There is a new national donor network dedicated to helping elect **OPENLY GAY AND LESBIAN CANDIDATES** to public office at the national, state, and local levels. Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, 1012 14th St. NW #707, Washington, DC 20005.

According to *Lesbian News*, **OBERLIN COLLEGE'S LESBIAN-GAY-BISEXUAL ALUMNI**

and not only is this a women's place, it's a Southern women's place."

After she shared an on-screen kiss with **AMANDA DONAHOE** on *L.A. Law* last season, rumors circulated that **MICHELLE**

Maria Schuchardt

group (800 members) has been officially recognized by the college. Contact J. Winters, 2104 Pauline Blvd. #307, Ann Arbor, MI 48103. And an organization for **LESBIAN-GAY-BISEXUAL GRADUATES OF KENT STATE UNIVERSITY** is now being formed. SASE to Alumni Club, P.O. Box 1983, Kent, OH 44240.

SOUNDTRAX PRODUCTIONS is a theater-based group that works with other production companies in Texas to link concerts together. On staff are women with professional experience in music, sound and lighting, and management; they have recording capacity as well as concert production skills. Ellen James, Soundtrax Productions, 1307 Lakeshore Dr., Irving, TX 75060. (214) 986-0040.

The Modern Language Association Commission on the Status of Women in the Profession seeks statements from lesbians teaching in colleges or universities who have experienced obvious or subtle **HARASSMENT BASED ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION**. The collection of statements will be entitled *Censorship: Anti-Feminist Harassment in the Academy*. Greta Gaard, Dept. of Composition, 420 Humanities Bldg., University of Minnesota, Duluth, MN 55812.

The all-women L7 rock band started **ROCK FOR CHOICE** last fall, a group comprised of musicians who do benefits for organizations involved in reproductive rights work. "We have a spiritual mission to expose people to our music," said L7 bassist Jennifer Finch in *Entertainment Weekly*. "Audiences loyal to bands like Red Hot Chili Peppers might get clued in on knowing that women can be a strong force that can rock." (*HOT WIRE* is seeking the address of Rock for Choice.)

On June 10, 1692 the first Salem, Massachusetts execution for witchcraft was held. By the end of 1692, 200 New Englanders had been tried for the "crime" of witchcraft; nineteen were convicted and executed; one was killed for refusing to testify; others died in prison. The city of Salem (in cooperation with neighboring towns) plans to observe the **300-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW ENGLAND WITCH TRIALS** with a series of events. The interfaith group No More Witch Hunts! is committed to ensuring that this observation is dignified and shows respect for these victims of misogyny and prejudice; they also want to expose the parallels between witch hunting and today's violence against women and minorities. No More Witch Hunts!, P.O. Box 3566, Boston, MA 02101.

Cheryl Kelly is trying to start a **LESBIAN CULTURAL CENTER AND LIBRARY** in rural South Carolina where she says there are extremely limited resources. Donations of office equipment, books, magazines, recordings, crafts by women, and money are being sought. ANWOLL c/o Cheryl Kelly, Rt. 1 Box 296, Ruffin, SC 29457.

FOND FAREWELLS

Editor/publisher **LORI TWERSKY** (*Bitch: The Women's Rock Mag With Bite*) died last November from lupus at the age of thirty-seven. At her death, Lori had completed (with several collaborators: Cheryl Cline, Sarah Crocker, Susan McCarthy, Danise Rodriguez, and Tatiana de la Tierra) the draft of a biographical dictionary of women in rock music. It is hoped that *Bitch* will resume publication.

The nationally distributed **VISIBILITIES** has ceased publication. Started in 1987 by Susan Chasin, the lesbian magazine was unable to continue due to slow and non-payment by bookstores and advertisers, as well as an inability to attract new ad revenue.

Another swan song: the January issue of **MATRIX WOMEN'S NEWS MAGAZINE**, was its last. Founded in 1976 and published out of Santa Cruz, California, *Matrix* described itself as a "monthly feminist forum."

BERENICE ABBOTT, pioneer of modern photography, died at age ninety-three last December. Her career began in Paris in the early 1920s when she worked with Man Ray.

From the Of-Course-The-Male-Critics-Hated-It Dept.: The new **CAROL BURNETT SHOW** only lasted a few episodes, but was pleasingly feminist in orientation. Should the opportunity arise to see reruns, watch for the highlight: an all-women, radical feminist spoof of *Star Trek*, complete with some surprising sexy twists.

DAME JUDITH ANDERSON died last January of natural causes at the age of 93. Her fifty-three-year career included the classic roles of Medea, Lady Macbeth, and even Hamlet (in men's clothing). The Australian-born Dame Judith also made twenty-nine movies, earning an Oscar nomination for her portrayal of the evil Mrs. Danvers in *Rebecca* (1940). Her last role was as Minx Lockridge in *Santa Barbara* (1984-87).

THE JUDDS (daughter Wynonna and mother Naomi) did their last show as a duo on December 4, culminating a 118-city "farewell tour." (Naomi suffers from chronic active hepatitis.) One of country music's hottest acts, the Judds have been performing together since 1983, racking up eighteen number one songs along the way, including tunes made popular with women's music audiences by Maile Klein and Marina Hodgini through their Country-Western dance instruction at festivals.

Retired mathematician Rear Admiral **GRACE MURRAY HOPPER**, died this past New Year's Day. A pioneer in data processing, she made several vital contributions to the development of modern computing, including helping to invent the COBOL programming language and coining the term "bug," which is widely used to refer to mysterious computer failures (such as what happens at *HOT WIRE*).

HONORS & AWARDS

SALMONBERRIES, the 1991 film in which k.d. lang made her debut in a lesbian-oriented role, won the Best Film award at the Montreal World Film Festival.

Entertainment Weekly's Best of 1991 issue named **JODIE FOSTER** Entertainer of the Year. Other top entertainers were **ROSEANNE ARNOLD** (fourth) and **GEENA DAVIS & SUSAN SARANDON** (eighth). In the same issue, director Jenny Livingston's **PARIS IS BURNING** (about drag balls in Harlem) was ranked the third best film of the year.

Sports Illustrated's holographic issue included a list of "Ten Living Legends." The list, composed of athletes for the ages "whose virtuosity we can marvel at today," included only one woman: the magnificent tennis star **MARTINA NAVRATILOVA**.

Golden Globe awards went to **AMANDA DONAHOE** for her portrayal of C.J. on *L.A. Law* and to **CALLIE KHOURI** (Best Script) for *Thelma and Louise*. **JODIE FOSTER** was chosen Best Actress in a Motion Picture Drama for her role in *The Silence of the Lambs*.

AUDRE LORDE was named a Poet of New York State, becoming the first African American and the first woman ever to win the honor. Gov. Cuomo called her "the eloquent outsider." She describes herself as a "Black-lesbian-feminist-warrior-poet-mother."

NADINE GORDIMER, a white South African woman whose fiction has told the anguish of those living under the racist regime, won this year's Nobel Prize for Literature, reported *Soyourner*. She was cited by the Nobel Committee for "her continual involvement on behalf of literature and free speech in a police state, where censorship and persecution of books and people have made her the doyenne of South African letters."

Filipina poet **MILA D. AGUILAR** received the prestigious Freedom to Write Award from PEN Center USA. She is published by Kitchen Table Women of Color Press.

Chicago's Center for New Television has awarded a grant to **NATALIE R. HUTCHINSON** and **MARY F. MORTEN** for the production of a video documenting the social, political, and personal experiences of African American lesbians, according to *Outlines*.

THELMA & LOUISE WATCH

CALLIE KHOURI got a Golden Globe for Best Script for **THELMA AND LOUISE**....."Quarrel with the man-bashing and the ending, but give Susan Sarandon and Geena Davis their due: a place in movie lore right alongside Butch and Sundance." (*TV Guide*).....At presstime, *T&L* had dominated the video rental charts for weeks after its January release, holding the

number one position for more than a month. The video version has now surpassed the film's theatrical take of \$20 million, and *T&L* is expected to earn a lot more if reissued as a \$20 or \$25 tape.....*Entertainment Weekly* prints charts summarizing famous critics' opinions of movies; *T&L* got the highest average (B+), beating all other film competitors except Jodie Foster's *Silence of the Lambs* (also B+ average)..... RayBan has sunglasses in about 160 movies per year. Stores sold out quickly of the \$84 Dekko line, the shades Geena Davis wears in *T&L*. Susan Sarandon's catseye-style Cornu frames from L.A. Eyeworks were also hot sellers.....In an *Entertainment Weekly* review of available movie posters: "This movie about two increasingly butch Cassidys on the highway to freedom and destruction was last summer's cultural touchstone. No dinner party is complete without guests taking sides on the picture. Despite good fun and great acting along the way, *Thelma and Louise's* climax is as morbidly macho as a biker's tattoo. Yet the poster is all upbeat...".....The same magazine's "Hot Sheet" column called *Fried Green Tomatoes* "...*Thelma and Louise* on Geritol!".....And did you catch the February 6 episode of *The Simpsons*, in which mom Marge (voice of Julie Kavner) goes to Rancho Relaxo for some much needed R&R away from the family? Guess which movie she watches while she's there.

GATHERINGS

Planning is underway for a **JEWISH FEMINIST FESTIVAL** to be held in the fall of 1992 or spring of 1993 in Albany, New York. Contact Arlene Istar at (518) 355-9921.

The first annual **SEMINAR FOR WOMEN GUITARISTS** will be held July 12-16 at Scripps College in Claremont, California. Classes in many styles (rock, jazz, etc.) will be taught by Mimi Fox, June Millington, Muriel Anderson, and Vicki Cottle. There are also full sessions for other types of musicians, in both California and Connecticut. Free brochures from National Guitar Summer Workshop, Box 222, Lakeside, CT 06758. 1-800-234-NGSW.

A planning meeting for the **NATIONAL LESBIAN HEALERS' CONFERENCE** (1993) will be held at this year's East Coast Lesbians' Festival in June. SASE to Lin Daniels, 279 Lester Ave., #3, Oakland, CA 94606.

The 1992 **LESBIAN SEPARATIST GATHERING** will be held Labor Day Weekend in Wisconsin. The Annual Gathering, P.O. Box 1203, St. Augustine, FL 32085.

The first **INTERNATIONAL S/M LESBIAN CONFERENCE** will be held Labor Day weekend in Seattle. Powersurge c/o Outerlimits, 1202 E. Pike, #819, Seattle, WA 98122-3936.

For info on the sixth annual **WOMEN'S MOTORCYCLE FESTIVAL**, SASE to WMF, 7 Lent Ave., LeRoy, NY 14482.

The **ASIAN LESBIAN NETWORK CONFERENCE** will take place May 3-5. According to *Hag Rag*, the conference is open to lesbians of Asian descent, living inside Asia and elsewhere. ALN Nippon c/o Regumi Studio Tokyo, Joki Nakazawa, Bldg. 3F, 23 Araki-cho, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo T160, Japan.

Flight of the Mind is holding two week-long **WRITING WORKSHOPS FOR WOMEN** this summer. Workshop leaders for the week of July 26-August 2 include Jewelle Gomez, Naomi Shihab Nye, Evelyn C. White, Andrea Carlisle, and Judith Barrington. Leaders for the week of August 31-Sept. 7 will be Ursula LeGuin, Michelle Cliff, Barbara Wilson, Beth Brant, and Judith Barrington. Application deadline for both workshops is in May. Send first class stamp (no envelope) to Flight of the Mind, 622 SE 29th Ave., Portland, OR 97214.



Rock on into eternity: fond farewell to 'Bitch' editor Lori Twersky, who died last November from lupus-related complications.

GAYLAXICON, the gay and lesbian science fiction convention, is moving to Philadelphia for its 1992 convention. Philadelphia Area Gay-laxians, 219 Talbot Dr., Broomall, PA 19081.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations refused to rent its Georgia retreat camp to the **SOUTHERN WOMEN'S MUSIC AND COMEDY FESTIVAL** for the 1992 festival (Memorial Day weekend). The camp has been the festival site for the last seven years. Producer Robin Tyler called the move "lesbophobia" and encourages activists to protest the liberal UAHC's decision, saying all the gay and lesbian synagogues are members of the UAHC. The **GULF COAST WOMEN'S FESTIVAL** (Easter/Passover weekend) suffered a similar fate when the producers were denied use of their preferred festival site and given no reason for the breach of contract.

The sixth annual **GOLDEN THREADS CELEBRATION** will take place June 26-28 in Provincetown. Entertainment will be provided by Robin Tyler; the weekend will be limited to 250 women, and is sponsored by a network of lesbian women over fifty and women who care about them (no lesbian woman is excluded). The group also publishes a contact quarterly. Christine Burton, *Golden Threads*, P.O. Box 3177, Burlington, VT 05401-0031.

Travel to Nigeria, West Africa this summer for the **FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN AFRICA**, entitled Women in Africa and the African Diaspora: Bridges Across Activism and the Academy. For exact dates and further info, SASE to Professor Obioma Nnaemeke, Dept. of French, College of Wooster, Wooster, OH 46691. (216) 263-2403.

TV-RADIO

Did you catch **HOLLY NEAR** on *L.A. LAW*? She played a woman suing her doctor after surgery in which he removed cells from her body and developed them into a financially successful project without informing her or sharing the profits.

"Jeers to the Golden Globes, for failing to nominate **ROSEANNE** for Best Comedy Series. At least this time around the Hollywood Foreign Press Association gave the star of ABC's hit a nod, nominating Roseanne Arnold as Best Actress in a Series," writes *TV Guide*. We agree; it's hard to believe that the show—which is consistently in the top ten on all lists of most popular shows—is always ignored by the Emmy Awards folks.

Columbia Pictures Television has been shooting a half-hour sitcom pilot called *Outta My Face*, starring rappers **MONIE LOVE** and **QUEEN LATIFAH**. "It's about two street-tough Jersey girls having fun living on their own," says writer/executive producer Gina Wendkos. "It's sort of a modern *Laverne & Shirley*. Or *That Girl*."

Roseanne Arnold will reprise the Lucille Ball role in the new remake of the 1954 classic **THE LONG, LONG TRAILER**.

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ABOUT THE WRITERS: Alice Lowenstein lives in Chicago, drinks coffee, and writes. She listens to her own and other women's words. Joy Rosenblatt, serious collector of recordings by women, is a long-time women's music fan and erstwhile producer who is now in the throes of yet another chapter of job hunting. Annie Lee has also been participating in the "there is no recession" job-hop, and now works at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She thanks the women of 5210 (especially Kim) for making it more of a hop and less of a plunge. Toni Armstrong Jr. wants to hear from other feminists who share her interests in the female vampire genre and/or in sports cars.

NOTEWORTHY WOMEN

High Priestess of the Harpsichord **WANDA LANDOWSKA**

By Janna MacAuslan and Kristan Aspen

During her eighty years, Wanda Landowska was almost singlehandedly responsible for the resurgence of interest in early music and the re-establishment of the use of the harpsichord in our century. She was held in the highest esteem by musicians, composers, and critics around the world. It is hard to understand how one human being could in only one lifetime have accomplished so much in such a variety of musical areas. Her life can be an inspiration to all of us to follow our dreams.

Born in Warsaw, Poland in July of 1879, Wanda Landowska was the daughter of a linguist mother and a lawyer father whose hobby was music. She began her musical training early, starting the piano at age four. "My first teacher was a kind and indulgent man; he allowed me to browse freely in the music which pleased me; and what pleased me and fascinated me particularly was the music of former times," she wrote of her early experiences. "My happiness, alas, was short-lived, for my mother made me change teachers. A stern, dry, and tiresome man took the place of my good and gentle master. My delightful roaming through the gavottes and the bourrees of Bach were at an end. Instead came the pitiless order to play twenty-five times, each hand separately, the studies of Kalkbrenner and Thalberg. I was very unhappy and full of longing for my old-time music, which they had taken away from me.

"It was then that I vowed that some day I would do the thing I wanted to do, the thing that I loved; I would play a program devoted entirely to Bach, Mozart, Rameau, and Haydn. I wrote this neatly on a sheet of paper decorated with Christmas pictures and sealed it in an envelope, on which I inscribed, 'To be opened when



"She played everything better than anyone else ever does," wrote an American critic of Wanda Landowska in the 1940s.

I am grown up."

Wanda had two important piano teachers, both Chopin experts: Jan Kellcynski, when she was very young, and later, at the Warsaw Conservatory, Alexander Michalowski. In 1895, when she was sixteen years old, Wanda was sent to Berlin to study composition with J. Urban. She loved vocal music and preferred to study counterpoint directly from Bach rather than through the strict rules and exercises of the German music school.

Paris at the turn of the century was the world center of art and literature. Even music, usually the most conservative of the arts, was caught under the spell of new ideas. To this cultural mecca Wanda eloped in 1900 with actor, writer, and Hebrew folklore specialist Henry Lew. He served as her manager in the early years of her career, assisting her with research, and they seemed quite adoring of each other for the next nineteen years.

From the beginning of her professional career, Wanda introduced the Paris

crowd to music of earlier centuries by always including Bach or other baroque composers on recital programs. It is important to realize that the musical audience in Paris in the early 1900s was either passionately steeped in nineteenth-century romanticism or wildly avant-garde, applauding the efforts of Debussy and Stravinsky. The playing of Bach in a concert was a rare thing, and Wanda Landowska was able to cultivate an audience by being such a superb performer and interpreter.

Through her interest in vocal music she became friends with members of the Schola Cantorum. They provided an intellectual climate that encouraged and applauded her work.

"I had the rare privilege of living in the midst of these eminent scholars and musicians who honored me with their friendship," she wrote about the early years of her career. "I often had the opportunity to discuss musical matters with them." While most of her friends approved of her wanting to play the music of masters of the past, they were very discouraging about her interest in performing on the harpsichord, calling it an "old tinnin instrument."

Fortunately she did have some support for her harpsichord-related ambitions, notably from composers Gabriel Faure and Paul Dukas, and from Albert Schweitzer, organist and author of a book on J.S. Bach. (Yes, the same Albert Schweitzer who later became known for his work in Africa.)

Wanda Landowska understood the hesitation about old instruments. They were too soft and tinny sounding. People wanted to hear a fuller, richer, bigger sound. She was competing, after all, with Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, one of the loudest, most dissonant pieces ever performed by an orchestra up to that time. She needed a sturdy, modern harpsichord, not a delicate antique.

With the help of the director and

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

chief engineer of the Pleyel piano company, Wanda visited museums and did research to aide in the building of a contemporary copy of the harpsichords available to Bach and Handel. Several years later (1912), she performed on the new instrument at a Bach festival at Breslau, introducing to the world a modern, two-keyboard harpsichord with a sixteen-foot register (a lower octave than the original instruments had).

Besides being an outstanding performer, Wanda was a writer with a mission. This is clear from the zest with which she communicated on the printed page through articles about the interpretation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music, about proper ornaments and fingerings, and other musicological matters. In 1909, her book *Musique Ancienne* was published and well received. An English translation of this work is included in a marvelous book entitled *Landowska on Music*, edited and written by Denise Restout with Robert Hawkins (1964, Stein and Day). Denise was Wanda's student, who later became her friend, secretary, and companion of twenty-six years, and was the person to whom she willed all her writings and instruments.

Wanda toured all over Europe with her new harpsichord. In 1913 she and her husband moved to Berlin, where she taught a harpsichord class at the Hochschule für Musik, one of the most renowned music schools in the world. It was a great honor to be asked to teach there, and signified recognition of the importance of her work. But when World War I broke out, the musician and her husband were held as political prisoners on parole. During this time she was allowed to continue teaching and occasionally to give a concert, but her writings were not published. When they were preparing to return to France at the end of the war, Henry Lew was killed in an auto accident.

At age thirty-nine Wanda returned to Paris alone to rebuild her life. In 1921, she performed in the Gallery of the Mirrors at Versailles, following a lecture on Bach and the French Harpsichordists before the International Congress on the History of Art at the Sorbonne University. Reviews were very favorable. Other important career developments included the republishing of *Musique Ancienne*, which had long been out of print, as well as numerous other articles and addresses, and the teaching of a master class at the

Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris.

As Wanda Landowska became more well known, contemporary composers began writing for her. A concerto for harpsichord, flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, and violoncello was dedicated to her by the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla. Also, the French composer Poulenc wrote a modern piece for her at this time.

In 1923, Wanda first toured and concertized in America. She recalled the trip vividly ("I arrived there like a lion tamer, dragging along four large Pleyel harpsichords"). As well as performing in many cities in the United States, she made her first recordings for Victor records, and in 1924 *Musique Ancienne* was finally translated into English.

For four years she traveled back and forth between Europe and America. In 1925, she bought a home at Saint-Leu-Laforet, north of Paris, transforming it into a beautiful place filled with travel mementos and a library of over 10,000 volumes she had amassed. Her beloved old instruments—two Pleyel harpsichords, clavichords, spinets, a 1642 Ruckers harpsichord, pianofortes, violas, and a small 1737 organ, not to mention two full-size modern pianos—finally had a home. She built a small recital hall to house these and other instruments, and inaugurated it in the summer of 1927, giving concerts every Sunday. She also founded her Ecole de Musique Ancienne, stating that it was for experienced musicians to learn more about music from the past. Here musicians, writers, painters, and intellectuals from all over the world took part in marvelous projects to resurrect music from the past.

And here it was that in July of 1933, Denise Restout became Wanda's student, later writing, "In this ideal atmosphere, Wanda Landowska could give free rein to her inspiration, and communicate to a choice audience her unquenchable enthusiasm for the music of the past."

In the summer, students and musicologists would come from all over the world to study at her master classes, where the music was played, analyzed, discussed, and interpreted as closely as could be determined to the way the composer originally conceived it. Most of her master classes have been preserved from her notes and those of her students (including Denise Restout), since this was before the availability of modern tape recorders.

Wanda Landowska's life again had begun to seem ideal, and she turned her attention more to writing, when tragedy

struck again—this time in the form of World War II. Her school, home, library, and instruments all had to be left behind as the Nazis advanced toward Paris. "Saint-Leu had to be abandoned with all its treasures," according to Denise Restout. "In our hasty departure we could only attempt to save what three small boxes would hold. In them went a few indispensable books and music scores, and some notebooks. Landowska wanted to take along a collection of priceless manuscripts of Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach's concertos. I insisted instead upon filling the space with the notes from the master classes. She protested. Despite my deep respect for Wanda Landowska, I threw in the notes and left the Karl Philipp Emanuel manuscripts. I was later to hear about that in no uncertain terms, but I never felt sorry for my disobedience. Other manuscripts of Karl Philipp Emanuel Bach's concertos existed in libraries and could be photostated. Of the notes, there was no other copy in existence; they represented fourteen years of Landowska's teaching."

After the refugees stayed in southern France for eighteen months, they received word that Saint-Leu had been looted and destroyed. Once again Wanda Landowska had to start over, but this time it was with the assistance of her companion Denise.

"I can best capture the devotion of Denise Restout to Wanda Landowska if I relate her escape after returning to Northern France where she discovered the horrors of the Nazis' destruction of the Landowska School," writes Jane Weiner Lepage in *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Bibliographies*. "Receiving a message from Landowska, who was a refugee in Nice, that she had decided to leave for America and wanted her to go also, Denise Restout had to undertake a risky journey through the demarcation line between the occupied and so-called 'free-zone' in France. She accomplished this by riding in a big truck hidden under a

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ABOUT THE WRITERS: *Janna MacAuslan is the guitar-playing half of the duo Musica Femina. She has toured with flutist Kristan Aspen since 1984. Their concert/informance program of both her-storical and contemporary music by women composers makes the contributions of women to classical music very clear. Janna is also a sound engineer.*

MOMS & DAUGHTERS ON VIDEO

By Paula E. Langguth

Perhaps nothing is as refreshing as a good movie about the bond between mothers and daughters. This is one area where women consistently capture starring roles—and awards. Whether you're looking for pure entertainment, a vending machine psychoanalysis of your own maternal relationship, or voyeuristic gratification, you'll find a film to suit your needs. Here's a closer look at five interesting films that deal with the ever changing relationship between mothers and daughters: *Secret Ceremony*, *Stella*, *The Audition*, *Terms of Endearment*, and *Strangers: The Story of a Mother and Daughter*.

• FADE IN •

SECRET CEREMONY

Lenora (Elizabeth Taylor) lost her child in a drowning accident and turned to prostitution to find love. Cenci (Mia Farrow) is a rich, unstable orphan who refuses to accept her mother's death from cancer. The two meet on a London bus when Lenora travels to her daughter's grave—and both discover the other eerily resembles their dead relative.

The impish Cenci takes Lenora under her wings and into her home, and they become surrogates for each other. Sounds like another of Hollywood's happily-ever-after stories? Not quite. *Secret Ceremony* is a low-budget psychological thriller which will keep you spellbound throughout.

Both Elizabeth Taylor and Mia Farrow turn in remarkable performances as two women trying desperately to cling to the past and to create the future of their dreams. Lenora realizes that opulence is

FADE IN•FADE OUT: In these tight economic times, more women than ever are turning to videos to stretch their entertainment dollars. **FADE IN•FADE OUT** is a handy guide, from a woman-identified perspective, to rentable titles.



The Oscar Award-winning 'Terms of Endearment' is the story of an independent-minded daughter (Debra Winger) and her equally strong-willed mother (Shirley MaLaine).

within her grasp if she plays along with Cenci's fantasy. But there is something quite unnerving about this young girl who carries on sexual monologues in the kitchen and keeps only the faces of photographs.

Lenora is both attracted and repelled by Cenci until Cenci's stepfather Albert (Robert Mitchum) returns from America. Albert—a man who still refuses to accept (or take) responsibility for his actions—was sent away by Cenci's real mother because of improprieties with his stepdaughter. His return reactivates Lenora's motherly instincts as she attempts to shield Cenci from Albert and from Cenci's light-fingered maiden aunts (portrayed by Peggy Ashcroft and Pamela Brown).

The heavy undertones of incest—between Cenci and Albert, and between Cenci and Lenora—are not for the weak of heart. I don't recommend this film for

anyone who hasn't resolved this issue in her own life.

Secret Ceremony was released in 1968, the same year the more acclaimed *Rosemary's Baby* (also starring Mia Farrow) was released, so it's not surprising that this film doesn't get much recognition from Farrow fans. But, interestingly enough, this film almost never appears in any list of credits for Elizabeth Taylor either. *Secret Ceremony* was reworked (with key scenes cut and replaced) for television. The result was similar to the TV version of *Body Heat*—very little body and even less heat.

If *Secret Ceremony* shows up on your television schedule, resist the urge. The video version is far superior.

STELLA

This remake of the 1937 classic

Stella Dallas focuses less on the mother's pitiful sacrifice and more on the mother-daughter relationship. Stella Claire (Bette Midler) is a free-spirited working class barmaid who meets up with Steven Dallas, an upper-class medical resident, in the days when a draft still cost a quarter.

Their whirlwind affair results in an unexpected pregnancy. In this pre-Roe v. Wade era, Stella shuns all support from Steven (who lamely asks her to marry him) and decides to keep the baby. It's not that Stella doesn't like Steven, or that she doesn't want the absolute best for her daughter. On the contrary, Stella is a proud woman who refuses to accept help from others.

The lack of female support surrounding both Stella and her daughter Jenny (Trini Alvarado) is most striking. Stella has only one female friend, Debbie (Linda Hart), a co-worker at the bar. And daughter Jenny has no visible female friends at all. In addition, there appear to be absolutely no other family members—which could account for Stella's unorthodox manner of childrearing.

It's not that Stella isn't a good mother. She is. She simply goes overboard, forsaking her own happiness in what she considers to be the best interest of her daughter. Unfortunately, she never takes into account her daughter's wants and needs. Stella's antics cause more than the usual teenage angst as Jenny visits with her father and meets up with Pat (William McNamara), a young upper-class youth who's an education major at Brown. Stella proudly arranges to take Jenny on a road trip to Boca Raton's swanky Resort and Racquet Club so Jenny can be near him. The result is both excruciatingly embarrassing and eccentrically exhilarating. But when Stella realizes that in the eyes of outsiders she is an embarrassment to her daughter, she plots to give her daughter a better life than she herself has had, or can give.

Her plan revolves around sending Jenny to live with her father. In the guise of getting Jenny out of her one-horse hometown and into her father's influential New York circles, Stella does her best to push her daughter away, even to the point of feigning selfishness. But what Stella thinks is a selfless act actually drives a wedge between mother and daughter as Stella fails to really communicate with Jenny.

In *Stella*—as in real life—pride is the downfall of everything. As the camera fades away, Stella positively glows with

self-satisfaction, content that she has made her daughter's life perfect. In appearances, it would seem so. But beneath the surface Jenny longs for her mother, the caretaker and support system that gave her all her finest traits.

THE AUDITION

The Audition is the most outstanding woman-made short feature I've seen to date that deals with the mother-daughter relationship. This candid twenty-four minute tale is about the relationship between a filmmaker (played by Jane Campion, the sister of writer/director Anne Campion), and her relationship with her mother (veteran New Zealand actress Edith Armstrong). According to the Women Make Movies catalog—through which the film can be rented or purchased—Jane journeys home to New Zealand to audition her actress mother for a small role as a schoolteacher in the film adaptation of Janet Frame's autobiographies, *An Angel At My Table*. The mother is somewhat resistant to the role, the camera, and what she perceives as her daughter's manipulation. The daughter has her own resistances—to her mother's vision of the world.

The relationship unfolds as Jane attempts to film her mother, a former stage actress, reading a passage from a play she once starred in. Anne Campion provides great visual images and sounds ranging from cicadas and crashing waves to airplanes—all of which make the tension between mother and daughter more bearable. Jane works hard to be introspective and learn more about her mother's thoughts; her mother is continually retrospective. And each rebuffs the other in a manner that is unsympathetic and smacks of a failure to see the other's point. The unresolved issues of Jane's childhood are foreshadowed in these pseudo conversations—well before either utters a single cutting phrase.

The Audition is full of snippets that bring self-consciousness to the surface. Even praise is heavily veiled and always closely followed by some sort of antagonistic statement. But Anne Campion does a wonderful job of keeping this film on the brink of harshness. Many women will find themselves in one or both characters.

The dialogue is what made this 1990 film so exceptional for me: biting but purposeful, as it explores the motives of these two women and how they live their lives. Jane is independence personified.

Her mother is a woman who relied too much on her family for her own happiness. The bottom line is: do we make choices that meet our own needs, or do we do things just to please someone else? The questions (and answers) raised by this film are well worth the rental price.

And a film about the relationship between filmmaking sisters Anne and Jane would certainly be an exciting story indeed.

'The Audition' is available through *Women Make Movies*, 225 Lafayette St. #206, New York, NY 10012. (212) 925-0606.

TERMS OF ENDEARMENT

This Oscar Award-winning three-hanky tearjerker is a classic based on Larry McMurtry's novel. First time director James L. Brooks captured Oscars for Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Picture with this story of an overprotective mother (Shirley MacLaine) and her independent-minded daughter (Debra Winger). Spanning thirty years, the film explores the transitions of mother-daughter conflict in a symbiotic relationship where mother and daughter are each other's umbilical cords throughout life's ups and downs.

Aurora Greenway (Shirley) becomes a young widow and places the onus of her daily life on her young daughter, Emma (Debra). As a result, Emma gets married early—to "Flap" Horton (Jeff Daniels), a man Aurora strongly disapproves of. Soon enough, Flap lands an assistant professorship in Des Moines (the only school that would accept him), and he packs up Emma and their young son Tommy, leaving the dustbowl of Texas in their rearview mirror.

This is neither the first nor the last time Aurora Greenway will feel abandoned by her loved ones. But underneath her icy, overprotective exterior is a woman who really is fun—a full woman waiting to get out. The 1983 film skillfully weaves two entirely separate plots together, chronicling the decline of Emma's continually barefoot and pregnant marriage at the same time it ignites a relation-

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Paula E. Langguth is the former arts editor of *'Visibilities.'* She is currently a contributing editor at *'The Baltimore Alternative,'* and writes frequently on topics of interest to women, youth, and children.

OPENING NIGHT

CONNECTIONS OF THE HEART

By Claudia Allen and Toni Armstrong Jr.

"Women, I Love Their Way" is just one of the many wonderful women-loving-women tunes in Paula Berg's new all-women, all-lesbian musical, *Connections of the Heart*. Most of the thirteen songs were written by the playwright; two were co-written with the popular Chicago singer Diana Laffey, and the production opens with an improvised overture (done by musical director Laurie Lee Moses for the Chicago production).

Connections is the story of a few days in the lusty lives of an up-and-coming lesbian rock band, the Amazon Goddesses. Jean—busy fretting about a long, long gone girlfriend and composing unsent coming out letters to her mother—doesn't notice that the ever-flirtatious playwright/fast food employee Bette isn't just flirting.

Then there's Bette's best friend Lynette. Long ago they were lovers for six months, though they went to couples therapy for three years. Lynette is a Luppie (lesbian yuppie) who yearns to rub auras with Anna Maria Crystal Rainwater Womyn.

For a little spice, throw in Blanche—a "life-is-my-stage" performance artist who likes to create drama wherever she goes. Blanche finds her new roommate Jean's fret-filled life a *perfect* stage.

Put them all together with singing and dancing, and you have *Connections of the Heart*, a funny, touching new musical reflecting and celebrating our lesbian lives. The play premiered at Chicago's Mountain Moving Coffeehouse last December with an all-lesbian cast, crew, director, musical director, and playwright.

"*Connections* strikes a perfect musical chord for lesbians searching for cul-



***Connections* is the story of a few days in the lusty lives of an up and coming lesbian rock band, the Amazon Goddesses.**

ture that accurately reflects our lives," wrote Tracy Baim in *Outlines*. "It makes light of our quirks, and takes seriously our loves. The musical's themes are universal for women and men, but they are drawn with lesbian paint strokes. As Lynette breaks out of her corporate straight jacket, as Anna searches for her Catholic savior, as Bette connects and disconnects with her heart and her writing, and as Jean makes a clean break from the past, we can visualize our friends and our lovers—our own history—in the making. We don't have to imagine a reversal of genders, we don't have to read between the lines. With *Connections of the Heart*, we are the central ingredient."

Playwright Paula Berg has been writing plays and songs since childhood,

when she recalls making them up for (and about) her babysitter. "I got the sense early on that part of the joy of theater is the opportunity to create mirrors, to generate images for us to see ourselves in different ways—to admire ourselves, to contemplate who we are and how we are, to laugh, to sigh, to embrace ourselves, to forgive ourselves," she says.

"Last year, I was at the Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival, having a cup of tea under the trees by the lake with a friend—just sitting there feeling good on a spring evening, watching all of the wonderful women walk by down the path toward night stage," Paula remembers. "I was lulled into this lovely sense of admiration and gratitude, and it wasn't just lust—not that I'm fundamentally opposed to lust, mind you—but it was more like this spontaneous opening of the heart that compelled me to just sit back and grin at these incredible beings that we are: all of our different ways of being, of being together, the laughter, the intrigues, the passions, the obsessions, the hurts, the longings. I thought to myself in that moment how grateful I was for all of it, and what a miracle we are. I wanted to remember that feeling for a long time. I'd been thinking for a couple of years that I would like to write a lesbian musical, but it wasn't until that moment in Georgia that I felt genuinely inspired to do so."

Paula describes her exposure to lesbian content in theater as "very limited." She had seen a couple of Claudia Allen's plays ("which I loved"), and *Dos Lesbos* at a music festival ("I just roared!"). "It was so uplifting, and validating, and—well, let's face it, *hot*—to see women kissing on stage, talking about their feelings, dealing with their relationship issues. I now know that there are other lesbian musicals out there, but I hadn't seen them. The play was really a response to my own longing to see something that reflected my reality."

Molly Elizabeth Austin (Blanche),

OPENING NIGHT: Theater by, for, and about women. Introducing theater groups, feminist plays, and upcoming playwrights who will be writing the classic woman-identified plays of tomorrow.

who's been performing since age sixteen in a variety of venues—including film, TV, and theater—agrees. "Coming from the mainstream theater world, there's a lot of homophobia. We're so invisible. It was so freeing to come into a process where you could be completely open, and not have to think about whether or not it's a safe environment to be out—not that I think about that very often, since I'm usually out regardless. But a lot of people *do* think about it. It was very freeing to know that it didn't have to be an issue. You could just be yourself and do your work, and be more creative."

"And be sexual," adds choreographer Liz Pazik (Jean).

"And it was fun kissing all those women," concludes Paula Walowitz (Anna Maria Crystal RainWater Womyn).

Gina Shropshire (Mrs. Wallace) was originally set to play Lynette in the Chicago debut, but halfway through the rehearsal process her best friend died, and she was ready to drop out. "That's what I would have done in the past," she says. "But because it was the kind of group it was—a very tight ensemble, all women, all lesbians—they encouraged me to stay. Which is what I needed to do." The playwright herself took on the role of Lynette, an ironic twist since by day she is in fact immersed in the corporate world. She has spent a professional lifetime preparing to play the part of the modern corporate dyke.

"It was very important to me that the first production of the play be with an all-lesbian ensemble in a women-only space," she says. "It felt like it was important that this first passage into the world be as safe as possible, and in keeping with the heart and spirit of the play. And perhaps there is such a thing as a lesbian aesthetic—if so, I wanted us to explore it together. I am eternally grateful that we were able to draw together all of the right people in this initial ensemble. Considering there's not an overwhelming surplus of out, available lesbian artists in Chicago theater, it's pretty amazing that it happened at all. To me it was a testimony to the generosity of the human spirit—all of these women working together to offer something back to the lesbian community that had given each of us so much strength, hope, love, power."

Other musicals Paula has written have taken anywhere from a year to three years to complete, but *Connections* came to the stage only six months after its conception on the plane home from the Geor-

gia festival. She says she made a conscious choice "to stay absolutely focused," and a lot of that expedience had to do with the tremendous amount of support, encouragement, enthusiasm, and commitment she received from friends and from everyone involved in the show.

How easily could this musical comedy be staged by companies in other cities? "Production budgets could be all over the map; it's hard to generalize," says the playwright. "But the basic settings are simple and production specials are minimal, so theaters could do outstanding productions of *Connections of the Heart* without huge budgets." In the Chicago production, there was one basic set used to represent two different apartments; the presence or absence of a brightly-colored afghan throw on the sofa was the cue as to which apartment the action was supposedly happening in. In addition to the set(s), the production requires live music—in the Chicago premiere, this was provided by Laurie Moses at the piano.

The original ensemble is considering the possibility of bringing their version of the play to music festivals and other community events, and Bailiwick Theater in Chicago will be doing a production this May. "We obviously want to share it with as many people as possible," Paula says. "Ideally, it will be a wonderful world when plays like this can be enjoyed by mixed audiences of all kinds, audiences who appreciate the human experience enough to genuinely value diversity. Still, it's intended to be a play for us—a place for us to enjoy and celebrate who we are, a play that sparks a little bit of that uplifting, sustaining, joyous feeling I had sitting in the Georgia pines last spring, watching all of those glorious women walk by."

Scripts, a cassette of songs, and possibly a video are available upon request for women considering staging 'Connections of the Heart.' Write to Paula Berg, c/o 'HOT WIRE,' 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. •

ABOUT THE WRITERS: Award-winning Chicago-based playwright Claudia Allen is the author of numerous lesbian and feminist plays and short stories, including an ongoing soap opera entitled 'Gays of Our Lives.' Toni Armstrong Jr. says her first introduction to lesbian theater actually came in seventh grade through the film adaptation of Lillian Hellman's 'The Children's Hour,' and she's been a Shirley MacLaine fan ever since.

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BRAINY GIRLS A GO-GO

RISE UP, UNSUNG BRAINY GODDESSES

By Bonnie Morris

I have a recurring dream in which I am forced to return to sixth grade and to complete the boring schoolwork handed to me by a stern authority figure. In the dream I protest that I am well beyond this grade level, that, indeed, I have earned a Ph.D., and that the schoolwork will be far too easy for me. The other children in the dream classroom are real schoolfriends I have known in my life, and they gaze at me without recognition as I beg for exemption. I wake up delighted to know that I am not being forced to revisit sixth grade after all, but the dream leaves a disquieting sense of disloyalty to the friends who struggled to do that boring schoolwork. And I once again confront my personal history as a not-always-popular brainy girl.

What contributes to a person's sense of difference? Attend any women's music festival or feminist political conference and you will find workshops, panels, and performances addressing our differences: race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious heritage, ability, age, size, and, of course, gender. Some of our differences are socially constructed. Others are inherited physical traits over which we have little control. In the women's community we find an ongoing and often painful dialogue on the ways we oppress or manipulate those different from ourselves. As a result, women participating in any dialogue on difference may identify as either oppressed or privileged, and share stories about key events in their pasts when they first became aware of their status in relation to others.

I'd like to add to that dialogue by exploring one "different" identity wherein privilege and oppression sometimes coexist: that of the gifted, talented female.

I was different as a child and as an adolescent because I was "gifted." I read ***Brainy Girls A Go-Go*** is a forum for discussing gifted and talented females, as well as exploring related topics.

and wrote at college level by the age of nine and spent much of my childhood in experimental school programs and accelerated classes. While my peers were still learning to read, I went home after school each day and wrote long stories about black history, Third World poverty, American economic imperialism, and Jewish identity. These were the topics my parents were studying and discussing in their own education as anti-war activists during the late 1960s. I learned whatever my brainy parents were learning, and my appetite for their advanced adult dialogue gave me a political focus as a young writer.

But the closer I grew to my parents' books and conversations, the more I experienced a painful sense of separation from "normal" kids, a gulf which was exacerbated by the many expressions American culture reserved for oddballs like me. Nerd. Dweeb. Egghead. Brain. Teacher's pet. Bookworm. Geek. Smart-mouth. Professor. Show-off. Weirdo.

In the first grade I became well aware I was considered smart—and that racism in the American school system helped to load the dice when it came down to intelligence tests and student placement. I thought this because at the age of six I was assigned to tutor my Mexican classmates in reading, while my reciprocal interest in learning Spanish was not encouraged. Even then I keenly resented being used by my teacher to reinforce the white curriculum, yet my role as a tutor also gave me a break from the too-easy schoolwork. With my classmate Jose I secretly laughed at the See Betty Run readers we used, which were no more representative of my hippie Jewish family than they were of his Chicano household.

My understanding that I enjoyed white privilege in school and society came through personal experience. While I appreciated the educational opportunities I had in advanced classes, I often felt frustrated rather than privileged, for I rapidly

outgrew friends my own age, and few kids understood the ideas I found so urgent. I alienated folks the minute I opened my mouth. My view of the world became deeply affected by the knowledge that I could out-think some grown-ups, but that it was disrespectful to acknowledge or act on this. Instead, it was socially appropriate for little girls to act "cute"—to be charming rather than articulate. Longing for social approval, by the age of eight I began to make deliberately endearing mistakes in spelling and punctuation...the kinds of errors grown-ups found so adorable, as children's incompetence reminds adults of their own power.

Like many brainy girls, I learned in elementary school that no one likes brainy girls. The archetypal smug, smart school-girl in glasses, always prepared with the correct answer in class, is the subject of unflattering satire in mainstream cartoon strips, television shows, and movies. She is assumed to be prudish and unsocial, in love with her homework, disdainful of the attention of boys, who are, of course, repelled by her un-American intellectual abilities—*real* girls flatter boys' egos, make boys feel smart.

In American culture, the image of the brainy girl gradually evolves into the "greasy grind"—the studiously college girl who is so unwholesomely obsessed with scholarship that she neglects the personal grooming necessary to attract college boys, and who ultimately becomes the uptight librarian or spinster schoolteacher—sexless, antisex, repressed, lonely, and downright misanthropic.

With these messages booming loud and clear over the sexist megaphone, most little girls with any academic inclination learn to act professionally stupid by sixth grade, when social popularity becomes paramount and good grades actually convey a negative status in the culture of school halls. New studies, such as Debra Schultz's 1991 *Risk, Resiliency, and Resistance: Current Research on Adoles-*

cent *Girls*, are addressing the problem of self-esteem and confidence in young women, tracing the path from primary school achievement to academic decline in junior high. While girls usually demonstrate superior test scores in the primary grades, the same girls show a plunge in scoring after leaving elementary school. Susan Dworkin's article on this phenomenon, "Can We Save the Girls?" (*New Directions for Women*, Fall 1991), states, "A girl may start out strong and confident at eight and nine and ten, but somewhere during adolescence, she loses her power and compromises her individuality."

What contributes to the decline in academic empowerment? My mother won every award in her high school, yet her algebra teacher's inscription in her yearbook read, "To a girl who's smart enough not to let the boys know it." Teachers' attitudes, kids' books, and Saturday morning television all discourage the brainy girl from believing in herself.

In my own childhood—and to this day—the majority of books aimed at children feature male protagonists; maybe white, maybe black, maybe Spanish-speaking, but mostly male. Book publishers claim this is because girls will read books about boy characters, but not vice versa. It's no surprise that boys' books attract female readers, as they contain more action, risk, problem-solving, and general excitement. Girls' books focus on taking care of boys (without letting them know one is doing so). A popular author in my own childhood was Phyllis A. Whitney, whose best-selling mysteries for girl readers—*The Mystery of the Green Cat* and *The Mystery of the Haunted Pool*—both feature a heroine of twelve or thirteen. As a young reader, I sizzled with frustration as her sleuth heroines spent countless pages taking abusive treatment from girl-hating boys. I was well aware that the brainy and sensitive heroines' mystery solutions were made to appear less important than winning the boys' trust and approval. In short, true problem-solving hinged upon placating the male ego; no girl could stand out on her own.

On television, we have popular kids' cartoons like *Scooby Doo*, featuring a brainy girl (Velma) who solves crimes but is established as homely and unfashionable. Daphne—named for a goddess—does nothing sensible or helpful, but appears decked out in mod clothes and gets to dance with the he-man leader of the gang. It is Velma who solves each mystery, but she receives no reward for her

brainy insights, and no child wishes to identify with her. (But I did.)

These brief examples are but the tip of an iceberg creating what scholar Bernice Sandler, in her work on hostility toward female academic achievement, termed the "chilly climate" for women on campuses. The discouraged academic girl of yesterday becomes the harassed woman professor of today, labelled "too aggressive" or "hard" if she shows intellectual ambition equivalent to that of the average male scholar. "She slept her way to the top" is another loaded analysis of a woman scholar's success (when a woman does succeed); most university department heads, administrators, deans, presidents, and academic committees are—surprise!—male.

"My mother won every award in her high school, yet her algebra teacher's inscription in her yearbook read, To a girl who's smart enough not to let the boys know it."

University professors, famous geniuses, and philosophers from history are almost always portrayed as male; yet when we are introduced to learning as children, school is a feminine sphere. In the United States, elementary school teachers are overwhelmingly women (and underpaid). Early education is so akin to childcare, and so poorly compensated—revealing what our pro-family, "education" presidents really think of kids—that it attracts few men, and thus children usually leave the home environment for another woman-controlled space in school. Men are generally interested in teaching head for the bigger bucks—and prestige—of higher education or administration, giving us neat analogies such as Woman=Teacher but Man=Principal to add to Woman=Cook but Man=Cordon Bleu Chef and Woman=Seamstress but Man=Designer. Children fear being sent to the principal, who symbolizes Dad, and they merely put up with the classroom teacher, who symbolizes a fussy Mom they will outgrow by June.

Both boys and girls are encouraged to be quiet, passive, and obedient in

school, traits girls are assigned for life outside of the classroom as well. Girls who have already been socialized into this regimen of non-assertive behavior may find it easier to complete mindless busywork in class, creating the good girl vs. hyperactive bad boy gender wars perpetuated by many insensitive educators. Doing homework neatly and correctly is a good-girl trait, eschewed by some boys for that reason alone, while girls find that boys are more often rewarded for creative thinking, independent research, and risk-taking.

As a brainy girl, I lived inside my own head, and learned to use classtime to write the sort of papers teacher wanted. On my own time, I wrote more revolutionary stories and essays, to which my supportive parents gave enthusiastic feedback. Despite my short-lived attempts at keeping our politics out of the classroom, I could not resist introducing topics I had learned about from my parents: racism, the Vietnam war, and so forth. My teachers branded me as uppity, or offered to "skip" me to another grade, or loaded me down with extra rounds of state-approved coursework. I received the strong message that school was a patriotic sphere, and that my critical focus on social injustice was un-American. My kind of precocity did not count as "good" smartness.

This fear of the subversive nature of intelligence is behind American contempt for anyone who talks about ideas. Consider the unflattering stereotypes, designed to discourage us from identifying as brainy: the mad scientist (usually working to destroy the planet), the absent-minded professor (incapable of functioning at social occasions), the pointy-headed agitator (paid by A Foreign Government to introduce radical ideas to good Americans), the anal-retentive committee lady (hair in a bun, lips pursed, all business and no pleasure), and of course the computer nerd (a millionaire at sixteen, but still dressed by his mother.)

Yep, the patriarchy works overtime to ensure that no brainy girl would want to aspire to intellectual power in adulthood. Brainy women might topple the existing "brainy men": lovable right-wing fanatics like George Will, William F. Buckley, and the other fellows who don't want the education structure soiled by courses on women's herstory or black leadership.

But despite the social stigma of being labelled smart—and what does *that*

say about American cultural values?—I never faltered from my ambition to become a writer, and went straight from high school to college to graduate school, until I had my Ph.D. firmly in hand. In college, I often had unpleasant experiences with other students who resented my grades, made fun of my bookishness, partied in my face all night, and then turned up at my door on the day before an exam demanding to borrow my notes. Fortunately, because taking exams and writing papers came easily to me, I had sufficient time to become involved in my preferred extra-curricular activity: the lesbian-feminist movement.

BEING BRAINY IN OUR COMMUNITY

When I came out as a lesbian during my freshman year of college in 1980, I found an entire community of women who valued female intelligence of any kind and who listened empathetically to my stories of being "different." In so many ways, we had all been encouraged to be less than we were, to masquerade as incompetent, to subvert knowledge when it might threaten men, to attain an aura of femininity through stupid remarks. In the women's community, though, the more skills one had, the more one empowered the community to exist without dependence upon male institutions and male leadership. I was delighted.

And yet...in this anti-patriarchal community, one often finds casual baiting and stereotyping of "brainy dykes." The stereotype here says that real, authentic dykes play softball and shoot pool, and work in non-traditional occupations that require getting down and dirty with power tools. Political dykes rightly criticize the elitist halls of ivy, exposing the academic world as a loathsome pit of sex, class, and race bias. And dykes who helped to establish women's studies programs at universities express outrage that these formerly radical departments are, in the 1990s, funding nouveau "postfeminist" scholarship including "men's studies." Fortunately, the white female scholars who have appropriated, exploited, and abandoned the perspectives of lesbians and women of color are counterbalanced at least somewhat by the radical dyke academics (such as Audre Lorde, Lillian Faderman, Merle Woo, and Mary Daly). In winter 1991, Mary Daly won cheers from a packed auditorium in Boston when she addressed the co-opting of women's

studies programs by "gender studies" scholars, concluding, "Can you imagine Sojourner Truth standing up to say 'Ain't I a gender?'"

While we crave visible female leadership, we often bury it in the women's community by promoting collectively-authored statements as a political ideal. The process of achieving consensus requires input from all participants present in crucial meetings or confrontations. Yet distaste for petty individualism has a price: we often do not know who inspired which phrase, whose words flavored the soup, in collective political writing. We fear giving too much power or control to a spokeswoman, for we have all known abuse of power, have heard white-defined criteria used for selecting keynote speakers at presumably inclusive conference. So, while we remain sensitive about whose ideas we selectively call "brilliant," we can also promote some women as leading thinkers, knowing that she whose politics are in the right place will accept accountability for her privileged time at the microphone.

When I identify myself as a professor of women's history, I invoke not just an occupational identity but academic privilege many women have been denied in their own hard-won educations. In response, some lesbians test me by declaring "I always hated history," or by calling out "Let's ask the professor!" from a conversation across the room.

I understand these interactions as challenges to my political resume—women want to know whether I live by my ideals or just write about feminism for profit. The truth is, most women's studies professors, like most women writers, are lucky to find a steady income. Radical women wield little power in the university. The experience of being baited and harassed by male colleagues is certainly not pleasant, but it is the present price for being able to stand in front of a classroom as an out lesbian professor whom young women and men must address as "Doctor." (The *real* privilege of academia is that summer vacation schedule, which makes it easy to attend festivals.)

It is time to stop promoting destructive and antisocial images of smart women, to reveal those images for what they are: a splendid mechanism for discouraging female potential and female empowerment. Intelligence is not gendered; it is a human quality we all have and can all develop, if only we are taught to believe that studying and writing our own her-

story is as important as flattering men/waxing floors/fighting communism/having white, Christian babies.

Rise up then, unsung brainy goddesses, and when you know the answer, sister, sing out your ideas. •

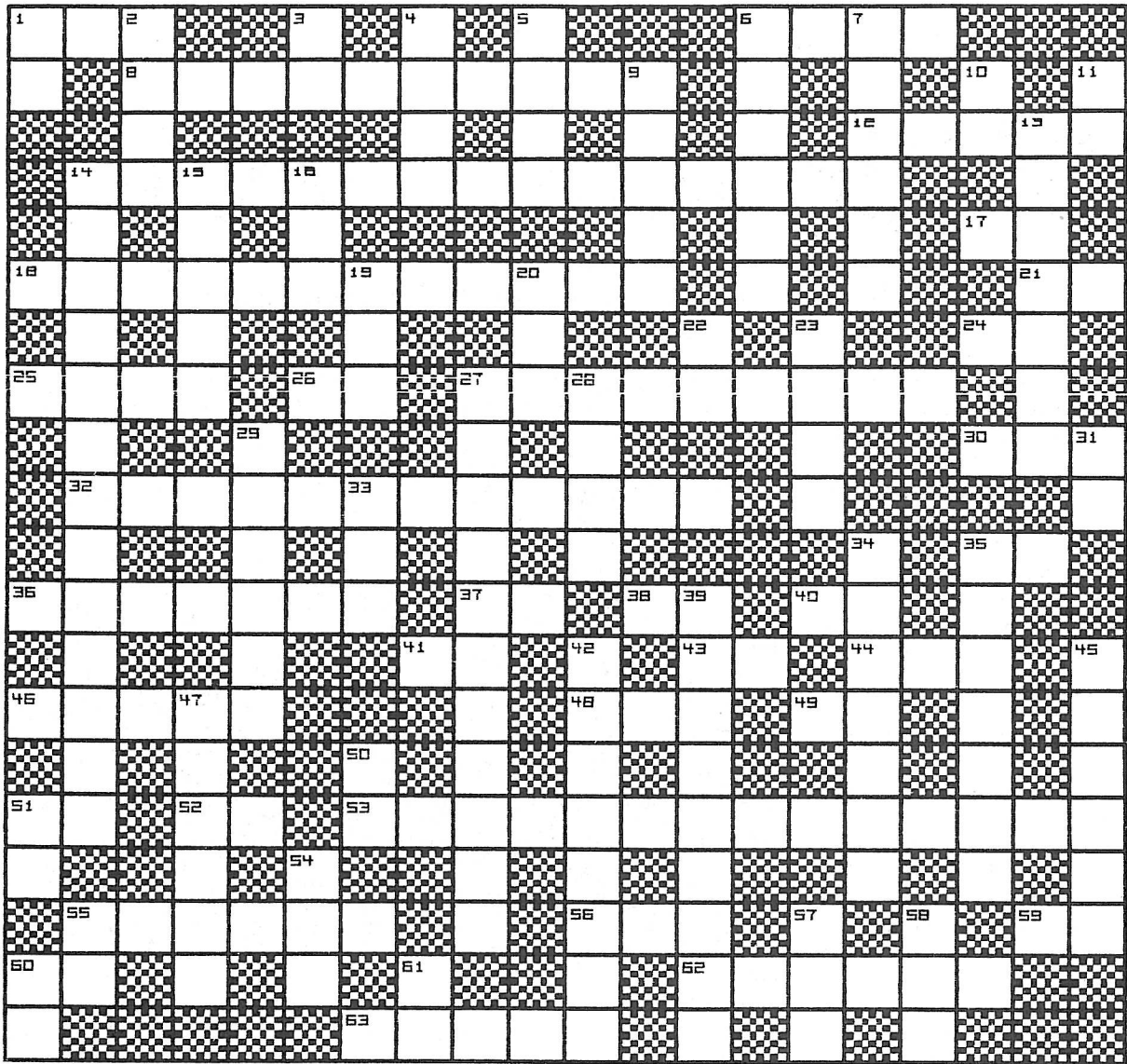
ABOUT THE WRITER: *Bonnie Morris earned her doctorate in women's history in 1989 and has taught women's studies and ethnic history at Harvard, Dartmouth, SUNY-Binghamton, Northeastern, and California State University. She hopes to contribute regular "Brainy Girls A Go-Go" columns to 'HOT WIRE' as an ongoing forum for discussing language, word games, writing, festival herstory, the education of women, the politics of women's studies, sex, humor, religion, and anything else that starts good women talking.*

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ACROSS

1. Eat corn on the — at outdoor women's festivals
6. Millington, Jordan, Brindel
8. *Terms of —*
12. I just can't come to — with not going to all the festivals
14. Radical feminist buddy movie (3 words)
17. Manager Jessie Cocks, filmmaker Jane Campion
18. Marga's one-woman play about her mother (2 words)
21. "Head lesbian," now on sabbatical (initials)
24. Home state of *HOT WIRE* and first National Festival
25. — *Down*
26. Famous mainstream performer at Rhythmfest (initials)
27. Redwood Records founder, RG's collaborator (2 words)
30. Digital audio tape
32. Manager, Margie Adam and Ronnie Gilbert (2 words)
35. MUSE director Cathy Roma, consciousness-raising
36. Ronnie Gilbert's famous politically oriented ensemble
37. Singer Susan Herrick, actor/director Sandra Heffley
38. Produces lesbian novels by the dozen (initials)
40. Cartoon character with whom Alison Bechdel identifies
41. Home state of Goldenrod and largest women's festival
43. Is coming out with tenth anniversary edition of her groundbreaking novel *The Color Purple*
44. — Martin, Pacific Northwest Jamboree producer
46. Women's Institute For Freedom of the —
48. French for water
49. This Karen is known for her biting stand-up comedy

51. Home state of the Hensons, producers of Gulf Coast Fest
52. Have you seen the movie version of her play *The Search For Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* yet?
53. Andrea Natalie's comics (2 words)
55. After two albums and 300+ shows, she was ready for a leave of absence from women's music
56. — *World*, — *Heart*
59. Home state of At the Foot of the Mountain and Ann Reed
60. Left women's music in 1984 to pursue spiritual life/music
62. Gilbert and Spector
63. Chapman and Drach

DOWN

1. Home state of Linda Tillery and Sisterhood Books
2. Karen and York
3. Theresa Edell (initials) composes using a computer
4. Witty writer Bombeck
5. Ann and Williams
6. Sloan and Casselberry
7. — *Note*, production guide (2 words)
9. Women need a lot of these to build festival stages
10. Home state of Alice Di Micele and Musica Femina
11. Co-founder of *Ms.* who recently wrote a book
13. Mother of *Don't Doubt It, With A Little Luck*
14. Nancy Vogl's new group with Robin & Libby (3 words)
15. Fingernail board (not to be confused with Jane Rule's book)

16. Month of Beltane
19. "— 12 Gays of Christmas" is one of the hits on Venus Envy's *I'll Be a Homo for Christmas* tape
20. Chief executive officer, as in giant corporations (such as Olivia Records, *HOT WIRE*, Ladyslipper, ha ha)
22. Home state of BETTY and Women Make Movies
23. "Glory" Zicari
27. Wanda Landowska was high priestess of this
28. What did you think of her film debut in *Salmonberries*?
29. A nun does this, and so does many a sound tech
31. Editor of *HOT WIRE* and *Women's Music Plus*
33. In India, a unit of distance which varies depending on location (1.5 to 3 miles)
34. Only journal of woman-identified music/culture (2 words)
35. Filmmaking sisters Jane and Anne
39. Playwright, *Connections of the Heart* (2 words)
42. *Secret* —, film vehicle for Liz Taylor and Mia Farrow
45. Genius behind *Dykes to Watch Out For*
47. Nicole Hollander's pioneering feminist cartoon character
50. Geena Davis's costar in *T & L*
51. Home state of Maxine Feldman and Bonnie Morris
54. We — Everywhere
55. Home "state" of Sweet Honey in the Rock, Roadwork
57. Two-steppers Maile — Marina have country attitude
58. Sue Fink's — *Promise*
60. Home state of Mimi Baczewska as well as Jasmine duo
61. Home state of Láadan creatrix Suzette Haden Elgin

• ANSWERS ON PAGE 24 •

The little feminist idea that could

WOMEN MAKE MOVIES

By Toni Armstrong Jr. and Dell Richards

In these days of backlash against the feminist movement—when media claims abound that we're living in the "post-feminist era"—it is a pleasure to celebrate the twenty-year anniversaries of our most enduring feminist institutions. Women Make Movies is a perfect example of "the little feminist idea that could."

Twenty years ago, Women Make Movies (WMM) used a church basement when they started teaching women about filmmaking. The now-classic institution established itself in 1972 with the specific mission of training women to become film and videomakers.

Through the 1970s and early '80s, hundreds of women participated in the WMM training programs, collectively producing seventy films and videotapes. The group held screenings in a carriage house in New York's Chelsea neighborhood, sponsored two international women's film festivals, and initiated a film distribution service.

WMM reorganized in the early '80s, placing a major emphasis on distribution. At the same time, they continued to develop projects and programs serving both artists and audiences for independent media. In 1984, WMM exhibited a groundbreaking program of media by Latin American women, *Punto de Vista: Latina*, and the next year co-sponsored (with Hunter College) the conference *Viewpoints: Women, Culture, and Public Media*—an event which was attended by more than 700 artists, theorists, and community activists.

In 1988, a new production assistance program was launched, including artist-in-residencies and workshops. The following year, WMM launched two touring programs, *Changing the Subject: An International Exhibition of Films by Women of Color*, as well as *The Feminist I*, a survey of contemporary women's video.

Over the past decade, WMM's distribution service has grown into an internationally recognized resource: films and



***Night Cries* by Tracey Moffat (1989): on an isolated, surreal Australian homestead, a middle-aged Aboriginal woman nurses her dying white mother. Their story alludes to the assimilation policy that forced Aboriginal children to be raised in white families. Women Make Movies distributes more than 250 films by women filmmakers about women's experiences.**

tapes from the collection have been showcased in special programs from Venezuela to Kenya to Finland to Hong Kong.

Today, the group is committed to functioning as a multicultural, multiracial organization. "We were founded as a community-based, grassroots film workshop to teach women film skills," says Debra Zimmerman, executive director for the past several years. As women got that training and actually began making their own films, Women Make Movies moved into distribution.

As a result, they have become the only nonprofit organization in the U.S. which rents films such as Joan Braderman's *No More Nice Girls* (1989, forty-four minutes, about veteran feminists—black and white, lesbian and heterosexual—facing the political backlash of the 1980s).

DIM THE LIGHTS: THE FILMS OF WMM

Women Make Movies now has more than 250 films, including special film collections by Latina women, African Americans, and other women of color. Titles include Pratibha Parmar's *Flesh and Paper* (1990, twenty-six minutes, about the life and writing of Indian lesbian poet/writer Suniti Namjoshi, born into Indian royalty); Michelle Mohabeer's *Exposure* (1990, eight minutes, an intimate dialogue between Japanese Canadian writer Mona Oikawa and Afro-Caribbean poet/activist Leleti Tamu, which reveals the intertwining of sexual and ethnic identity and common experiences of racism and homophobia); Lucinda Broadbent's *Sex and the Sandinistas* (1991, twenty-five minutes, about

Nicaraguan lesbians and gay men); *Beijo na Boca/A Kiss on the Mouth* (1987, thirty minutes, from the Lilith Video Collective, about female prostitution in urban Brazil); *Tiempo de Mujeres/Time of Women* (1988, twenty minutes, a portrait of the rhythms of life in an Ecuadorian village populated almost entirely by women); and *No Me Olvides/Don't Forget Me* (1989, thirteen minutes, about Mujeres por la Vida/Women for Life, the Chilean women's human rights organization).

Of special interest to *HOT WIRE* readers might be Pratibha Parmar's fifty-two minute *A Place of Rage* (1991), an exuberant celebration of African American feminists, including Angela Davis, June Jordan, and Alice Walker. Within the context of the civil rights, Black Power, and feminist movements, the trio reassesses how women such as Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer have revolutionized American society.

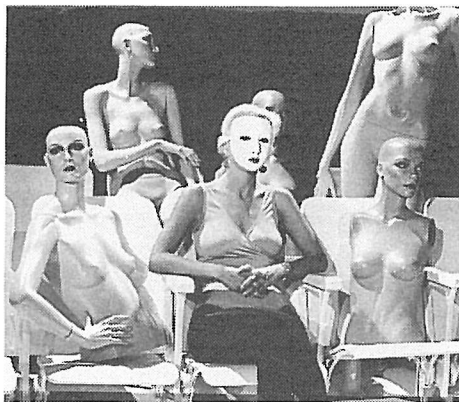
Fans of popular feminist filmmakers will be happy to see a good selection of their works. For example, WMM carries Michelle Parkerson's *Stormé: The Lady of the Jewel Box* (1987, twenty-one minutes, about Stormé DeLarverie, former emcee/male impersonator with America's first integrated female impersonation show); *But Then She's Betty Carter* (1980, fifty-three minutes, about the legendary jazz musician); and *Gotta Make This Journey* (1983, fifty-eight minutes, about Sweet Honey in the Rock).

The works of Barbara Hammer which are available through WMM include *Dyketactics* (110 images in four minutes, an "erotic lesbian commercial"); *Double Strength* (sixteen minutes, an experimental and passionate study of a lesbian relationship between two trapeze artists); *Women I Love* (twenty-seven minutes, footage shot over a five-year period in a collective portrayal of four of the filmmaker's lovers); and *Sync Touch* (ten minutes of lesbian images juxtaposed with common clichés, providing an ironic inquiry into the nature of the lesbian aesthetic).

The biggest part of the collection, however, consists of documentaries. Denise Bostrom and Jane Warrenbrand's classic thirty-minute *Healthcaring: From Our End of the Speculum*, for example, is an early (1976) feminist award-winning film. "It was a film version of [the book] *Our Bodies, Ourselves*—the first film about women's health care," says Debra Zimmerman. Thanks to an emphasis on distributing to institutions, movies like *From Our*

End currently are being seen by doctors in medical centers who—as Debra puts it—"may not want to see it, but certainly need to."

Documentary subjects include global issues, civil rights, human rights, the labor movement, sex equity, AIDS, sex roles, disability, and a wide spectrum of ethnic, national, and cultural topics. Films focusing on such weighty issues include Kiki Zeldes's *Lifetime Commitment: A Portrait of Karen Thompson* (1988, thirty minutes, about the first years of Karen Thompson's battle to get proper care for her disabled lover Sharon Kowalski, and to get official recognition of their relationship as a family of choice); Ann Alter's *No Need To Repent: The Ballad of Rev. Jan Griesinger* (1989, twenty-seven minutes, about an ordained lesbian minister); Heramedia Collective's *Just Because of Who We Are* (1986, twenty-eight minutes, about violence



***Mirror, Mirror* by Jan Krawitz (1990) explores the relationship between a woman's body image and the quest for an idealized female form.**

against lesbians); and Stephanie Antalocy's *Trade Secrets: Blue Collar Women Speak Out* (1985, twenty-three minutes, about four women who reveal how their lives changed when they stepped into the traditionally male world of skilled crafts).

But *Women Make Movies* isn't just about education; it also has a lighter side. They have a substantial collection of films on the literary and performing arts. Some of these titles include Joanne Burke's *Mary Lou Williams: Music on My Mind* (1990, sixty minutes, about the pioneering black American composer/arranger/pianist, narrated by Roberta Flack); *Mama's Pushcart* (1988, a fifty-four minute film by Demetria Royals and Louise Diamond about Ellen Stewart, founder of New York's La MaMa Experimental Theater Company); as well as films on artist Doris Chase; first generation African American

concert dancer Syvilla Fort; dance instructor/mentor/performer Thelma Hill; and award-winning authors Alice Walker and Toni Morrison.

Even the catalog entries by themselves are delightful reading. Spy spoofs, soap operas, and even the occasional vampire movie abound. It also includes early works by Jane Campion, best known for the feature-length *Sweetie*. (See also "Fade In • Fade Out" on page fifteen in this issue for a synopsis of *The Audition*.)

Animated shorts, running no longer than thirty-two minutes each, are popular with children and adults alike. Titles include Ayoka Chenzira's *Hair Piece: A Film for Nappy Headed People* (1985, a ten-minute satire on the question of self-image for women living in a society in which beautiful hair is viewed as hair that blows in the wind); Frances Leeming's *The Orientation Express* (1988, fourteen minutes, crafted entirely from cutout images spanning three decades of *Life* magazine's version of the feminist mystique); and Sandra Sharp's *Picking Tribes* (1988, seven minutes, a light look at a daughter of the '40s as she struggles to find an identity between her African American and Native American heritages). In the inventive *Cycles* (1989, seventeen minutes), Zeinabu irene Davis mixes animation and live action footage to discover a film language unique to African American women; the multi-layered soundtrack combines a chorus of women's voices with the music of Africa and the diaspora—including Miriam Makeba, a cappella singing from Haiti, and trumpete Clora Bryant.

No feminist film company's inventory of films would be complete without a group of lesbian-oriented titles, and *Women Make Movies* has a great selection, including such gems as Caroline Sheldon's *17 Rooms or What Do Lesbians Do in Bed?* (1985, a nine-minute look into seventeen bedrooms to challenge the titillating promise of that question with home movie footage and texts such as "Sleep," "Read," and even "Sometimes Kiss"); *She Even Chewed Tobacco* by Liz Stevens and Estelle Freedman (1983, forty minutes, about women in The Gold Rush); *Meeting of Two Queens* (1991, fourteen minutes, Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich "star" in the roles of their lives—cast as lovers by Chilean video artist Cecilia Barriga, who remounts clips from their signature roles in silent film style vignettes); Marilyn Burgess's *A Woman in My Platoon* (1989, twenty minutes, about lesbian women's military experience in Canada during

World War II); and Su Friedrich's *Damned If You Don't* (1987, forty-two minutes, about a young nun fighting a losing battle with her sexual desires, including testimony from the trial of a seventeenth-century nun accused of lesbian relations, and the deconstruction of the classic nun film *Black Narcissus*).

RENTING THE FILMS

Unfortunately for the average *HOT WIRE* reader, the films are not generally affordable for individuals—at \$50 (or more) each to rent, it's easy to see why. (Most of the films are in the \$200-\$300 range to buy.) But that doesn't mean you can't get the films. You can, if you're willing to do some legwork and talk a friendly local organization into showing it, or if you can round up enough viewers who would be willing to split the rental cost with you. Women Make Movies is happy to help women who want to arrange screenings of selected titles in local communities.

More and more women's bookstores are adding video rentals to their list of community services, finally making many of these films competitive with the titles found at the local Blockbuster outlet—rentable in the \$2 to \$3 range. If the bookstore where you shop doesn't yet do this, suggest to the manager or owner that they start—and give them the address of Women Make Movies. Small, community-based businesses like our bookstores tend to be responsive when they know there's consumer interest.

WMM hopes to eventually distribute videos to the home audience, though it isn't possible for them to do so now. "It's not economically feasible," says Debra Zimmerman. "The demand for our titles isn't like *Rambo*. We can't sell a million copies and get the price down to \$20."

And for now, targeting the institutional market fits in with the group's grassroots philosophy of reaching as many people as possible with films from a woman's point of view. "With institutions, a videocassette is seen by hundreds and hundreds of people," says Debra. "We try to reach women through women's centers and women's studies programs, small theaters, libraries, and women's festivals."

CURRENT PROGRAMS

WMM's current programs reflect their commitment to providing services to both users and makers of independent media. According to their *Twentieth Anni-*

versary Film & Video Catalog, the Production Assistance Program assists emerging and established women video and filmmakers with the development and production of their media projects. Components of this program include fiscal sponsorship, which assists producers in fundraising, proposal writing, and production management; a Skills Bank to assist with job referrals; low-cost monthly workshops on the business and marketing aspects of media production; the Women Make Videos Program, which awards equipment-use grants to New York State videomakers and internships to emerging



Pratibha Parmar's *A Place of Rage* (1991) features June Jordan (left), Angela Davis (right), and Alice Walker reassessing—within the context of the civil rights, Black Power, and feminist movements—how women such as Rosa Parks and Fannie Lou Hamer revolutionized American society.

videomakers; and a Producers Resource Center.

The international distribution service provides films by and about women to audiences throughout the world. Their more than 250 films and videotapes are used by museums, film festivals, media art centers, cinemas, universities, high schools, labor groups, government agencies, corporations, women's centers, and prisons.

Additional services to users include their in-house screening facility; extensive programming assistance to help in selecting appropriate titles or developing media programs for conferences, symposia, and other public programs; and user/study guides for individual titles and collections.

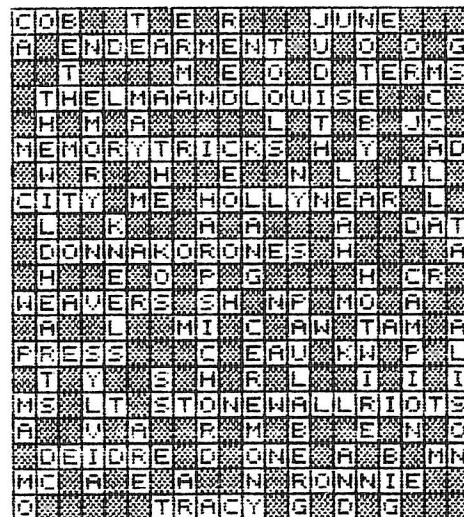
The newly-established Speakers Bureau was started in response to requests from customers. Selected titles can be available for screening, either with their makers or with qualified speakers from

Women Make Movies. The organization needs at least four weeks notice, and they'll be happy to make suggestions based on geographic area, speakers' experience, and your programming needs. Fees include honoraria and travel expenses, which of course vary according to the speaker, location, and type of occasion. A partial list of the women who work with the WMM Speakers Bureau includes Joan Braderman, Doris Chase, Ayoka Chenzira, Ariel Dougherty, Michelle Citron, Julie Dash, Zeinabu irene Davis, Daresha Kyi, Barbara Hammer, Midi Onodera, Sandra Sharp, Leslie Thornton, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Kiki Zeldes.

Membership is open to all individuals, organizations, and institutions who wish to support the aims and goals of Women Make Movies. Benefits include discounts on workshops, eligibility for fiscal sponsorship, use of the resource center and screening room, and regular mailings. Organizational members receive a five percent discount on all purchases and sales throughout the year.

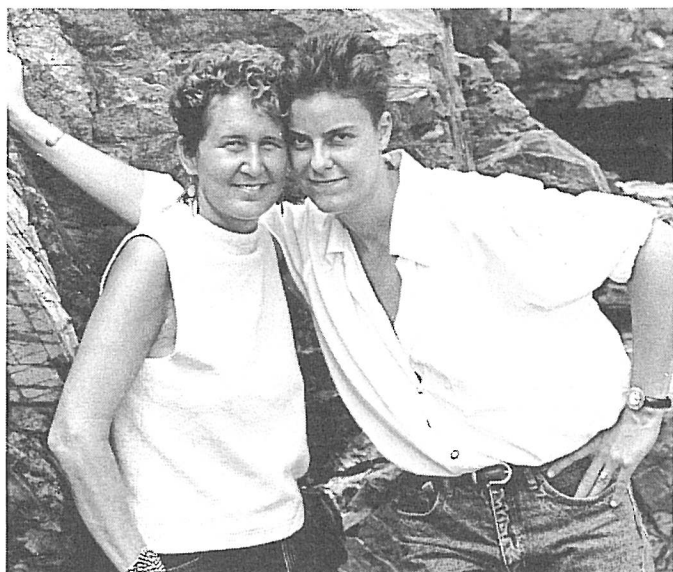
To all of the women over the years who have worked with Women Make Movies—we salute you! Happy twentieth anniversary!

To get on the WMM mailing list, send your name, address, and phone number. It will help if you will indicate up to six areas of interest from the following categories: environmental, cinema studies, disability, Latin American issues, health, history, global issues, visual anthropology, video art, violence against women, women of color, black studies, Asian studies, labor studies, lesbian studies, literature, young adult, sex equity, women's studies, or all of the above. Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette Street, Suite 206, New York, NY 10012. •



THE WOMEN BESIDE THE WOMEN

By Laura Post



B. Proud



M. J. Sharp

In this era of professionally collaborative personal relationships, it is common for a significant other to take on the functions of a performer's manager/booker. (Pictured: Jessie Cocks and Susan Herrick, Reed Williams.)

Jessie Cocks. Reed Williams. Donna Korones. Diane Morrissey.

You may not recognize the names of the women listed above, but—significantly—you probably *would* recognize the names of their performer partners.

In this predominantly sexist and misogynistic society, it is a pervasive belief that "behind every successful man, there is a [supportive] woman"—a dualism which persists even within our feminist cultural network. Not only may female public figures be treated differently than their significant others in their private lives, but those significant others may experience insensitivity or even rudeness at the hands of eager fans or overly assertive industry agents. [This concern about startripping was thoughtfully addressed in previous *HOT WIRE* articles: Kay Gardner's "Charisma and Startripping" (March 1987), and the anonymous "Wives, Widows, or Groupies—

On Being Lovers of the 'Stars'" (November 1986).]

One solution to this pedestal-placing would involve major revisions to thinking about value and visibility, with subsequent modifications in expectations and behavior. This is not likely to be accomplished in the near future, despite some performers' attempts to be accessible, to use their stage authority thoughtfully, and to empower the producers, promoters, technicians, media persons, other musicians, and audience members who all contribute to their successes.

Another solution would be for behind-the-scenes players to claim celebrity status. Not only would this be unwelcomed by many workers—who consciously choose to participate *out* of the spotlight—but such an outcome would only intensify the existing power disparities.

In this era of professionally collaborative personal relationships, it is common for a significant other to take on the

functions of a performer's manager/booker. Not only does the significant other then readily keep current with the performer's career, but the career actually becomes shared between them, creating opportunities to enhance the partnership at several levels. Drawbacks to this arrangement might include unclear identity boundaries, resulting in unhealthy competitiveness for attention; unclear time boundaries, leading to a subtle, co-dependent shift in focus toward the performer's life; or work dissatisfaction or incompatibility. Even within the most carefully negotiated context of equity and mutual respect, the manager/booker partners of performers can feel invisible and unappreciated.

What follow are the stories of the four women named above: their thoughts about relating to their performer partners and the process so far. With feminist intent, this article is entitled "The Women Beside [not *Behind*] the Women."

JESSIE COCKS

Raised on her father's horse farm, which essentially served the wealthy, Jessie Cocks grew up appreciative of the pleasures and values of her hard-working family. She married a man in 1978, and then moved solo to Nevada seven years later, leaving behind a middle-class situation in order to follow her dream of doing social justice work. She eventually founded the American Peace Test, an organization which uses non-violent resistance to stop nuclear testing.

When her ex-husband committed suicide in 1987, leaving Jessie as beneficiary to his estate, her material status suddenly changed from a modest lifestyle on a \$12,000-a-year salary to ambivalent proprietorship of a large farm and a sizeable sum of money.

"I felt that I had become the enemy," she says. "For the first few years, I just gave away huge amounts—thousands and thousands of dollars—wanting to be free of what I perceived as an albatross. I then began to see the inheritance as a gift that allowed me to stop working, to focus on myself, to get in touch with what I needed from life. It was around that time—in 1989—that I met Susan [Herrick], and I saw that there was something else good I could do with the money."

Susan was working at the time on *Truth and the Lie*. "It was real clear that Susan needed to do her thing. I was getting to a healthier place about the money, and I decided that I was going to finance her record," she recalls. "I had no other expectation about my involvement in her work, and after the financial negotiations I backed off. I did make some suggestions, but not with any control; it was very important that this be Susan's project, since it was her dream and her vision."

It wasn't until many months later ("having learned better about setting boundaries and taking care of myself") that Jessie saw collaborating with Susan on her music as a way of working and healing at the same time. "I recognized that I still had the skills that I had always had. Susan welcomed my help with the booking, with the media, the day-to-day functioning of her Watchfire label. I was new to the women's music industry, but my people-contact and organizational experience were very useful."

Having been in the spotlight as an activist, Jessie is clear about her commitment "to the current process," whether it takes her to the spotlight or not. "I know

that if I were ever again at center stage—for example, if the book I'm going to write were to be really successful—that Susan and I would be able to handle it. We work at distinguishing between our business relationship and our lover relationship as two equal people. We work at setting up mutually agreeable times for business meetings—for a while we weren't discussing any business in bed—keeping the dialogue open, and, most importantly, staying aware that our lover connection is primary."

REED WILLIAMS

An accomplished keyboardist and singer, Reed Williams currently holds a full-time day job as an administrative assistant. She met Tracy Drach through dating the same man, and the two women became friends during the rocky aftermath of their respective breakups. Initially interested in Tracy's music, Reed helped Tracy with logistical aspects of playing local gigs. After moving away—first to Boston, then to Pittsburgh—Reed awoke to her feminism and came out as a lesbian. She moved back to Durham four years later and asked Tracy to be her lover.

"It happened a lot that people would approach us, focus on Tracy, and ignore me," Reed recalls. "They would tell her how close they felt to her, how important her work was, and not even say hello in my direction. So I would get angry—sometimes at Tracy, which wasn't right, but which is probably a common response. I resented that all she had to do was sing on a Saturday night to be some woman's best friend."

Reed says she had to remind herself that Tracy had been singing all her adult life—for pay since 1981, and as a serious professional since her first album was released. By contrast, the first time that they even discussed the possibility of Reed helping out with the business was in 1990. "I have done a lot of things in my life just by doing them, and I didn't think twice about not being able to produce an album," Reed recalls. "For instance, I'd tried my hand earlier at producing a concert for the first time, so I imagined that I could assist with *Another Door*. Unexpectedly, Tracy and I wound up co-writing a song ('Who Stands for Life?'). Although I am clearly satisfied with my degree of participation and don't have secret aspirations toward stardom, I loved working with Tracy and contributing to such a solid album."

Reed has never made a formal offer to be Tracy's booker. She says Tracy would get approached about fundraising or promotion, and she didn't want to deal with it. "It was easy for me to ask for money since it was neither my record nor my specific pride. Tracy wasn't comfortable doing the business stuff, then she had no time to do the business stuff, then I found that I liked it and was good at it. I have the time during my work days to make some telephone calls and write some letters. I have learned a lot and, of course, am still learning," she says.

"Another part of what we work at all the time is talking about our expectations of each other and of the business. We try very hard to keep the business out of the relationship. It was difficult to not see each other until late in the day and then try to accomplish multiple updates and decisions, when what we really needed to do was to reconnect as lovers and keep each other informed of our internal processes.

"This process feels organic to me, rich and ready for blooming. Last year, I had no idea that I would be here, that we would be here. I know that I really enjoy the booking and managing that I do for Tracy; to me, it is community building. I know that I will continue my community involvement," Reed says, "even if Tracy changes her mind about her career, or if we decide to hire a more experienced booker for her."

DONNA KORONES

Growing up in New York City, Donna Korones went to the theater a lot, accompanying her mother who was involved in the business end of the show world. Though she loved Broadway musicals and sang their songs, Donna knew that she wasn't going to be a performer. She married, developed her own business, and, many years later, attended a life-transforming Holly Near concert. Then, Donna met Ronnie Gilbert and fell in love. Their business relationship emerged subsequently.

"I remember one day Ronnie had a box of files," Donna recalls. "I had done bookkeeping all my life and was very comfortable with it. I could tell from the papers that they needed some help, and of course it was perfectly sensible to me, just like a piece of music would be to Ronnie. I said to her, 'Oh, Ronnie, really. I can clear this up for you.' It was very easy, and it answered a dream."

"It was a time for a change in management for Ronnie, and we just did it. It was very clear from the beginning that the skills I had were the ones that Ronnie didn't have, just as the ones she has are the ones I lack. I think the fact that we did such different things is what made it relatively easy to slip into our complementary roles; it was obvious what each of our responsibilities would be," Donna says. "Over the years, the jobs have become very close. I do everything but get up on stage—although I did get up on stage once, on Ronnie's sixtieth birthday. Another dream come true—I actually got to sing 'Goodnight, Irene' with Ronnie and Holly."

When they finally decided to do Ronnie's next album [*Love Will Find A Way*] themselves, Donna found the tasks were brand new, even though she had skills that prepared her for production. "I can deal with details, but this was really the most detailed thing I had ever done. After the album was finished, it was like having a baby, and I realized that I could do it, that it wasn't a mystery, that it was worth it and, more, that the system was in place and that I would do it again."

Ronnie and Donna work closely together in their partnership. "I think that we are hindered by the titles that we are given. I know that what I say can be quoted in a way that I didn't mean because there is a certain authority that comes with 'manager.' On the other side, people can be much more spontaneous with me than with Ronnie because of what they associate with 'artist.' There are also the people who are completely star-struck, who will elbow me out of the way to get to Ronnie. With those people, either I'll be devastated or I'll put out my hand and introduce myself. The worst, though, is when someone comes up to the record table after a show and asks me if I'm Ronnie's daughter," Donna says.

"The bottom line is that we work together in order to present her on stage. Both our energies go into the career, and we are both affected by it. Our life is taken up by what we do, and we like it. We travel together, we meet people together, and with every project there is a reward: a show that we believe in or the person who is touched, possibly in a life-changing way. It is truly a privileged life."

DIANE MORRISSEY

Diane Morrissey has been a purchasing agent for the past three years and

says that she likes the time spent on the phone, meeting people, and negotiating sales. She met Leah Zicari at a university gay and lesbian function, and they got to know each other through Diane unwittingly dating Leah's ex-lover. Despite not wanting to be a booker, Diane was always enthusiastic about Leah's music.

"It was wonderful to be in the audience and hear her perform. As corny as it sounds, I fall in love with her again every time I see her on stage," says Diane today.

"I am not at all musical myself. I don't play, I don't sing—I hit the scan on the radio in my car, and that is the extent of it. In the beginning, I would help Leah do her hair or take care of her wardrobe. She could go out and do her thing, and she looked great. I hauled her guitars around when she was in town; it was exciting to get her ready. It wasn't planned, it just happened—it was how we interacted."

Diane says at first she had a tough time with Leah needing to go on the road for tours. "But it was what she needed to do, and I needed to decide whether I could deal with it or not," says Diane. "We're individuals who have always been very separate, and the issue has worked itself out. As her career has been developing and moving forward, so has mine, and we're both happy with that."

"One thing about why I'm not doing booking or managing Leah: I wasn't asked. Would or wouldn't is a whole separate question. I can't say it would never happen, but I sincerely doubt it, because I just don't have the desire for that kind of role. It just happens that she is an entertainer. Leah is just as supportive of my work."

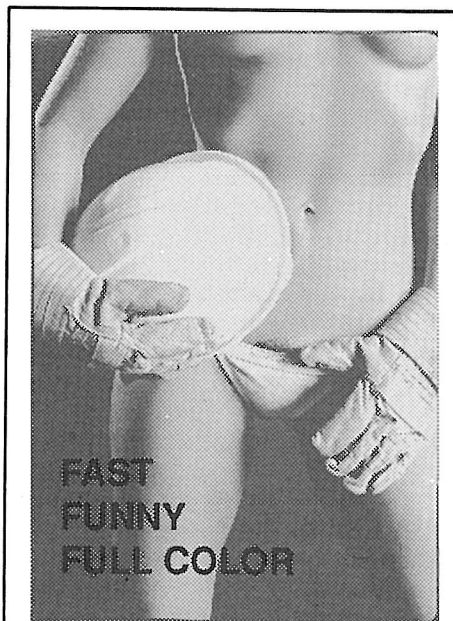
Diane says she wouldn't work for Leah because she wouldn't work for any lover ("although I might work *with* her"). She doesn't think that she could be Leah's manager. "We each have our own way, and it is unbelievably irritating to try to work together. Ninety-nine percent of what we do, we do well—we find a way to make it happen. In some other ways, like dealing with her business, I might be too hardline because of what I am used to; I wouldn't put up with the owed money and stretched deadlines she talks about," Diane says. "The only thing I know is that we'll deal with each aspect of our careers as it comes up."

Diane labels herself "a nine-to-five, want-my-dinner-when-I-get-home, let's-watch-*Star Trek* kind of dyke." She acknowledges that vacations are great, but doesn't think she could tolerate being

away as much as Leah has to. She hopes to be able to travel some ("Being around all those lesbians would be great!"), but it would be as a festival-goer, not as someone responsible for Leah.

"One concern I have is that she will go out there and will grow in a way that I will not," says Diane. "There are many unknowns, and we are aware that we are each growing, and we may end up growing in different directions. But we'll deal with it." •

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Laura Post is a regular contributor to 'Outlines,' 'New Directions for Women,' 'Mama Bears News and Notes,' as well as staff writer for 'HOT WIRE.' Thanks to Diane, Donna, Jessie, Leah, Reed, Ronnie, Susan, and Tracy for their input, feedback, and suggestions. Special thanks to Jessie for the title of this article, and appreciation to Susan Horowitz for the inspiration.*



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**READ THE WORKS OF
WOMEN WRITERS**

Memory Tricks and Pretty, Witty & Gay

MARGA GOMEZ

By Laura Post

These articles on Marga Gomez and the Lesbian Cartoonists Network (page 36) are part of an ongoing series about feminist humorists. See the January 1992 issue for articles about Kate Clinton and Lea DeLaria.

Marga Gomez got her professional start as an actor. Growing up the bratty only child of well-known Cuban comedian Willy Chevalier and sensual Puerto Rican dancer Margarita Estremera ("Margo the Exotic" to Anglos), Marga came honestly to entertainment. Soon after discovering that humor eased the pain of Catholic grammar school, Marga also discovered drama as an alternative to sports while she was attending Massapequa H.S. in Long Island where, incidentally but significantly, she was the only Latina.

Marga abandoned teachers' college, felt unqualified for Spanish show business since she didn't speak Spanish, and was unimpressed with Hollywood and its lack of Hispanic enlightenment. In 1976, she relocated from the Big Apple to San Francisco, seeking independence and the hippie life. Her initial stints with theater groups Les Nicklettes and The San Francisco Mime Troupe were brief.

"I joined Les Nickettes in 1978 because they were an all-female musical comedy group, and I knew it would be fun," recalls Marga. "The first show I did with them was called *Curtains*, and I had the part of an asshole guy. I was so cute, though, that a gay man in audience came backstage to ask me out. I worked with them again in 1980; I played a villain—"VD, The Pirate Queen"—in a remake of Peter Pan that was hipper than the Spielberg version."

Immediately after the first Nickette run was over in 1978, she auditioned and was hired to work with the feminist theater company Lilith, whose work she had first seen in 1976.

The following five years of performing and touring took Marga throughout

the United States and to Europe. Her success with Lilith convinced Marga that she could make it on her own as a performer. [Other Lilith alumni include Reno ("who is now the toast of New York") and Terry Baum, who tours internationally.]

In 1986, Marga spent a summer and fall season with the internationally-acclaimed San Francisco Mime Troupe—which didn't actually do mime—performing what she calls "agitprop and political theater." She took a six month break from comedy clubs, as the group played to thousands in the outdoor parks of the Bay Area, and toured the Pacific Northwest. "It was like enlisting in an anti-capitalist politically correct theatrical version of the Marines, and I was Gomez Pyle. Like with Lilith, the modus was to take an issue, or several issues, and to present the progressive, right-on point of view in an entertaining fashion. Most of the audiences were hip, feminist, leftist, so we weren't ever playing for the Republican convention or anything like that. It was really great work, because even if you're in the movement you need to feel reinforced about what you're doing."

Both theater companies used comedy. "We hit some serious issues, but always with a light touch; we found that was the best way to prove the point, to disarm people and to unconsciously affect them," Marga says. "I've always enjoyed doing comedy and getting the laughs—even when I emceed my high school variety show. Although the theater work with Lilith and The San Francisco Mime Troupe wasn't Shakespeare or Pinter, it was more than one-liners."

In 1982, Marga began her career as a solo act. And she was rewarded early: nominated for the San Francisco Cabaret Gold Awards Outstanding Female Comedy Solo in 1984, she went on to win in 1986, 1987, and 1988. 1988 was an especially good year for her; she not only won the Outstanding Comedy award but also Entertainer of the Year, appeared on PBS'

Comedy Tonight with host Whoopi Goldberg, as well as on A&E's *Good Time Cafe*. She did *Stand-Up Spotlight* with host Rosie O'Donnell on VH-1 in the summer of 1991, and her new show *Marga Gomez is Pretty, Witty & Gay* had a four-week sold-out run at Josie's Cabaret in San Francisco last October, then sold out three shows in San Diego last January. She says she is especially looking forward to her New York City debut; she will be doing *Pretty, Witty & Gay* at P.S. 122 in the East Village this May.

Marga decided to go solo when it became clear she wanted to write and perform her own material. "With Lilith, I always felt a little bit intimidated, because the pieces had to be accountable to everybody—not just to the people in the group, but to everybody who saw it and gave feedback," she recalls. "I just wanted to write jokes and make people laugh. As it turned out, I wrote from my own experience; since the world is slanted a certain way, what I do is political because it's against the grain, subversive because I am not in the mainstream."

Even so, Marga maintains that her work isn't deliberately feminist or political. "Sometimes I include references to current political figures or whatever, but most of my stuff is political because it comes from somebody who is a triple minority. It's common sense for me not to exploit; it's not funny to exploit people to get a laugh, to use people as the butt of a joke...unless they're very wealthy. I went to Catholic school for a little while—just long enough to destroy my self-esteem—and even though I don't go to church any more, and I find that the Bible contains things which are sexist and homophobic, I still am very impressed by the saints and the martyrs. I always wanted to be good, and I want people to be good and kind, and that is what I live by.

"I like to do my material from the heart down, with the belief that being good is feminist. I can be mean when

somebody heckles, but I really try to be saintly...in a sick way. I try to treat people right—for example, when I go into a space to work, I enjoy meeting the stage crew and the people who wait the tables. I work hard and do the best job possible, because I always have this feeling—I probably shouldn't admit this—of being unworthy; that to see me somebody spent the money they worked so hard to earn. I really push myself to be sure I don't let them down," Marga says.

"I think that my comedy started to really come together in 1985, when I got to work at the [now-defunct] Baybrick, in San Francisco," recalls Marga. "The club was owned by a woman named Lauren Hewitt, who had a rapport with artists; she was really innovative and creative with art. It was mostly a women's bar, the first upscale bar...she had a carpet. There were also all kinds of great acts, like Bonnie Hayes and Teresa Trull," she recalls. "Then Lauren started a comedy cabaret on Fridays. My comedy really started coming together at those, because we had to do forty-five minute sets, and if people liked us they'd let us know—we got paid a certain amount of money. Also we had a tip jar—so I learned to be better in my act because I knew that there were immediate rewards."

Marga played those forty-five minute sets once or twice a month, for some of the same people—"so I had to write a lot, had to create a lot, had to sustain the attention of the crowds...difficult crowds, I might add, since a good percentage of the women were high," she says. "The audience also didn't have to pay to see the show, and when people are there for free, they're less interested. I really had to work hard. Lauren encouraged many of us, and I started putting together a Wednesday night showcase of comedians for her, comedians who were lesbians and straight women, gay guys and straight guys, people who I believed were enlightened."

Marga performed with Monica Palacios—often at the Baybrick—from 1984 until 1986, when Monica moved to New York. "I always felt we were ahead of our time," Marga says now of their duo act. "Outside of San Francisco people didn't get us; we were too sarcastic. But irony is in vogue now, even with lesbians. Monica is in L.A. now, having a lot of success with her one-woman show *Latin Lezbo Comic*." As Marga recalls it, some of their more memorable bits included a pickup scene at a business lunch between

two women, complete with briefcase choreography; The House of Fur fashion show narrated by JenneFUR PELTinez (their animal rights statement); a piece on assimilation set at the Golden Yuppie Health Spa; and their versions of *Personal Best*, *Agnes of God*, and Spanish television. ("Gee, just thinking about it makes me want to call Monica and get the duo back together. I still have the costumes somewhere.") Monica and Marga were founding members of the Latino comedy group called Culture Clash (1984-86), a group which is still together and may even get a sitcom on the Fox network.



Marga Gomez: "I want to play for the largest audience possible; I want to challenge people; I want to help people out of conservatism before they sink into the slime."

Besides performing, Marga occasionally produced shows. "They were on a very small scale, but I always felt very proud of them," she says. "The productions began at the Baybrick but went all around the Bay Area. I had an eye for people, regardless of sexual preference or gender, who were progressive. I thought it was important to start showing those people and their comedy."

Despite her obvious talent for it, Marga has always been frustrated with writing. "Actually, I kind of hate to do it," she says. "I write down ideas as they come to me, if I can—it feels weird to take out a little notebook when at the discotheque—but as things strike me funny, I try to remember them. That's my advice for any beginning writer: write down ideas, because you can come back later and develop them. For example, I had written down something about being at rock concerts and being manipulated by the singer to put your hands together and sing, and after about a year or two on the list, I finally wrote it into a bit that I really enjoy doing and that gets a lot of laughs. It's a physical routine, and I tend to like those a lot because I can actually put my body into it. I think that I'm more known for physical comedy than just being a talking head. There are certainly comics I like who don't even take the microphone out of the stand, but there is something about my ethnic background that allows me to talk with my hands and to talk with my body, so I try to use everything," she says.

Marga's comedy and other work can be very self-revealing, a style which works well for her. "I believe that you're supposed to write what you know, so that's what I know: I know me," she says. "I was an only child—my ex-lover used to refer to me as a feral child—and I have always felt in my own bubble, so that's why I take material from my personal experience. Now, if people couldn't relate to it, I would have to...look for a day job. I try to find events that are universal in my life; I read *People* magazine and I watch a lot of TV. I am somewhat obsessed with *Mod Squad* reruns, and will talk about that unless I am stopped."

According to Marga, the intimate nature of her comedy reflects the way she lives her life, with a sense of irony. "I have a sense of humor and like to laugh; sometimes in this world we don't even know what we are laughing at. A therapist once told me that I think like a comic—we did a visualization, we were flowers. We had to say what we saw, and what I saw was the mad scientist from *The Fly* saying, 'Help me, help me,' and the other people in my group said, 'Oh, yeah, she's a comic.' I wasn't even trying to be funny, that's just what came out."

Marga's current stand-up routines include *Noche Line*, a spoof of a Spanish television talk show; a reading from Anais Nin's "previously undiscovered

diary of a trip to Disneyland"; a skit featuring "the hidden lesbians" from *The Beverly Hillbillies*; and one-liners about gender differences ("women might start a rumor but not a war") and the new men's movement ("I thought that was called the government").

Marga has performed as emcee, comic, and game show host on the Olivia cruises, excursions which she describes as "a little Michigan, a little Gilligan." She says her title is "Julie of the Les Boat," and she thinks of herself as ship psychiatrist.

At the 1991 San Francisco Pride Day, she showcased a rap song sporting the refrain, "Yo, USA, 'tis the decade of the dyke." At the 1991 Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, she debuted her new hip hop anti-censorship dance, the "Way Out" with the stage crew—her "Fly Dykes"—as backup.

But perhaps the highlight of Marga's 1991 was the premiere of her autobiographical tragicomedy *Memory Tricks*, which debuted in San Diego in November of 1990 and then enjoyed a five-week sold-out run at The Marsh in San Francisco in the spring (and was included in the Bay Area Solo Mio Theatre Festival). It received repeat standing ovations both times she performed it at the Michigan Festival, and was well-received last November in Fresno.

MEMORY TRICKS

Marga Gomez's one-woman, two-act play came about because she wanted to put together performance pieces. She had found that in order to be a stand-up comic, one needs to make a living working in comedy clubs—where she was beginning to feel increasingly less comfortable. "The comedy business is so conservative right now, and at times it reflects the bigotry of the national mentality," she says. "I thought of doing concerts like Kate Clinton, who sells out auditoriums all over the country, but outside of California I would have to build my name recognition by selling records or videos, which I don't have yet. So theater pieces are a way for me to market myself and to do other work that I enjoy. I really like acting and portraying characters and telling stories, changing the rhythm of stand-up, so I wanted to explore that."

Editor's note: the next five paragraphs reveal crucial plot twists in 'Memory Tricks.' Marga doesn't mind if you know what the play is about, but if you expect to see the show and (like me) prefer not to know much in

advance, resume reading with the paragraph that begins, "The first part of the play is more jokey."

One day Marga got a call from a multi-cultural theater festival in San Diego, asking if she had anything she could perform there. "I didn't, but I said, 'Sure!'—so when I got off the phone, I had to come up with one. Coincidentally about this time I was feeling the need to write about my mother—about her loss, my grief...and most of all to pay tribute to her," she recalls. "Since she had become ill, I'd been having a hard time going to the clubs and doing stand-up, because I was in a lot of pain. I didn't know how to tell my friends, and I didn't want to talk about it, I didn't want anybody to know; then, I do this play, and it reveals to thousands of people that my mother has Alzheimer's. I guess I just wanted to work that out. It was like a few years of therapy for me to do the play; instead of paying a therapist, I get paid. I still have a lot of painful feelings, but I have come to some resolution through what I found in the work, and when I perform it I get close to my mother," she says.

Marga and her director David Ford had workshopped the piece for a few months before it opened, but the actual writing happened in the week or two before the San Diego theater festival, when it was half the length it is now. "I basically arrived at the final form, memorized it, and performed it the next day, when I was totally scared shitless," she says. "After that, we developed it and performed the additional segment at BRAVA Women for the Arts; the whole piece was put together for the San Francisco run. It's hard to say how long it really took to put it all together, because although I had been living it and thinking about it, I avoided writing it until right before the performance."

In writing *Memory Tricks*, Marga started with the title. "Unless you're the kind of comic who improvises everything—which I'm not—you need to memorize a set list with names of bits," she says. "I actively destroyed my brain cells in the 1970s, and when my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, I began to get paranoid about losing my own memory, about going on stage and forgetting my comedy. I read a couple of books on improving memory power, which suggested several memory tricks, so the title came out of that, too."

Memory Tricks is a serious dramatic work with some very funny moments.

Marga says that comedy functions in the play mostly as relief—"relief from the painful situation of losing a mother, the person who was everything, the most powerful person in your life, seeing her deteriorate and being helpless. The helplessness is the most painful part of it. Through that experience, I would've gone nuts if I couldn't release it in some way; I couldn't have coped. Studies have been done on caregivers, most of whom are chronically depressed and have all these physical illnesses which come from being a caregiver. It's really important to take care of yourself if you're taking care of someone else.

"I would be with my mother, and we'd be watching television—something like *An Evening at the Improv*—and she'd laugh. Even though it was all verbal, all stand-up, and she might not have understood it, she'd hear the audience laugh and then she'd laugh—and it'd give her pleasure, like eating ice cream. Trying to make her laugh was part of my caregiving, and it was healthy for me to find things which were still funny, and to detach from the situation.

"The first part of the play is more jokey—it's about childhood, and it naturally lends itself to a stand-up routine about the crazy things that we went through, especially in the 1960s in New York City. In the first part, I weave in the deeper threads a little at a time. In the second act, which deals with the more serious emotional situation, I weave in the comedy a little at a time, so that even until the end when it seems the most heart-breaking, people can laugh because it still comes down to a mother and daughter," she says.

The comic's new piece—*Marga Gomez is Pretty, Witty & Gay*—is something that deals with herself more than *Memory Tricks* does. "Even though *Memory Tricks* is from my point of view, it focuses on my mother and her relationship to me, to the rest of the world, to men," says Marga. "*Memory Tricks*, goes from my childhood through my adulthood, addressing the news of her illness. It skipped my teen years, which were a drag; that was when my sexuality developed. In some ways, I feel that my sexuality is still at a teenage level, and that's what the new play is about.

continued on page 56

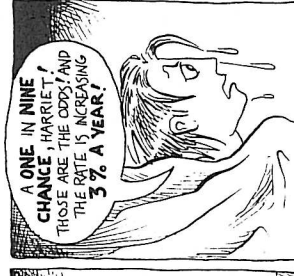
ABOUT THE WRITER: *Laura Post works as a psychiatrist/medical consultant in San Francisco. Her writings have appeared in numerous books, journals, anthologies, and women's periodicals.*

Cartoons by Alison Bechdel

DYKES TO WATCH OUT FOR

Thanks FOR THE MAMMAS MARRIES

©1992 BY ALISON BECHDEL



Women's Music and Culture FESTIVALS

By Jamie Anderson

Pull out the sleeping bag, the guitar, and the crystals—it's festival season again! What follows is a list of festivals and some of the amenities they provide. Ticket prices and attendance are estimates. Accessibility services differ from festival to festival, and the availability of interpreters varies; you'll need to contact the festival directly for details like that. Finally, many of these festivals are produced by groups of women; due to space considerations, only the main production contact women are listed in this article.

Whether you prefer a small, intimate setting or the larger-than-life scale of Michigan, whether you're looking to get naked in the woods by the light of your new Coleman lantern or prefer the indoor conveniences of cabins and dorm rooms, there's a festival for you. See you in the ticket line!

ARIZONA WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

Third weekend in September in northeastern Arizona. Attendance: 100-200. Women only, sign language interpreted, primitive camping. Ticket prices: \$35-\$45. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, open mic. *Produced by CB Productions and Diane Post, 1826 E. Willeta, Phoenix, AZ 85006. (602) 258-7985.*

CAMPFEST

Memorial Day weekend, since 1984, near the Pennsylvania-Delaware line. Attendance: 750-900. Women only, sign language interpreted, camping, cabins. Ticket price: \$165 plus \$20 workshift deposit. Festival includes: night stage, film/video, workshops, crafts area. *Produced by Lee Glanton, RR 5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322. (609) 694-2037.*



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Jamie Anderson (right) with pal Seraiah Carol. Both performed as singers/leaping lesbians on Sue Fink's 1991 Michigan Day Stage set. Most festivals feature some kind of afternoon "showcase" type entertainment.

CELEBRATION LESBIENNES

Labor Day weekend, since 1991, almost two hours northeast of Montreal. Attendance: 300-500. Women only, camping, cabins, lake, pool; many performances and workshops are in French with English interpretation. Ticket prices: \$125-\$200. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, film/video, arts exhibit, workshops. *Produced by Productions Particulieres (Myriam Fougère and Lin Daniels). Canadian contact info: CP 261, Succ. de Lorimier, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2H 2N6. (514) 593-4220. USA contact info: 132 Montague St., Box 274, Brooklyn, NY 11201. (510) 763-9228.*

EAST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL

Third weekend in June, since 1989, in Pennsylvania (three hours north of New York City). Attendance: 400-1,000. Women only, sign language interpreted, cabins, camping, lake, tennis courts. Ticket prices: \$125-\$200. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, crafts area, film/video, arts exhibit, workshops, theater, special interest areas (Writer's Tent, Lesbians of Colors, Gyrifest/girl children, Over Fifty, Separatists, Jewish Lesbians). *Produced by Particular Productions (Lin Daniels and Myriam Fougère), 132 Montague St., Box 274, Brooklyn, NY 11201. (510) 763-9228.*

GULF COAST WOMEN'S FESTIVAL

Easter/Passover weekend, since 1989, in central Mississippi. Attendance: approximately 400. Women only, sign language interpreted, camping, cabins, RV spaces with hook-ups, shuttle from Jackson airport. Ticket prices: \$100-\$165. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, workshops, jam tent, woman-oriented Passover/Seder celebration, crafts area, various networking tents (Over Forty, Women of Color in Celebration, Womyn With Disabilities, Rainbow Political/cultural sharing, Harmony Haven/boy children, Gyrllfest/girl children, Women in Recovery). *Produced by Henson Productions (Wanda and Brenda Henson), 1806 Curcor Dr., Gulfport, MS 39507. (601) 896-3196.*

LONE STAR WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

First weekend in October in central Texas. Attendance: 300-1,000. Women only, camping. Ticket prices: \$55-\$75, meal ticket. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, open mic, special-interest areas (Sobriety Tree, Singles Game Room). *Produced by Bonnie Moore and Kathy Mills, P.O. Box 2650, Austin, TX 78768.*

MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

Mid August, since 1975, in northwestern Michigan (1992 dates: Aug. 11-16). Attendance: 6,500-8,000. Largest quantity and variety of women's music and culture on the planet; attended by women from all over the world. Women only, sign language interpreted, camping, RV area, shuttle to/from Grand Rapids airport. Ticket prices: \$190 for full week. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, acoustic stage, open mic, film/video, crafts area, dance, theater, workshops, special interest workshops (Tai Chi Chuan, Taiko Drumming, country-western dance, body building, gospel choir, concert band, festival chorus), special interest areas (DART, Over Forty, Womyn of Color), Community Center Programs (Jewish Womyn, International Networking, Younger Womyn, Bisexual Womyn). *Produced by We Want the Music (Lisa Vogel and Barbara Price), P.O. Box 22, Walhalla, MI 49458. (616) 757-4766.*

MIDWINTER MINIFEST

Annual one-day event, first weekend in December, at the church in Chicago where Mountain Moving Coffeehouse meets every Saturday night. Attendance: several hundred. Women only, dozens of crafts booths. Affordable "suggested donation" at door. Entertainment varies from year to year (sometimes local talent all day with national talent at night, sometimes only one major act, sometimes no live entertainment, sometimes films). *Produced by Mountain Moving Coffeehouse Collective (Joy Rosenblatt), P.O. Box 409159, Chicago, IL 60640. (312) 769-6899.*

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHORAL FESTIVAL

Weekend event, every two years or so, usually in the fall, in various cities; scheduled for Cincinnati in 1993. Performances, workshops, networking. Women's choirs and choruses from throughout the SisterSingers network (mostly U.S. and Canada). 1993 production contact: *SisterSingers (Catherine Roma), 4260 Langland, Cincinnati, OH 45223. (513) 541-0560.*

NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

Weekend after Memorial Day weekend, since 1974, now held in Bloomington, Indiana (originally in Champaign/Urbana, Illinois). Attendance: 2,500-3,500. Oldest continuing women's music festival; wide variety of day programming and special-interest conferences (such as the annual Writers Conference). At Indiana University, all events indoors, university housing, sign language interpreted, shuttle to/from Indianapolis airport. Ticket prices: \$105-\$145. Festival includes: day stage showcase, night stage, Bloomington Cafe (acoustic stage), crafts area, film/video, arts exhibit, theater, spirituality showcase, dances, walk/run race, child care and children's programming, special-interest workshops (writers, spirituality, women of color, older women, health and sports, women and money). This year the Association of Women's Music and Culture will hold their convention at this festival. *Produced by Women in the Arts (Mary Byrne), P.O. Box 1427, Indianapolis, IN 46206. (317) 636-7382.*

NORTH EAST WOMEN'S MUSICAL RETREAT (NEWMR)

Labor Day weekend, since 1980, in southern Massachusetts; formerly called New England Women's Musical Retreat. Exact location varies. Attendance: 500-1,000. Women only, sign language interpreted, camping, cabins. Ticket prices: \$160-\$215. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, open mic, film/video, arts exhibit, workshops, crafts area. *Produced by NEWMR, Inc., P.O. Box 550, Branford, CT 06405. (203) 522-6543.*

OHIO LESBIAN FESTIVAL

Annual outdoor one-day festival (may expand to weekend with camping), first Saturday after Labor Day weekend near Columbus. Attendance: 1,300-2,000. Women only. Ticket prices: \$12-\$15. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, open mic, arts exhibit, workshops, market area, food concessions, games (volleyball, basketball, water balloon fights), drumming circle, child care. *Produced by Lesbian Business Association, P.O. Box 02086, Columbus, OH 43202. (614) 261-4608.*

PACIFIC NORTHWEST WOMEN'S CULTURAL JAMBOREE

July Fourth weekend, since 1990, in Bellingham, Washington. Attendance: approximately 1,000. At Western Washington University, sign language interpreted. Ticket price: \$80. Festival includes: main stage, dances, crafts area, workshops, movies, art show, open mic, sports (volleyball, softball, swimming). Check to see if there will be male back-up musicians on stage. *Produced by Beachfront Productions (Tam Martin), P.O. Box 4644, Long Beach, CA 90804. (213) 439-8695, fax (312) 439-3981.*

RHYTHMFEST

Labor Day weekend, since 1990, in Northern Georgia (Lookout Mountain). Attendance: approximately 1,300. Women only, sign language interpreted, camping, cabins, RV (no hook-ups). Festival includes: day stage, night stage, open mic, videos, arts exhibit, workshops, festival-sponsored speakers, crafts area, carnival (jugglers, parade and more), live music

jam, herb womyn gathering, special-interest tents (Networking, Women of Color, Native Americans, Political, Environmental, Sex Awareness). Melissa Etheridge performed (unannounced) at '90 and '91 festivals. Produced by the Rhythmfest Cooperative (Mandy Carter, Michelle Crone, Kathleen Mahoney, Barb Savage), 2009 Chapel Hill Rd., Durham, NC 27707. (919) 419-1923, fax (919) 682-9435.

SISTERFIRE

One-day urban event in June, in Washington, D.C. area. Temporarily discontinued, but is expected to resume eventually. Large variety of culturally diverse programming, including Deaf Stage unique to this festival. *Produced by Roadwork, 1475 Harvard NW, Washington, DC 20009. (202) 234-9308.*

SOUTHERN WOMEN'S MUSIC AND COMEDY FESTIVAL

Memorial Day weekend, since 1983, in Georgia. Exact location varies. Attendance: 1,500-2,100. Women only, sign language interpreted, cabins, camping, RV space. Good showcase for comics. Ticket prices: \$140-\$220. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, open mic, film/video, workshops, special-interest areas (Twelve-Step programs, singles support). *Produced by Robin Tyler Productions, 15842 Chase St., North Hills, CA 91343. (818) 893-4075.*

SPIRIT FEST

Labor Day weekend, since 1991, in Louisiana (thirty miles north of New Orleans in Fountain Bleu Park). Attendance: approximately 200. Focus on woman-oriented spirituality. Women only, cabins, camping in park but not at festival site. Ticket prices: \$80-\$145. Festival includes: night stage with audience participation, crafts area, workshops, cabin for drummers. *Produced by Henson Productions (Wanda and Brenda Henson), 1806 Curcor Dr., Gulfport, MS 39507. (601) 896-3196.*

VIRGINIA WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

Last weekend in September in Virginia (twenty-five miles northeast of

Charlottesville at the Women's Retreat Center). Attendance: approximately 800. Women only, sign language interpreted, cabins, camping, pool, child care. Ticket price: \$40, food extra. Festival includes: music and comedy all day until 10 p.m., crafts area, workshops, food concessions, dances, sing-alongs, ropes course, sports (volleyball, field hockey, softball, frisbee, new games, soccer). *Produced by Janet Grubbs, 1522 Old Mill Rd., Crozier, VA 23039. (804) 784-6012.*

WEST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL

This new festival will debut during the first weekend in June in Malibu, California. Attendance: 500 anticipated. Women only, sign language interpreted, cabins, camping, pool, beachfront access. Ticket prices: \$175-\$225. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, crafts area, film/video, arts exhibit, workshops, dances, country-western dance lessons, special interest tents (Lesbians of Colors, Jewish Lesbians, Lesbians for Patsy Cline). *Produced by Lin Daniels and Marilyn Van Veersen, 279 Lester Ave. #3, Oakland, CA 94606. (510) 763-9228.*

WEST COAST WOMEN'S MUSIC AND COMEDY FESTIVAL

Labor Day Weekend, since 1978, near Yosemite, California. Attendance: 2,000-3,500. Women only, sign language interpreted, cabins, camping, RV area, pool, lake, river. Ticket prices: \$140-\$220. Festival includes: day stage, night stage, open mic, crafts area, film/video, plays, clean and sober dances, country-western dances (and lessons), poetry, workshops, special-interest areas (singles support, Twelve-Step programs). *Produced by Robin Tyler Productions, 15842 Chase St., North Hills, CA 91343. (818) 893-4075.*

WIMINFEST

Memorial Day weekend, since 1985, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Attendance: up to 1,000; usually sells out early. Night stage in KiMo Theatre, other events in hotel and at local park, sign language interpreted. Ticket prices: \$45-\$75. Festival includes: night stage, day stage showcase, open mic, crafts fair, art show, "fun in the sun" (games and other outdoor activities), dyke dog contest, work-

shops. *Produced by Women in Movement in New Mexico/WIMIN (Carol Boss, Sandi Gonzales), P.O. Box 80204, Albuquerque, NM 87198. (505) 298-3691.*

WOMEN'S MOTORCYCLE FESTIVAL

Annual in August, since 1984. Write for full details. *Produced by Gin Shear and Sue Slate, 7 Lent Ave., Leroy, NY 14482. (202) 483-1010.*

WOMONGATHERING

Weekend before Memorial Day Weekend, since 1988, on the Pennsylvania-Delaware state line. Attendance: 175-500. Women only, camping, cabins. Ticket price: \$160 plus \$20 workshift deposit. Festival includes: emphasis on women's spirituality, intensive workshops, music, drumming, theater, ritual. *Produced by Lee Glanton, RR5 Box 185, Franklinville, NJ 08322. (609) 694-2037.*

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Festival information was obtained directly from the producers and from *Women's Music Plus: Directory of Resources in Women's Music & Culture*. Omission of any festival was unintentional. If your festival was not included, please notify Jamie Anderson, P.O. Box 42282, Tucson, AZ, 85733, and *Women's Music Plus*, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640. •

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jamie Anderson was recently voted Favorite New Performer by 'HOT WIRE' readers. Her newest album 'Center of Balance' has just been released.

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THE LESBIAN CARTOONISTS NETWORK

By Toni Armstrong Jr.

When Andrea Natalie started The Lesbian Cartoonists Network in 1990, she didn't know any other lesbian cartoonists, though she had been syndicating her *Stonewall Riots* cartoons since 1989. "I wanted to find out submission information—how to get my cartoons into things—and I wanted to connect with other dyke cartoonists," she says.

Creating new networks from scratch is a time-honored tradition in women's culture, and Andrea plunged right in. "I sent out press releases and articles to more than 300 publications, although I don't know how many actually printed it," she says. "I talked with Jennifer Camper here in New York, and Alison Bechdel had written me a letter. I picked the brains of every cartoonist I met for the names and addresses of other cartoonists, and some addresses came from the man who curated the *Lesbian/Gay Cartoon Show* in New York City in 1989. Little by little I wrote to everyone."

By the fall of 1990, Andrea had found enough women to justify putting out a quarterly newsletter, which has been one of the Lesbian Cartoonists Network's most visible projects. Other advocacy activities include letter-writing campaigns and anything that might inform and promote lesbian cartooning and cartoonists.

"I wanted to see more lesbians in lesbian/gay publications, and also in mainstream publications—and I think we have accomplished a lot of that," says Andrea now. "For example, *Wimmin's Comix* [published by Rip Off Press] changed the spelling of their name—it used to be *Wimmen*, and they switched it to *Wimmin*. Every issue has a different editor; they were one of the first to publish lesbians, but it was sort of here and there.

"Then they had an issue which was really heterosexist, I thought. There was one tiny panel out of the whole book that had anything to do with lesbians; they had done outreach to two lesbian car-

THE LESBIAN LAW OF PROCESS:



Kris Kovick

FOR EVERY IDEA, THERE IS AN EQUAL & OPPOSITE IDEA THAT IS VALID.

toonists, *maybe*.

"We had been writing to them and trying to get in there more, and they never responded. Then they had a prologue that was something about, well, 'when these women cartoonists think about men, they think about sex; they don't think about you're a professor or daddy or brother, they think about sex.' It was just an incredibly heterosexist thing, and it totally overlooked the fact that lesbians existed.

So we started a letter-writing campaign, and it apparently created a big hoo-ha out in San Francisco. Lesbians were invited to a meeting, and a special outreach mailing was done to all the dykes in LCN.

"In the upcoming issues, I think there will be more lesbians. That was last year, and now they're talking about having an issue just about lesbians; they have different subjects every time, but they've never had a subject called dykes." Other

examples of publications which Andrea says will focus on lesbians include *Real Girl* (issue #5) from San Francisco, edited by Angela Bocage, and *Fanny* [Knock-about Comics] out of London.

"There will be a couple of all-dyke issues," Andrea says, "so the Network has accomplished that. It's gotten us more into mainstream comic books, and we know what's going on more. A lot more of us are syndicating than before."

Despite the successes, Andrea's final issue as editor was last summer. "I discontinued it because I got a little burned out on it. I just didn't have time. On an average, I can't even say—but it took maybe ten hours a week of work," she says. "It started being a lot of correspondence and phone calls, and I also found myself wanting to jump on every political issue—like if a newspaper was screwing over dyke cartoonists, not paying or even plagiarizing. I wanted to have us all jump on them or something. Or like there's a cartoon show now out in San Francisco, and they're calling it *The First Women's Cartoon Show*, which is not true—there have been lesbian cartoon shows. So I wanted to start another letter-writing campaign...I just wasn't focusing on my own work anymore." Andrea's cartoons are now syndicated in twenty-five publications ("but only about half of those pay me"). She self-

published her first book of cartoons, called simply *Stonewall Riots*, and is currently looking for a publisher for her second, which she hopes will be entitled *The Night Audrey's Vibrator Spoke*.

Interestingly enough, funding LCN was never an issue, unlike how it's been with many other women's culture enterprises. "I never even requested funds," Andrea says, "but all these dyke cartoonists sent me money. Like, I'd open the mail and there'd be a check for \$100 from Alison Bechdel. I think only once did I have to put my own money into the newsletter. At the end I even had money left over that I just sent back; there was no problem with money."

When Brandie Erisman of Daytona Beach, Florida heard that Andrea was stopping, she volunteered to take over at least the LCN newsletter. Brandie considers herself a writer, currently working on freelance projects, rather than a professional cartoonist, though she does like to draw. "My background is journalism," she says, "and a lot of times I'd be taking notes and, well, when you want to tell somebody what you think of them, you just kind of draw a little note in the margin that they'll never see."

The new newsletter editor first heard about the Lesbian Cartoonists Network through *Lana's World*, a now defunct

comic fanzine started by Michelle Rau. "It was a little collection of cartoons, and Michelle was real big on encouraging people who were just starting out," says Brandie. "I started corresponding with her, and I received her publication. Her mailing list eventually went to Andrea Natalie, and I started receiving the Cartoonists Network newsletter. When I heard that Andrea was no longer going to do it, I realized that I have the time and the skills to coordinate it."

"I felt that it was an important thing to do, because I think cartoons are very powerful. A lot of surveys say that in the newspapers, cartoons are the first things that people read—or a large percentage of people *always* read the cartoons," she says. "Some of them are very innocent, but a lot of them have a very strong political message, and they reflect what's going on. So I thought it was important because of the power of the political cartoon. Also I'm interested in encouraging lesbian artists and lesbian opinion. I figured I could follow up on one of my hobbies *and* do my bit for the lesbian community."

Brandie says she doesn't belong to any gay rights organizations, but she thinks of herself and her lover as a kind of local lesbian lending library. "We receive a lot of publications, and we try to rotate the them. When something important happens, we make sure that all of our friends are aware of it. And they say, 'Hey, can we borrow this magazine or that book...' It's not like I'm major crusader—it's more like starting in my own community and trying to keep the cohesiveness and the interest there," she says.

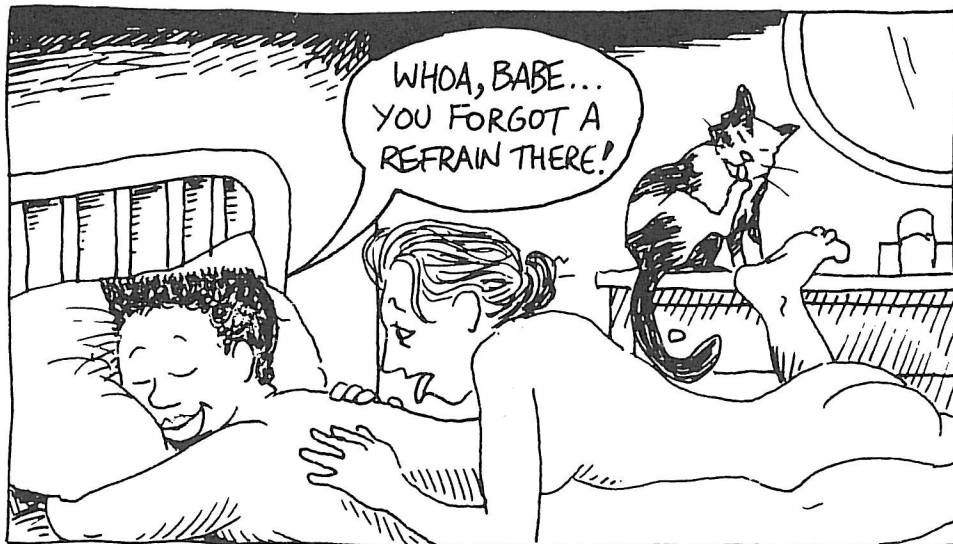
There are currently seventy-five women on the LCN mailing list. It is unclear how many of them are actually working as cartoonists, but reading it is akin to reading a roster of some of the most familiar names in women's cartooning culture: Kris Kovick, Alison Bechdel (*Dykes to Watch Out For*), Leigh Dunlap (*Morgan Calabrese*), Roberta Gregory, Rhonda Dickson (*Lesbian Survival Manual*), Noreen Stevens, Jennifer Camper, and Diane Germain. According to Brandie, many of the members cartoon for their local publications and are not (yet) known to the national lesbian feminist audience.

"Some of the seventy-five on the mailing list are people who've written and

continued on page 57

ABOUT THE WRITER: Editor Toni Jr. is proud of the fact that 'HOT WIRE' was the first publication to feature Alison Bechdel on the cover (July 1987 issue).

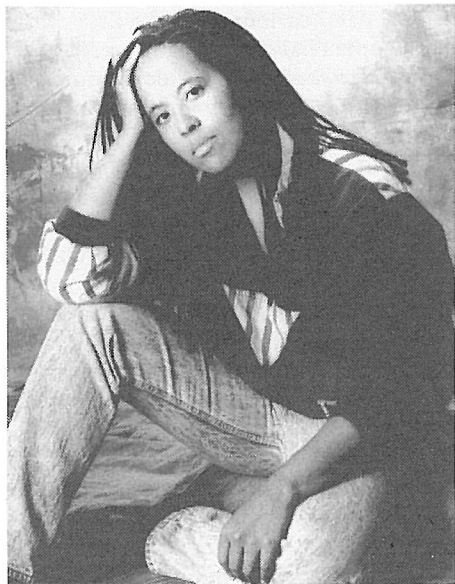
APRIL 8, 1991. MEREDITH SCHAPIRO TRANSCRIBES THE COMPLETE LYRICS OF ALL THREE FERRON ALBUMS ONTO LORENE HENDRICKS' BACK WITH HER TONGUE IN SIXTEEN HOURS AND FORTY-EIGHT MINUTES.



Alison Bechdel

WOMEN MUSICIANS ON SABBATICAL

By Laura Post



Irene Young

Deidre McCalla: "I no longer have this internal pressure that if I don't do a new record immediately, I'll never be worth anything."

Academics get paid to do it. Seniors are expected to do it—permanently. In privileged circles, "junior year abroad" has become a metaphor for it, and artists have sometimes been able to get away with doing it. What I'm referring to is taking time off from work. Life is hard all over, but the touring schedule of performers in the feminist cultural network can be grueling, draining, and ultimately exhausting. What follow are the personal stories of three musicians: two who have recently returned from time off (Nancy Vogl and Deidre McCalla) and one who is now in the middle of her sabbatical (Alix Dobkin).

NANCY VOGL

Nancy Vogl has offered her visionary lyrics and sure acoustic guitar playing to the feminist community since 1973. She toured the U.S. five times with the Berkeley Women's Music Collective, and has



Nancy Vogl: "When this thing [The Wild Hearts] with Libby McLaren and Robin Flower came up, there was no way that I could say no. I wouldn't have made this choice had I not gone to Spain." Nancy spent a year at the L'aula de Musica music academy in Barcelona.

since played at the First International Rock Festival in Berlin, Germany as well as continuing to tour as a solo performer. Her first solo album, *Something To Go On* (1984), was recorded to document her work before establishing a full-time career in youth counseling. *Fight Like the Dancer* (1986, Olivia Records) featured her talents with Nashville studio musicians. She is currently playing in a new band called The Wild Hearts with sister women's music veterans Robin Flower and Libby McLaren.

In 1989, when her essay about the power and importance of women's music won her a Rotary Scholarship, Nancy was able to spend a year at L'aula de Musica, a small music academy in Barcelona.

"I was thirty-nine, in a very stable relationship, and touring began to be intrusive," Nancy says. "I was also becoming attached to being in a small town, so I

decided not to tour any more." Her plans included going back to school to finally learn theory ("which I've avoided for twenty years"), and to go home and do community work in Sonoma.

"When I was twenty-two, I went to Europe for six months and just traveled around, had a great time; I was gone, I came back, I went back to my life," she recalls. "To go away at thirty-nine was like starting a new life. I didn't know the language, or one person in Barcelona." The time away was quite different from what she had imagined; when she came back, she had a difficult time readjusting.

Nancy points out that touring artists "do things for survival," and have particular daily rituals. "What happened over an eleven-month period is that I did all those, but I failed to remember that I was away from home. And so Barcelona became my home. When I took all the things I had just

established for myself, and flipped them back at home, I lost my center.

"For many people who grew up in a society where the dominant values are Puritan, Western, goal-oriented, product-oriented, what you do when you're basically a self-motivated person is to say, 'Well, if I only had this time off, I would practice eight hours a day, I would write, I would learn Spanish, I would do all these things.' But I realized the most I could sometimes possibly do was to look out the window. It took me a while before I let go of everything and said, 'This is my time for whatever it is.' It turned out that what I had to learn during that year had little to do with music," she says.

"I started a homeopathic remedy, I did a lot of meditating, and I had a very introspective year. It just happened that Catalan culture is very, very closed—not the stereotyped view of southern Spain, lots of music and dancing and friendly people. What I moved into was an urban, industrial, cosmopolitan European city that is formal, reserved, and very private. Not that I was lonely—because I had friends, and I got mail—but it was a kind of exclusion, and it pushed me into an internal journey. That's in fact what I had instead of a musical breakthrough. I learned some theory, I practiced my guitar, and I read a lot. My Spanish was pretty good when I left." Nancy says she had time to do everything she wanted, all day long, which she found amazing.

"It's true that crisis is opportunity, and a door closed is a door opened. For whatever reasons, I experienced everything that I did, and it's taken me to this point, which is to the band I've been looking for for eighteen years [The Wild Hearts]. When this thing with Libby and Robin came up, there was no way that I could say no," says Nancy. "I wouldn't have made this choice had I not gone to Spain. The more I live, the more I'm convinced that you just really have to do—I have to do—what pleases me. If I follow that, it's right.

"I didn't want to believe that this happened around my turning forty because intellectually—being a feminist—I thought that age didn't matter. But this whole year has just been the most tumultuous, emotional, spiritual, radical shifting for me. I am working again as a counselor, in a two-and-a-half-day shift, which affords me four days off to practice. I've made a year's commitment to the job, and after that, I'll see what our touring schedule is like. I'm really happy."

DEIDRE McCALLA

Singer-songwriter Deidre McCalla was going places. Her album *Don't Doubt It* (1985, Olivia Records) was nominated for two New York Music Awards; *With a Little Luck* (1987, Olivia Records) won a San Francisco Cable Car Award. Thanks to her active promoting and touring—toting hundreds of pounds of her own recordings on everything from Greyhound buses to trains, planes, and cars—both albums sold well, considering they're on a grass-roots independent label. Deidre's own career was taking off when she appeared on the cover of *HOT WIRE* in 1988, but the intense pace was wearing. She took 1990 off to rest.

"In 1989, I realized that for the last five years I had spent sixty to eighty percent of my time away from home," she recalls. "Traveling is not conducive to creativity, but due to the economics of touring with a road manager I have needed to do long tours." Sometimes Deidre would be away from home as long as thirteen consecutive weeks.

"The years of being gone that much, of lugging all that weight around, was really taking a toll," she says. "I started not being emotionally present at the shows. I'd be singing a song and thinking about which interstate I was going to take the next day. I was getting less patient with people, which is not good because I work with a lot of new producers. I have always been a great 'starter show,' because I think that building the network is so important. But I found that I was becoming more short-tempered, which is not like me. When I saw that I had done 365 shows in five years, I understood why I was so tired."

It was a good time to take a break. "I had put out two successful albums, and I felt my career would benefit from time off, both creatively and in terms of audience growth—it kind of helps to disappear sometimes. In the fall of '89, I told my booker [Tam Martin] that I was going to take 1990 off, which didn't mean that I wasn't going to do *any* shows; if the phone rang, fine, but I told her not to struggle to put a tour together. I needed to be alone for a while."

Deidre describes herself as "somewhat frugal," and she had saved some money. "It doesn't take a whole lot for me to live, and I knew that I would be all right for a while," she says. "I originally thought I would have a lot of time for writing, and that I would write all the songs for the

next album. I did do some writing, but it was not anywhere near as much as what I thought I was going to do. Halfway through the year, I started tripping myself out about it, and feeling like I was doing nothing. It really wasn't until the end of the year that I came to a place where I realized that I was *supposed* to do nothing. The point was to rest."

Deidre had bought a keyboard the year before, and spent a good portion of 1990 teaching herself to play it. "It was restful to be away from the guitar, and it was really great not to have to do anything," she says. "I would get up in the morning, exercise, go for walks. I was just home—answering my phone instead of letting my answering machine do it. I don't think anyone who's not traveled extensively can imagine how thrilling it is just to be home."

By the end of 1990, Deidre had an album's worth of material that she wanted to record, but was depressed at the thought of having to raise funds. "I finally realized that I didn't have to put out an album in the spring or fall, or any time in 1991. The point of the sabbatical was to rest, and I did that, and now I could do what I wanted to do—which was live shows. In 1991, I tremendously enjoyed every show I did. I wish there had been more shows, but the recession and the Gulf War had a paralyzing effect on producers and audiences; everybody was watching their bank account," she says.

Deidre has come to terms with the pace her career is now keeping. "At this point, I no longer have this internal pressure that if I don't do a new record immediately, I'll never be worth anything. *With a Little Luck* showed that I wasn't a one-trick pony, so in terms of needing to prove things to myself—that need isn't there. I think I was able to take the time off because I felt I could finally relax—that I wasn't going to wake up and realize that it had all been just a wonderful dream. The success of *With a Little Luck* enabled me to take this sabbatical with confidence in myself.

"Every career has its stresses, and I think the majority of the audience doesn't realize just how many hats performers on this circuit wear. Also, since music is an activity that people usually do in their leisure time, sometimes women don't realize that it's really *work* for performers," she says. "I wish it was easier."

Deidre thinks the world would be better off if it was set up for everyone to take sabbaticals instead of waiting until

age sixty-five and retirement. "I know someone who believes in 'periodic retirement,' which I highly recommend if there's any way to step back from what you're doing. I'm very fortunate that I am able to do work that I love doing; I stepped back because I wanted to continue loving doing it."

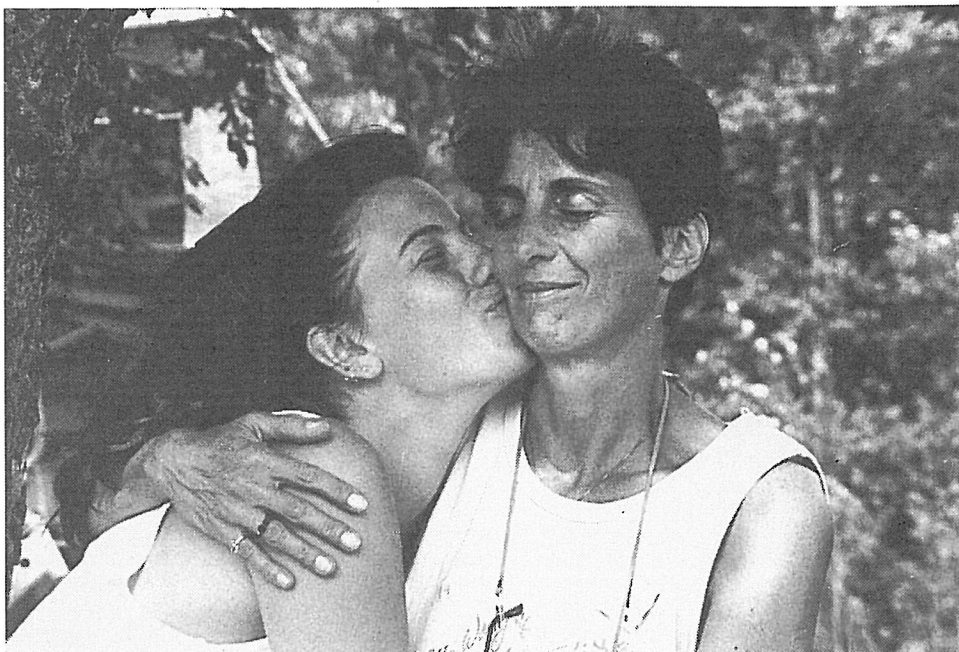
ALIX DOBKIN

Alix Dobkin has undeniably been one of the most visible lesbian feminists in our community since *Lavender Jane Loves Women* was released in 1973 on her own Women's Wax Works label. Alix's classic songs are still concert favorites ["The Woman In Your Life," "Talking Lesbian," "Amazon ABC," and "If It Wasn't For the Women"]; her popular new "Lesbian Code"—the anthem gleaned from her recent touring through English-speaking countries (on the 1990 release *Yahoo Australia!*)—proves that Alix's talents and appeal remain great. Why, then, has the woman often labelled "Head Lesbian" taken 1992 off from touring?

"I've been doing this for the better part of twenty years," she says, "and though I love performing, doing workshops, and traveling, I'm just tired. I love meeting and singing for Lesbians, for women, being welcomed into so many Lesbian homes—it's not that I'm tired of doing those things. But I am tired. So, when I got a message from 'beyond' to stop, I thought, well, why not?" She decided to give it a try.

"One of the main reasons I think I can take time off is that the job I set out to do—helping to establish Lesbian community—is done. I can still perform, I can still get concerts, I can still make a living, my audience is stable—so that's not the point. In fact, I've gotten wonderful support from women, the perfect kind of support which says we'll really miss you, but go for it; or you deserve it, good for you."

Alix says that once she made the decision to go off the road, she was in a daze, but it feels good now. "I expect to do occasional performances and special events, but I won't be on the road all the time. That really was the decision: to just stay home. I tour maybe seven or eight months a year, and although it's not a continuous process of being on the road, it's an interrupted home life. That means I don't get to do anything like play on the softball team, or participate in ongoing projects, or go to the women's coffeehouse, because I'm gone too much." Alix is looking forward to



Toni Armstrong Jr.

Alix Dobkin: "I view this next year as emptying out, getting rid of an identity I've been constructing for thirty-five years: Alix the Performer, Alix the Entertainer. And for eighteen of those years, Alix the Lesbian Celebrity." (Pictured with daughter Adrian Hood.)

the opportunity to connect with the community that exists in the Catskills and, when she does travel, to just go for visits without having to work all the time.

Alix's last concert was in Pomona, New York last November. At press time, she was planning to produce a Country & Western two-stepping/line dancing event with instructors from Northampton, Massachusetts, and had been invited to do a guest lecture at SUNY/New Paltz in a Lesbian Studies class. The handful of performances she has scheduled include the East Coast Lesbians' Festival, the new West Coast Lesbians' Festival, and her traditional July show at Mountain Moving Coffeehouse in Chicago.

Mostly, though, she's been concentrating on writing, as per the plan. "I started writing articles in February, and I'm spending time learning how to use my word processor—a Smith Corona which I got from Kay Hagan," she says. "I've been concentrating on writing the liner notes for my compilation album, entitled *Love and Politics*." The record is due out this summer, and will include two previously unrecorded songs.

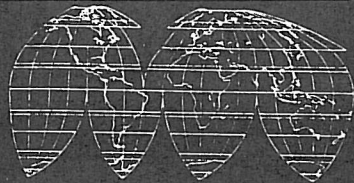
"I'll always go to Michigan—which is so important to me—but I don't know whether or not I'll even play guitar, though I'm still practicing and improving technically. I view this next year as emptying out, getting rid of an identity I've been

constructing for thirty-five years: Alix the Performer, Alix the Entertainer. And for eighteen of those years, Alix the Lesbian Celebrity. I expect 1992 to be difficult and empty, and in 1993 we'll see what comes in to fill that emptiness. Ha ha ha." So far, Alix reports "no emptiness whatsoever."

A major goal during this next phase involves writing, especially her memoirs. "I'm thinking about the early '40s, when I was very, very young," she says. "I want to see what's there, what I can retrieve—learn more about myself and who I am, where I come from, and the things that maybe I didn't look at before. Then I'll get on to my teenage political activism, Yiddish Culture, art student years, folksinging in the '60s, marriage, and motherhood. Everything that happened before I became a Lesbian. I think that every one of us—every Lesbian—needs to do personal work, and needs to uncover the kind of brainwashing and programming we all get, no matter how functional or dysfunctional our families were.

"There is nothing particular that I'm
continued on page 47

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Laura Post has written in previous issues of 'HOT WIRE' about time off taken by Betsy Rose, Ferron, and Lucie Blue Tremblay. Much appreciation to Nancy, Deidre, and Alix for participation and feedback.*



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WHO WEARS THE TUX?

The Original Great American Dyke Quiz

By Julia Willis

COLLECTIVELY SPEAKING

How are decisions made in a collective?

A. After a thorough discussion of the issue, a course of action is proposed and accepted by a majority vote.

B. The issue is turned over to a steering committee for further discussion, but the committee can never find a good time they can all meet except Sunday afternoon—and no one wants to meet then.

C. Everyone expresses her opinion on the issue, but no one listens to Jade's opinion anymore because she's sleeping with someone outside the collective.

D. Elena chairs the meeting, and whoever wants to stay in the group does whatever Elena says.

E. They close the door for privacy and then flip a coin.

B is the answer that can best be applied to most collectives. This is why they're always in the process of getting back to you. If you are very lucky, a decision will be made in your lifetime.

LESBIANS ON FILM

Movie censorship forbade any references to "taboo" subjects including lesbianism from the early '30s into the '60s, when restrictions were lifted and lesbians came onto the screen—still nearly unrecognizable as human beings. Who will be most remembered for her truly awful portrayal of a lesbian in a mainstream motion picture?

A. Barbara Stanwyck, playing a crusty madam in a New Orleans brothel with a bad case of the hots for one of her girls (played by Capucine, an actress who always seemed dubbed, even when she wasn't), in *Walk on the Wild Side*.

B. Sandy Dennis, as the femme who whines so loudly and so long that it's honestly a relief when the tree falls on her in *The Fox*.

C. Anne Heywood, probably the most inept butch in the history of cinema (it's almost a shame that tree doesn't get her, too), also starring in *The Fox*.

D. Either of the two French twits starring in *Therese and Isabelle*, a salute to girls everywhere who ran screaming from boarding school into a

respectable married state.

E. Raquel Welch, in an unforgettable screen appearance as the Greek poet Sappho in *Women of Lesbos*.

F. Shirley MacLaine, giving her all as poor Martha, who practically in the same breath declares her love for Karen (Audrey Hepburn) and hangs herself (not what you'd call a very positive role model), in *The Children's Hour*.

G. Mercedes McCambridge, doubly nominated for her roles as the leather-clad sadist in *Touch of Evil* and the gingham-clad homophobe in love with Joan Crawford (which is, of course, why she is so determined to kill her) in an odd (and I do mean odd) Western called *Johnny Guitar*.

H. Susanna York, as the helpless homebody who eats cigars and drinks bathwater in *The Killing of Sister George*.

I. Two women who should have known better.

The answer is I, and the two women are Alexis Smith and Melina Mercouri, for their horrifying portrayal of a pair of drooling, lascivious, and highly unattractive lesbians (and by this I do not mean they looked ugly, but that they gave off such an unsavory, unwholesome attitude toward each other it was enough to make your skin crawl—honest) in the 1975 bomb 'Once Is Not Enough.' But it was—it was more than enough. Oh, and concerning answer E, Raquel never made a movie called 'Women of Lesbos,' but we can dream, can't we?

THE BIGGER BANG THEORY

Where did we come from and how did we get here?

A. We come from the Amazon planet Sis in the Labia Majora galaxy. Our mission is to create a welcome and loving diversion in an otherwise primitive and generally uninhabitable environment known as Earth. Our soul identities are made manifest in a certain percentage of all female babies born to human parents.

B. Well, one time Lilith shoved Adam off her and got up and said, "That's enough of this," and left. She was later spotted living with a woman who sold camels down in Babylon.

C. We used to be dolphins until evolution gave us the clitoris. Then all hell broke loose.

D. It was just one of those things.

E. We don't recall.

The answer (and although I have no definitive proof, my sources are entirely reputable) is A. Now doesn't this explain a lot?

BATTER UP!

The mystique surrounding women and softball is powerful. Where did the name originate?

A. On the playing fields of Eton.

B. In ancient times, when Amazons ritually tossed the heads of their enemies around a circle to celebrate victory over the patriarchy.

C. Next to the Piedmont Regional High School in Pickens, South Carolina, in 1911, when Miss Minnie Mae Moore and her "chum" Miss Sara Sperling started the first Maiden Ladies' Saturday Softball League, and the girls came from six counties to gaze upon Minnie Mae and her pitcher's mound.

D. None of the above.

The answer is B. Eventually they switched from heads to a more blatantly offensive rounded body part—hence the name "softball." Had this change not occurred, many of you would now belong to softhead teams.

LESBIAN NOVELS

It's very important that you maintain an historical perspective on lesbian writing before the recent rash of fiction in every genre from mystery to romance to roman à clef to social commentary. Why? Because, dear readers (she said, adjusting her pince-nez), you will learn how far we have come in creating a variety of more positive role models, and you will see how far we have yet to go on the road to great and lasting literature. It will be good for you—and I expect to see your papers on my desk by Friday. Meanwhile, from the following plot descriptions, pick the one which corresponds to the narrative action in the 1928 book 'The Well of Loneliness.'

A. Two women run away together and make a homestead for themselves in rural New York State, back when the far West was Buffalo.

B. Laura spends several miserable years with a

butch named Beebo who pretends she was raped to keep Laura interested, and then somehow Laura ends up married (to a nice, mixed-up faggot) and expecting a baby.

C. A picaresque novel of the adventures of a young Horatia Alger type: everything she touches turns to gold, and every woman she touches turns to putty in her hands. Based on the real-life megalomania of the author.

D. A girl named Stephen falls in love with another British ambulance driver in WWI but eventually sacrifices her own happiness to see that her one true love is safely married to a nice boy.

E. Jan and her friends drink tea and sip brandy and wander around thinking how wrong it is and how very, very lovely. Sigh.

All right, pens down. You should have written D in the space provided (what space?). How many of you got it? Tsk, tsk, D is 'The Well of Loneliness' by Radclyffe Hall, whose friends called her John. She and Lady Trowbridge lived together in the English countryside and raised dachshunds. A quick rundown on the others (and you may have an extra point for knowing two or more): A is 'Patience and Sarah,' an early '70s novel by Isobel Miller; B is 'Women in the Shadows' (1959) by Ann Bannon; C is the classic 'Rubyfruit Jungle' by Rita Mae Brown (also early '70s); and E is 'We Too Are Drifting' (1935) by Gail Wilhelm.

I'VE GOT ALL YOUR RECORDS, OR "GUESS WHO I SLEPT WITH IN 1982 WHEN SHE WAS WARMING UP FOR CRIS WILLIAMSON?"

It's a curious thing, but the music business does seem to have a way of attracting groupies, and in a slightly more subtle fashion this holds true in the lesbian community just as well as it does backstage after an Aerosmith concert. Why is this so?

A. Women musicians are inherently more sensuous than you are.

B. Women musicians lead you to believe they are inherently more sensuous than you are.

C. Most women musicians are either highly evolved spiritual beings or the sleaziest dregs of womankind, and you can't always tell who's who until the next morning. That's what makes it so exciting.

D. Because we often make love while listening to music, the majority of songs are love songs, and music is all rhythm and motion and climax, we've come to equate music with sex.

E. Music is sex.

The answer is D. Now I have nothing personal against love songs—some of my best friends write them. But let's try to remember

that those who cannot tell the singer from the song often end up on the sidewalk with puzzled looks on their afterglowing faces when the loaded van with the bad shocks pulls away from the curb. (Additional warning: and don't quit your day job and pack your bags and move out to California to be near her. Her live-in girlfriend won't like that one bit.)

SM

You don't hear very much about SM now. Why do you suppose that is?

A. The SM dykes quit writing letters to the gay newspapers.

B. It's so hard to find a decent set of restraints

these days.

C. It made too many women giggle.

D. It's old hat—the latest is S and L.

E. Women got tired of trying to sleep in spiked dog collars.

D. The latest is S and L: sweetness and lust. During a session of S and L, you're supposed to giggle.

• • •

These quiz questions are reprinted with permission from 'Who Wears The Tux? The Original Great American Dyke Quiz' (1990, by Julia Willis), now in its second printing. The book is available at your local bookstore, or directly from Banned Books, P.O. Box 33280, Austin, TX 78764. •

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READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

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

- Please vote for one individual and one organization.
- The survey of favorites is included for fun and to give us at *HOT WIRE* a closer look at the tastes of our readers (so we know better who and what to cover in the next year's issues). Please make your survey selections completely on the basis of your personal favorites; this is in no way intended to be a list of "bests." Previous years' Readers' Choice selections can be found in September issues.
- Readers' Choice votes and surveys for this year can be written on a separate piece of paper or photocopied from this page. (Don't feel compelled to rip up your magazine).
- Please vote only once.

We must receive Readers' Choice selections by June 10, 1992.

Send to: 'HOT WIRE' Readers' Choice, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

INDIVIDUALS

ROSEANNE ARNOLD for her uncompromising feminist TV show and her pro-lesbian statements to the press.

ALISON BECHDEL for her *Dykes to Watch Out For* cartoon series, calendars, and books.

TERRY GRANT for not giving up on the women's music distribution business despite the severe economic recession.

WANDA HENSON for her crusade to bring woman-identified culture to the Deep South.

K.D. LANG for breaking the taboo barrier with her homoerotic music videos, and for her performance in *Salmonberries*.

CATHERINE ROMA for her almost-two-decades of commitment to the feminist choral movement.

KAREN WILLIAMS for forging new political paths with her comedy.

ORGANIZATIONS

EAST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL for being the most openly lesbian-identified of all women's music festivals.

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

LADYSLIPPER for maintaining the world's most comprehensive catalog of music, videos, and other resources by women.

LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES for lovingly maintaining the world's largest collection of lesbian materials.

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

FAVORITES

Vocalist _____	All-time favorite album _____
Group/band _____	Album producer _____
Songwriter _____	Live sound engineer _____
Bass player _____	Recording engineer _____
Percussionist _____	Album cover _____
Drummer _____	Fiction book _____
Electric guitarist _____	Nonfiction book _____
Acoustic guitarist _____	Periodical _____
Keyboard player _____	Author _____
Instrumentalist _____	Poet _____
Wind instrument player _____	Cartoonist _____
Comic/comedienne _____	Photographer _____
Emcee _____	Movie/film _____
New performer _____	TV star _____
All-time favorite performer _____	Film star _____
Current song (last 2 years) _____	Film director _____
All-time favorite song _____	Mainstream performer _____
Current album (last 2 years) _____	Other _____

LESBIAN MOVIES I'D LIKE TO SEE

By Diane F. Germain

- **TEENAGE MILITANT NINJA LEZBOS:** Reptilian dykes are cool to the touch but never slimy in their politics.
- **GRIMLEZ 2—THE NEW BITCH:** A gruesome tale of really small and mean-hearted lesbian trolls. Hard to believe. Of little redeeming value.
- **POSTCARDS FROM THE EDGE:** Memories of a traveling poets' collective and their talking lavender van. Kind of strange, but has its touching moments.
- **STAR TREK VI—THE UNDISCOVERED "C" WORD:** Nimoy and Shatner have been reduced to silicone statues in a futuristic "museum of man." No one has time to rescue them, as every lesbian possible is jetting among the stars liberating other female aliens from the fear of intimacy and internalized homophobia. Look for a clever use of the calibrated G-Spot Finder near the end.
- **FRIED LESBO TOMATOES:** The title sounds like Damon Runyon's idea of lesbians on drugs, but not so. A feisty old lesbian, recently escaped from a nasty nursing home, helps a bedraggled but adorable homemaker find love and joy in the arms of another woman. This is

accomplished amusingly through stories of radical rural activist lesbians.

- **PRETTY WOMBMOONS:** Romantic separatists are beautiful and witchy in this comedy of class differences and love.
- **DYKELET:** Shakespeare's eternal dilemma—to be one or not to be one.
- **THE PRINCESS OF DIKES:** A Dutch lesbian stomps through her childhood memories for the key that will save her sensitive sister from a painful case of writer's block. Hint: It has something to do with holding back the oceans, leaks, and fingers used in an unusual way.
- **DYKELINERS:** Exciting film about women medical students daring each other to compete for longest time doing cunnilingus without coming up for air.
- **THE DYKE THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE:** An indictment against the lesbian "baby boom" of recent years. An innocent-looking baby dyke acting as a "nanny" is suspected of attempting to single-handedly curtail the "patriarchal breeders syndrome."
- **FREE DYKE CITY:** A separatist's dream of the future...a women-only city patrolled by lesbian rock stars. Carol MacDonald, Helen Hooke, Toshi Reagon, and the

women of **BETTY** and **Musica Femina** are the intense bounty hunters who relentlessly chase down Richard Gere, the weird intruder. The grossest part is the scene where he claims to be a lesbian. Eeeoow! No way!

- **LEZ' BETTER BLUES:** African-American dykes into sex, jazz trombones, and the value of commitment.
- **AT PLAY IN THE FIELDS OF THE LEZBOS:** Two mercenary white boys crash land in the jungle amid an Amazon tribe. Big personalities clash dramatically as the women decide how to get rid of these intruders and save the rain forest.
- **NUNS ON THE NUN:** Several religious women have desires for the aloof Mother Superior in a Montreal cloister.
- **NOT WITHOUT MY GIRLFRIEND:** Two Iranian women struggle to escape the binds of patriarchy and tradition to come to America as a couple.
- **ATTACK OF THE FIFTY FOOT LESBIAN:** A science fiction classic monster humorous in her proclivity to bite off the heads of pig-like men, but hey, guys, it's just a feminist movie...don't you have any sense of humor? •

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RE:INKING

PRODUCING CONCERTS 'NOTE BY NOTE'

By Rena Yount

This kind of book is a joy to discover. *Note by Note: A Guide to Concert Production* does a much-needed job, and it does it with thoroughness, skill, and care. The result is an organizing tool every aspiring concert producer should have.

The book began in the mid '70s when Holly Near and Amy Horowitz wrote a few pages called *How to Produce a Concert* for new producers who were working with Holly. Several years later, Redwood Records received a grant to write an expanded guide; this became Ginny Berson's *Making a Show of It*, which went out of print in 1985.

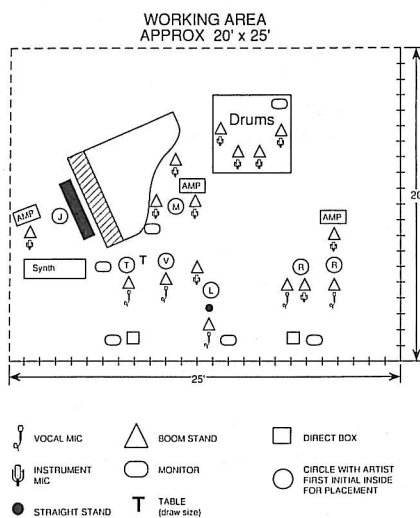
At that point, Redwood Cultural Work—formerly Redwood Records Cultural and Educational Fund—decided to create an updated concert production guide. The 1985 Cathy Fink/Si Kahn tour to benefit the National Campaign Against Toxic Waste was helped by using their personalized addenda to the older book. This experience was the inspiration for Cathy Fink and Sheila Kahn (Community Music) to join forces with Redwood in the research, writing, development, and publicizing of the 1989 *Note by Note*.

Amy Bank wrote the first drafts of most chapters; the writing, community involvement, and logistics were guided by Marti Mogensen, Carrie Koeturius, Jo Durand, Joelle Yuna, and Amy Bank; Jeanne Bradshaw (Great American Music Hall) and Jo-Lynne Worley (Redwood Records) contributed knowledge and forms; and Caryn Dickman and Peggy Kiss computerized the drafts. Martha Ley did a great deal of editorial work, and Pam Wilson designed the cover and final format for the book.

The list of familiar names continues with the women who critiqued the book after it was finally assembled: Torie Os-

RE:INKING articles deal with women's publishing and writing, including individual women, book projects, and related issues.

SAMPLE STAGE DIAGRAMS
Now and on the following page are sample stage diagrams for two different kinds of performances. Artists frequently send a stage diagram with their signed contracts. If they do not, the following layouts may give you some ideas. Final positioning of mics, instruments, and other required pieces of furniture will be done during the technical check.



'Note by Note' includes 150 pages of appendices, consisting mostly of timelines and sample forms.

born, Katie Schlageter, Virginia Giordano, Nona Gandelman, Brynna Fish, Jo Durand, Dulce Argüelles, Cathy Fink, and Sheila Kahn.

Clearly, the creators had their hearts in this project. Even if you've never heard of Redwood Cultural Work or Community Music—or Holly Near or Cathy Fink—you could tell that the people who produced this book have been there. They've seen concerts soar and they've seen them fail miserably. They know the frustration of finally having your favorite musician present, only to find that the audience isn't—because the ads are coming out next week. Oops. Or the audience is there, but anything above a murmur sends the speakers into a feedback frenzy. Or the speakers are fine, but there's no one to set them up.

Having production mishaps is a drain on the musicians, a loss to the audience, and Goddess knows it's a drag for

the producers, who have most likely worked long and hard with few resources and little guidance, trying to pull off an event they believe in.

With *Note by Note* in hand, the problem is partially solved. There may still be limited resources, but this 274-page book gives tons of guidance. It's packed with detailed information about the nitty-gritty of concert production, including booking, promotion, staffing, sound, lighting, accessibility, childcare, and using concerts for fundraising and organizing. How do you design a concert program? What should you put in an artist's contract? It's all here—including two sample artist's contracts and a wealth of other sample forms, charts, contracts, and worksheets. This book is meant to be used. Designed to serve first-time producers, it is detailed enough that it will have value for most experienced ones as well.

Note by Note isn't just for producers. Musicians and other performers who intend to tour will also find this book useful. It will give them a better understanding of what goes into concert productions, and what issues they should raise with producers. If I were a performer working with less-than-experienced concert producers, I would include their purchase of *Note by Note* as part of our agreement—certainly a legitimate production expense, and one likely to save much more than its price in time, money, and angst. It would also give us a common starting point for discussing anything from ticket prices to housing.

The concentration of information in this book is impressive. Sound, an absolutely key ingredient in musical production, is covered in nine pages. This includes an honest assessment of things the producer should leave to an experienced sound technician, as well as advice on how to start looking for such a tech, and concrete suggestions ranging from a "pro and con" list of places to rent equipment to such specifics as making sure the

mics are tested with the stage lights on. (Stage lights can cause buzzing if they and the mics are on the same circuit.) There are simple diagrams of sound systems and definitions of terms, reminders of things that should be decided a month before the concert, and specific guidelines for running the sound check. (The voice of experience is wryly present: "Leave enough time for setup in your schedule—generally one hour more than what everyone thinks necessary is about right....")

Other concerns, such as publicity, are given more space than sound, since they are more directly handled by the producer. But the style is still clear and condensed.

Neophyte producers may have some difficulty using the book, however, particularly if they are not located in urban areas with well-developed networks in place. Wanda Henson, producer of the Gulf Coast Women's Festival and SpiritFest as well as local concerts, suggests that it might be better subtitled "A Guide to Professional Concert Production." She says she may not have had the nerve to try producing concerts if she had read the book prior to doing her first shows, as she found *Note by Note* intimidating. Also, it didn't address the specific problems and headaches she faced trying to create women's culture events in small, pre-feminist towns.

"Producers in small towns have almost no choices," Wanda says. "In larger towns, there may be more supportive things—available halls to rent, straight and gay media people who will take you seriously, lesbian or feminist publications, bookstores, even radio shows. Where we come from in the South, there are none of these things. In addition, we're fighting an unbelievable amount of internal and external homophobia. It's hard to even find the audience, and then it's hard to convince them to come to this type of event—even if we know they'll love it once they're here. We can't find any women to do the technical things, and there's very little front money for things like advertising." Mississippi is a very economically depressed area, and women are especially hard hit.

"People like me start with zero knowledge about things like what a stage manager does," Wanda continues. "Even after studying *Note by Note*, I didn't really understand the negotiation process, for example. An important factor is that many working class women—who are

likely to be very dedicated to women's music and culture, and who will eventually do a great job once they understand everything—don't have much formal education."

Wanda recommends that the next updated version of *Note by Note* include a section aimed at would-be producers who find themselves in these kinds of situations, trying to create feminist cultural communities where none yet exist. She says it would have helped her to learn what to expect when dealing with agents and managers ("how not to be bamboozled"); how to not lose money; how to create interest in communities where the women haven't yet heard of feminism or gay pride; how to compile and use confidential mailing lists; how to promote events in towns without publications, radio shows, bookstores—in short, how to start from scratch, as the women in the early days of women's music had to do.

There are two major challenges in preparing a how-to manual like *Note by Note*. One is to pack the book with information; the other is to make sure the information gets used. A new producer can't be expected to memorize 125 pages of text, after all; and it seems there's always some key point that gets forgotten. Fortunately, the text is followed by 150 pages of appendices, consisting mostly of timelines and sample forms.

A significant part of the book's usefulness comes from these appendices. *Note by Note* doesn't simply tell you that you need a medical release form if you're going to provide childcare; it gives you a sample release and invites you to use it. Other forms include a sample press release, an ad size chart, sample lighting plot and stage diagrams, and a detailed budget worksheet. This collection should save enormous amounts of time spent reinventing the wheel—or spinning wheels, wondering where to start.

The timelines and sample "day of show" schedule are perhaps the key items in helping translate information into action. They are a concise reminder of what needs to be done and approximately when, starting with the decision to stage an event.

Note by Note is in the best community-organizing tradition of sharing skills and hard-won knowledge. It is one of the best how-to manuals I've ever seen on any subject. It is clearly written, direct, thorough, conscientious, and capable of changing the standard level of concert

production on the women's circuit.

Congratulations and thanks are in order to editor Joanie Shoemaker, Redwood Cultural Work, Community Music, and Friends, for this labor of knowledge and love. The rest is up to us.

If '*Note by Note*' is not in your local bookstore, contact Redwood Cultural Work, P.O. Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. (510) 428-9191.

ABOUT THE WRITER: *Rena Yount is a long-time 'HOT WIRE' staff writer who currently resides in Washington, DC.* •

SABBATICAL from page 40

looking for; in fact, my performance work was going along so beautifully that it seemed kind of crazy to stop when I really had it so flawless." She's quick to say she'll miss it.

"But, I'm fifty-one. I'm always focused on me. Everything I do is focused on me. When I share my process, that's me. Therefore, the focus isn't going to be much different. The manifestation may be different, yes. It may turn out that I won't do anything differently; I may just end up doing what I'm doing now. I really don't know. Still, a healthy Lesbian community and the destruction of patriarchy are my goals, my objectives, the reason for life on earth—that hasn't changed. But how it happens, who knows?

"My friend Suzanne tells me that it is the nature of women who have done what they were supposed to do the first fifty years to change, to do something totally different, so I've taken that to heart. It's very scary. It's very exciting! I won't be earning income except through my album sales, but I have a few thousand dollars saved, and I just feel it's such a right thing to do," she says. "I have to do it." •

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MULLING IT OVER

I AM PAM HALL, FIFTH GENERATION DYKE

I was raised to be a musician: six-year-old Suzuki violinist to concert symphony member to singer/songwriter of womyn's music. It has been a long journey, with much to celebrate.

I am Pam Hall, fifth generation dyke—daughter of Anita, professor of education, who is the daughter of Alberta, newspaper editor and printer, who was the daughter of Hattie, a laundress, who was the daughter of Kate, an African shaman (whose back yard was the scene of many an African ritual), and she, former slave from Burnt Corn, Alabama, survivor of the Civil War. I pay homage to my maternal ancestors who have made this possible.

I want to begin this article with a recognition of the strong women who shaped those who shaped my life: Mom and Grandma. For whatever reasons—be it the so-called matricentric family legacy of slavery and oppression, the courage of those mighty and strong women who survived the middle passage, or the persistent and ever-present pissed-offed anger that drove the "need to succeed" middle-class mentality in the midst of a nightmare—here I am, the womon-child of that first Black woman who stepped on this land in shackles.

Here I am the womon-child, singing to womyn, to freedom, to life, love, and passion.

Life for this Black southern lesbian hasn't been all cotton and light, nor has it been a nightmare of despair. Touring the country last year often left me wanting to hurry up and get back South. For me, the South is gentle, is warm, close, like bath-water. Its womyn are kind, up-lifting, and no stranger to struggle. I adore my mother, my granny, my friends, and I love a womon.

My music reflects my love of

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



Pam Hall: "I don't sing to educate the straight world about lesbianism or feminism—I sing for the sisters."

womyn, and my deep respect for Southern womyn like Fannie Lou Hamer, as illustrated in the song I wrote about her entitled "St. Fannie Lou," in which I sing, "she is my matron saint of the sick and tired and those who just ain't gonna take it no mo!" Or my song about Grand-

ma, who said, "Five words I never want to hear 'cross your lips is shoulda, woulda, coulda, couldn't, and can't." Other Southern women—like Daisy Bates, Unita Blackwell, Margaret Walker Alexander, Rosa Parks, Alice Walker, Mom—have all instilled a sense of dignity

in me that is challenged as often by my less-enlightened sisters as by the raw and racist rednecks deep in the Delta.

But there are womyn who fill me with pride for my gender and culture, region and race—all those womyn who dug for the proverbial "pony" and simply fed the garden with the shit, made gorgeous hothouse orchids of their lives. Thinking of them is the stuff that motivates me to sing in a lesbian tongue and with a feminist fist uplifted.

My career as a womyn's musician began as much as a flirt with fantasy as a deliberate and studied endeavor. As a teenager, I first heard Joan [Armatrading]'s "Love and Affection" and her references to "a lover." That same year, I stumbled into a women's bar and danced my first slow drag with a tall Native American woman whose arms surrounded me in a gentle and sensual sweetness, and I felt weak as Joan sang "love, love, love, love..." (and I cried during the sax solo). I needed to hear Joan say "she," but I was willing to take "you" instead.

From that moment in 1976, I began my journey to find my voice and my feelings, to search for my own expression of the feelings of lesbian-identity and lesbian love. I found Cris, Meg, Kay, *The Changer and the Changed*; I found a lesbian collective, and a woman's love.

So I sent in a video to Wanda Henson, producer of the Gulf Coast Women's Festival, and through her mentorship I learned to identify lyrics that were left-over internalized sexism, racism, and looksism, as well as the victim/power-over style so often heard in blues and rhythm and blues.

Wanda and I began working together regularly. We edited my material, and with her help, last year I stepped onto the stages of three major women's music festivals (Gulf Coast, Southern, and East Coast Lesbians' Festival) as well as the Swiss Lesbian Conference and The Swiss Women's Dance.

In every setting—in straight audiences as well as womyn's audiences—I've chosen to begin my sets with a tune I wrote called "L-E-S-B-I-A-N" to let everybody know where I'm coming from. Often I'll sing about St. Fannie Lou or Granny to validate the ignorance of those who make a great show of exiting the concert.

But I don't sing to educate the straight world about lesbianism or feminism—I sing for the sisters. I sing for lesbians and womyn who delight in the

diversity of culture; I sing for women, about women, about women loving women, about women's spirituality, and about women's abilities. I am a "lesbian-identified" womyn's musician who willingly steps in the box labeled "dyke" that has a rich and wondrous precedence, with the likes of Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, Alix Dobkin, June Millington, Pat Parker, and Audre Lorde pioneering the way for me and womyn like me.

The ferocious and abundant opportunities of 1991 still make my heart sigh and my head spin. So much love, and the embracing energy of womyn and festival audiences still make warm waves pass over me. I am so very appreciative of this pure loving energy from my sisters. Am I dreaming or can it truly be that I can sing about my lesbian passions and feminist dreams, and receive what I think all artists seek from their community—affirmation, validation, and spiritual support?

Included on the soundsheet in this issue of *HOT WIRE* is the song "Linda." Although it is "lite (less filling)," it is not offered with any hint of pompous satirical trivializing of our culture. Although tongue-in-cheek, so to speak, it is a dance tune that lets me giggle at the way this world gazes at dykes (with Goddess knows what on their minds) and insists on making our lives as difficult as their minds can imagine.

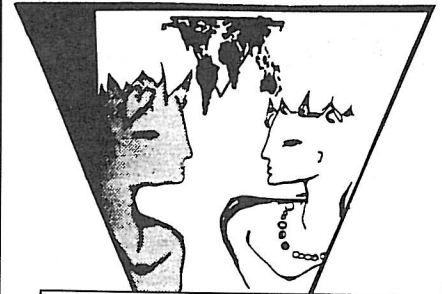
I've been able to get my career off to a great start thanks to the generous support of womyn who have helped me realize the dream of singing and playing for women, about women—women like Dr. Ruth, June Millington, Wanda Henson, Robin Tyler, Lin Daniels, Myriam Fougère, Toni Armstrong Jr., Michelle Crone, and many others. I am forever grateful for their support. To my Mom, my solace, and Brigitta, my beloved—my soul rejoices because of your love. And to my new and especially my old friends, as well as my listeners, my heart is full and sometimes weeps because of your strong embrace.

Blessed Be. •

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NYC DJ Kim Miller

Music

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Alix Dobkin
Sue Fink!
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ON STAGE AND OFF

Holly Near's autobiographical musical docudrama

FIRE IN THE RAIN...SINGER IN THE STORM

By Toni Armstrong Jr.

Life's firsts are always memorable—that first kiss, that first day on the new job. And for many women, that first contact with women's music.

The first women's music song I ever heard—Meg Christian's "Ode to a Gym Teacher"—made me laugh, and the rest of the album (*I Know You Know*) made me marvel in amazement that a woman was actually singing sweet love songs about other women.

The memory of the first time I was moved to tears by a song is vivid in my heart to this day. I was sitting in the audience at an early National Women's Music Festival in the mid '70s (then held in Champaign-Urbana at the University of Illinois campus). A gorgeous redheaded singer I'd never heard of stepped onto the stage and sang the most exuberant love song about her sister; I simply wept, overcome by the sweetness and joy of it. And that was *the moment* my lifelong devotion to woman-loving, woman-identified music began.

The woman, of course, was Holly Near, and the song was "You've Got Me Flying," written about her older sister Timothy.

Almost two decades later, the combination of Holly and Timothy is still having a powerful effect on audiences. A year ago, their show—*Fire in the Rain... Singer in the Storm*—had its world premiere with the San José Repertory Theater, at the Montgomery Theater in San José, California (May 10-June 2, 1991). Opening night attracted such glitterati as Holly Hunter (*Broadcast News*, *Raising Arizona*), Catherine Coulson (*Twin Peaks*), and Michael Tucker (*L.A. Law*), all friends of the Near sisters.

The two-and-a-half hour production, billed as a "musical docudrama" based on Holly's 1990 autobiography, has been widely hailed as a one-woman journey through three decades of political and social activism. *Fire in the Rain... Singer in the Storm*—written and performed by Holly, conceived and



Timothy Near: "In studying my sister, I study myself. And that's good; it's theater at its best."

developed by Holly and Tim, and directed by Tim—takes the audience on a whirlwind tour of Holly's travels, both geographical and personal, from her family ranch in California to Hollywood, touching down in New York, Paris, Latin America, Chile, San Francisco, Saigon, and Nicaragua along the way.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

This slogan reflects the spirit of Holly's generation—and nowhere has it been more embraced than in the feminist cultural community in which she matured, and which she helped to create. Reviewers of last year's *Fire... Singer* production uniformly noted that the one-woman show blends intensely personal and political details (via music, monologues, poetry, and slides) to create a portrait of the remarkable life Holly Near has led so far. The San Francisco *Chronicle* called it "a kind of living family album, peppered with slides of the Near family at home and lots more of the singer's extended family of fellow performers [including Jane Fonda, Meg Christian, Edith Piaf, Ronnie Gilbert,

Miriam Makeba, and Cris Williamson]."

Holly's autobiography *Fire in the Rain... Singer in the Storm*, which has now sold upwards of 45,000 copies, sets down her impressions of the 1970s and '80s, which she calls "unacknowledged, extraordinary times." The paperback version came out last October, and she has recorded a two-hour audio autobiography (*Singer in the Storm: The Life and Music of Holly Near*, produced by Enhanced Audio Systems, 1991) which incorporates an interview, readings from the book, and her music.

Many people who know Holly primarily through women's music may not realize how extensive her experiences in the entertainment business have been. She was in the original Broadway production of *Hair* before getting involved with the anti-war movement of the '70s. From 1968 to 1973, she worked primarily as an actress—film work included *Minnie & Moskowitz* and *Slaughterhouse Five*; on TV she appeared in *All in the Family*, *The Mod Squad*, *Room 222*, *The Bold Ones*, and *The Partridge Family*. In 1991, PBS featured a portrait of Holly called *Singing For Our Lives*, which has been released as a one-hour home video. (Keep an eye out on cable TV—the A&E network may be picking it up). She also had a cameo in the film *Dog Fight*. In addition to her theatrical work, she's now writing her first children's book, *The Great Peace March* (to be published by Henry Holt Publishers).

In the early days of her career, Holly auditioned off and on for various music industry moguls, but to no avail. "There's no element of submission in your voice," she was told; in response, she founded Redwood Records. Since 1972, she's released fifteen albums on Redwood, which have sold more than 1.5 million copies. Now called Redwood Cultural Work, Holly's label is one of the most successful independent record companies in the U.S., with a catalog of more than twenty-five groups represent-

Dear 'HOT WIRE' Readers,

Thanks so much for your votes of approval, support, and confidence in my work. [Holly was the recipient of the 1991 'HOT WIRE' Readers' Choice Award "for her unflinching positivity and ongoing commitment to women and our movements, organizations, and culture, as well as for her book 'Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm.'"]

Many people preface their compliments by saying, "You must get tired of hearing this, but..." I doubt any artist gets tired of hearing that her work is appreciated...any human being for that matter... mother, teacher, farmworker, waiter, attorney, lover alike. Having just completed yet another thirty-city tour, let me say, you are a great audience!

I am now working on the musical docudrama that I wrote last spring, called 'Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm.' It's full of songs that I have written, slides, monologues, and poetry. My sister Timothy Near conceived, developed, and directs the play, which is based loosely on my autobiography.

I (along with my pianist John Bucchino) will open in Los Angeles on August 2 at the Mark Taper Forum. The play will run for eight weeks, eight shows a week. It is huge, exciting, frightening, and challenging. Although I'm used to a lot of work, this pushes my limits, and that is good for me.

I have finished training with a voice therapist, learning how to project my speaking voice without straining it in a 500+ seat theater with minimal amplification. I'm working with a fine voice teacher who is helping me to expand my range and improve my breathing technique. I am taking tap dancing and working out in a gym to get physically strong and improve my stamina. I wish I could have dropped everything else and just been in a state of training. I envy subsidized athletes! However, I have squeezed in enough to feel somewhat more prepared.

The play is radical and gentle, direct and full of laughter. It celebrates the last twenty years of political activism for some and introduces a lost his/her story to others. 'HOT WIRE' editor/publisher Toni Armstrong Jr. has been very helpful in providing me with women's music slides, triggering my memory and filling me with joy and admiration for the women who have brought forth the songs.

If you are on the California coast in late summer, I hope you will come see it. The Mark Taper Forum's address is 135 North Grand Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012. (213) 972-0700.

My thanks to all of you who have been, and continue to be, a part of this work.

Most sincerely, Holly Near

ing a wide array of cultural diversity.

Holly Near is known as an international musical troubador-ambassador; she's taken her songs and live performances all over the world. She began touring in 1971 as a political activist and singer, joining Jane Fonda, Donald Sutherland, and others in Vietnam as part of the controversial Free The Army (FTA) show for servicemen and servicewomen opposed to the war and racism in Vietnam. Soon, she was writing and singing political songs, touring extensively, and gain-

ing fame as a singer and activist in the U.S. Her many honors include being named Woman of the Year by Ms. magazine in 1985, and receiving the HOT WIRE Readers' Choice Award in 1991.

Critics and fans alike have noted that Holly has been more concerned over the years with peacekeeping and change-making than with hitmaking. Her vision led her through the 1970s and '80s to defend many not-always-popular causes, such as human rights in El Salvador, lesbian and gay rights, nuclear disarmament,

the oppression of people with AIDS, and women's right to choose regarding reproductive rights. She's known to many different politically progressive audiences, having toured over the years with Inti-Illimani, Ronnie Gilbert, Arlo Guthrie, and Pete Seeger, among others. Holly's loyal fans in the women's music community have had their consciousness raised on many issues, thanks to her insistence on being a multi-agenda entertainer.

In 1988, Holly returned to theater as the torch singer in the most successful show in San José Rep history, *The 1940s Radio Hour*, directed by her sister Timothy Near. Tim has been the artistic director at San José Repertory Theatre since 1987. Before that, she co-directed *The Good Person of Setzuan* with Sharon Ott at Berkeley Rep, using Deaf actress Freda Norman in the title role. As an actress, Timothy has worked with the National Theater of the Deaf, and as a regular guest on *Sesame Street*. She won an Obie Award in 1981 for her performance in Emily Mann's *Still Life*, a play about the legacy of Vietnam. In 1984, Tim directed Holly and their younger sister Laurel in *The Near Sisters*, a show that played in Berkeley. (Laurel, by the way, co-founded Wallflower Order, the feminist dance collective.)

The sisters' relationship seems no less precious for being so public. "Being the eldest, I have observed the unfolding of a highly dramatic life," wrote Tim in the *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm* program book. "I have watched a gifted child who could easily have had a successful 'mainstream' career, but who instead became a performing artist affecting thousands of people's lives on a level more significant than pure entertainment.

"It has often crossed my mind to write a screenplay based on the surprising aspects of Holly's life. I also find her music to be highly theatrical, so when her autobiography was published, I couldn't resist asking her if she would put excerpts from it on stage as a musical docudrama. She didn't jump at the idea; it is an extremely vulnerable project, and a time consuming one. But after much urging on my part, she agreed to go out on a limb to see what bird might be perched at the end of a fragile bow," wrote Timothy the night before their first rehearsal.

"I have worked with the designers to create an environment that is warm

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HOTLINE from page 11

The voice of LUCIE BLUE TREMBLAY was heard throughout the land on National Public Radio last December on a new show called *E-Town* out of the historic Boulder Theater in Boulder, Colorado. The hour-long show offers music and dialogue with an emphasis on environmental issues.

Fear of Flying author Erica Jong is preparing a feminist soap opera called *THE WOMEN'S GROUP*. She and producer Linda Yellen have a development deal with ABC for the soap, which focuses on seven women who meet regularly at an encounter group for love addicts.

A pilot called *THE SITTER* is being written for ABC, based on an episode of *Amazing Stories*. Mabel King will again star in the role of "the only babysitter who could really handle a couple of bratty kids," her character being described as "a reggae voodoo Mary Poppins."

Did you catch the music of SALLY VAN METER on *Northern Exposure*?

FILM•VIDEO

Wolfe Video has produced a film entitled *WEST COAST CRONES*, featuring nine older lesbians from California talking about themselves, introducing their herstories, and presenting their lifestyles today. Wolfe Video, P.O. Box 64, Almaden, CA 95042.

Jewish lesbian filmmaker Jan Oxenberg's new film *THANK YOU AND GOOD NIGHT* is slated to run on PBS later this year. The documentary, dealing with the death of her grandmother, had a limited run in mainstream theaters. Both of her earlier films—*Home Movie* (about coming out) and *A Comedy in Six Unnatural Acts* (satirizing stereotypical Hollywood images of lesbians)—are available through Women Make Movies [see article on page twenty-two].

The bad news is, Fannie Flagg—writer of the book *Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Cafe* and co-writer of the screenplay for the movie version—denies that there is a lesbian relationship between *THE CHARACTERS RUTH AND IDGIE*. The Chicago *Sun Times*, while noting that in the book the women's "bonding" does seem amorous, says that Fannie scoffs at the suggestion of lesbianism.

The good news is, actor Mary Stuart Masterson, who plays Idgie Threadgoode in *FRIED GREEN TOMATOES*, says she believes lesbianism is "definitely the implication as far as I'm concerned" between her character and that of Ruth (Mary-Louise Parker), according to a report in *Outlines*. And that's how she plays the role.

Jezebel Productions has released a new film produced and directed by Greta Schiller entitled *MAXINE SULLIVAN: LOVE TO BE*

IN LOVE, according to *New Directions for Women*. Maxine—one of the premiere jazz vocalists of her time—was instrumental in developing the concept of a "swing" version of standard songs, and acted as an influence on many, including young Ella Fitzgerald. The Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

Filming is scheduled to begin in August on the movie version of *MURDER AT THE NIGHTWOOD BAR*. The movie is based on Katherine V. Forrest's Naiad Press book, and will star Kelly Lynch (*Curly Sue*, *Drugstore Cowboy*) as detective Kate Delafield. Still to be cast at press time was the part of Andrea Ross, Kate's love interest. (We vote for Mary Stuart Masterson.)

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Margaux Hemingway is slated to star in a film called *MIRROR IMAGE*, in which her character is a lesbian with multiple personalities who kidnaps and brutalizes people. Feminists may want to join a group called Multiple Personality Dignity in protesting this film. According to *Dykes, Disability & Stuff*, MPD is organizing a letter writing campaign and boycott of the film. *Mirror Image* Protest Project, MPD, P.O. Box 4367, Boulder, CO 80306-4367.

On a similar note, the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation has created an info packet about *BASIC INSTINCT* to be used by activists. The big budget thriller depicts all three of its lesbian or bisexual women characters as vicious man-killers, reports *Womyn's Words*. The filmmakers rejected all changes suggested by GLAAD. *Basic Instinct* Project, GLAAD, 514 Castro St. #B, San Francisco, CA 94114.

"Through its dozen or so characters, it provides a twenty-year history of American womanhood," reads the *Time* review of the film version of the Lily Tomlin and Jane Wagner play *THE SEARCH FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE*. "If this isn't a goose-bump experience for you, you're just not sentient."

Entertainment Weekly says *House Party 2* "recruited the terrific rapper QUEEN LATIFAH, then they cast her as Zora, a humorless feminist zealot who attempts to raise the consciousness of Kid's girlfriend (Tisha Campbell) by telling her, in essence, to keep her pants on." (Long live the Queen.)

Fans of k.d. lang will want to obtain *HARVEST OF SEVEN YEARS (CROPPED AND CHRONICLED)*, the hour long documentary video featuring rare live performance footage and videos of early songs and styles, plus "candid moments at home."

American celebrities, including JODIE FOSTER and SIGOURNEY WEAVER, enhance their box office appeal by endorsing products in countries other than the U.S., according to *Entertainment Weekly*. In Japan, for example,

The Silence of the Lambs spent an impressive thirteen weeks among the top ten grossers in Tokyo, where Jodie is familiar as a pitchperson for Honda.

PUBLICATIONS

The long-awaited *WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS: DIRECTORY OF RESOURCES IN WOMEN'S MUSIC & CULTURE* is a seventy-six page book listing the names, addresses, and phone numbers of more than 3,000 women and groups. Illustrated with graphics by well-known feminist photographers and cartoonists, the directory includes categories such as Festivals, Producers, Performers, Writers, Publishers, Grants, Women's Choruses, Film/Video, Radio, and Periodicals. SASE to Women's Music Plus, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

MONEY FOR PERFORMING ARTISTS: A COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE GUIDE is available through The American Council for the Arts. The 288-page reference lists nearly 200 sources of support for individual actors, playwrights, musicians, composers, dancers, choreographers, and other performing artists in the U.S. and Canada. This is the third in a series of books (*MONEY FOR VISUAL ARTISTS* and *MONEY FOR FILM & VIDEO ARTISTS*). ACA Books, 1285 Avenue of the Americas, Floor 3 Area P, New York, NY 10019.

Having trouble fighting the notion that we're in a "post-feminist era"? SUSAN FALUDI'S *BACKLASH* thoroughly debunks the media-driven perception that the most recent wave of feminism has harmed American women. She explains and proves how the mainstream media has repeatedly and systematically distorted facts and printed erroneous information and conclusions.

HAG RAG is now available on tape. *Hag Rag*, Box 1171, Madison, WI 53701. (608) 241-9765.

LESBIANS OVER SIXTY who are proud to call themselves "old" may be interested in the national *Old Lesbian Organizing Committee Newsletter*. P.O. Box 980422, Houston, TX 77098.

A new magazine for LESBIAN/GAY MORMONS is now available. *New Direction*, 6520 Selma Ave. #A-440, Los Angeles, CA 90028.

WOMEN FIGHT BACK is a new monthly publication that hopes to use testimony of women from across the country to spotlight ways in which women are discriminated against. The publication will also identify actions that women can take to achieve equality. Complimentary copies of each issue will be sent to the CEOs of the Fortune 100, the top 100 press and TV news editors, current U.S. Senators, and the president of the U.S. and his cabinet. *Women Fight Back*, P.O. Box 161775, Cupertino, CA 95016.

Moving into its fourth year of publication, the quarterly *DYKES, DISABILITY & STUFF* has

left its longtime Boston home and moved to Madison. The new address is P.O. Box 8773, Madison, WI 53714.

SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT

Kristan Aspen is seeking submissions for a book of stories from the 1970s about the grassroots **BEGINNING OF LESBIAN FEMINIST WOMEN'S CULTURE** as it emerged through music. Artists, producers, distributors, promoters, photographers, technicians, and audience members are all invited to contribute. SASE to Kristan Aspen, P.O. Box 15121, Portland, OR 97215.

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES: WRITINGS BY MIXED-BLOOD AND MULTI-RACIAL WOMEN OF COLOR anthology seeks submissions. May be in any language, but must be accompanied by English translation. SASE and bio to Kate Miller, 224 N. Minor Ave. #A, Seattle, WA 98109 or Jamie Lee Evans, 482 44th St., Oakland, CA 94609.

Patricia Bell-Scott and Sandra Murray Nettles are seeking submissions for an anthology of **CONTEMPORARY BLACK WOMEN'S JOURNALS**. They seek journal excerpts from women of all ages, backgrounds, and world views. SASE to Patricia Bell-Scott, Dept. of Child and Family Development, Dawson Hall, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

Material is being sought for *Women's Glib: Collection of Women's Humor*, a book about **AMERICA'S FUNNIEST WOMEN STAND-UP COMICS** to be published by The Crossing Press in 1993. SASE to Roz Warren, P.O. Box 259, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004.

At the Crossroads, a new visual, performing, and literary arts journal for **WOMEN ARTISTS OF AFRICAN DESCENT**, seeks submissions. Don't send originals; do include bio, photos, and brief statements about the work. Karen Augustine, *At the Crossroads*, P.O. Box 317, Station P, Toronto, Canada M5S 2S8.

WOMAN OF POWER seeks material on the following themes: Overcoming Prejudice, Celebrating Difference, Cultivating Diversity; Language; Relationships; Creative Arts; and Food. Also, please note new address: *Woman of Power*, P.O. Box 2785, Orleans, MA 02653.

WOMAN IN THE MOON PRESS welcomes manuscripts of up to forty pages during the reading season of April 1 through June 30 each year. Query before submitting work. The press is interested in publishing the work of women, African Americans, gays, and incarcerated people. WIM, Box 37, 2215-R Market St., San Francisco, CA 94114.

After a four-month hiatus, **HAG RAG** "Intergalactic Lesbian Feminist Press" is back and seeking works for future issues focusing on Friends; Radical Lesbian Feminism: It's Not What You Think, It Is What You Think; and

Amazon Revolution: Promoting Our Agenda. Also, *Hag Rag* is now available on tape. Bio, phone number, and SASE to Theo, P.O. Box 1171, Madison, WI 53701. (608) 241-9765.

Women visual artists and writers are sought for the 1993 multicultural **TAKE BACK THE NIGHT LUNAR CALENDAR**. Full Womoon Productions, Box 1205, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

Calling all **LESBIAN PLAYWRIGHTS**. L.A.'s only lesbian/gay theater is hosting its first annual New Play Competition. The plays must portray lesbian or gay experience in a positive light. \$200 first place, \$100 second, \$50 third. SASE to Celebration Theater, New Play Competition, 4470-107 Sunset Blvd. #353, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

Do you perform Salome's "Dance of the Seven Veils?" Have you had a Kundalini Awakening? If you answer yes to either of these, Llewellyn Publishing author is interested in **YOUR EXPERIENCES**. Kisma K. Stepanich, 204-1/2 Broadway, Costa Mesa, CA 92627.

Submissions sought for a collection of stories about **LESBIAN/GAY CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCES**. Particularly interested in stories about why you may have left the church and how you reconciled, and what your spiritual life is like today. SASE to Candace Chellew, P.O. Box 1251, Decatur, GA 30031-1251.



Laurie Anderson (left) appeared at Barbara's Bookstore in Chicago, signing and reading from her new book 'Empty Places.' (Pictured with musician/musical director Laurie Lee Moses.)

SHORT SHORT STORIES (500 words) sought for a mini-anthology called *Quickies: Lesbian Short-stories*. It will be a cross between a pamphlet and a periodical and will be published at least once a year. SASE, two-line bio, and submissions to Irene Zahava, 307 W. State St., Ithaca, NY 14850.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN/MENNONITE WOMEN'S ANTHOLOGY PROJECT seeks contributors regarding lesbian/bisexual issues. Anonymity respected if requested. B. Zook, P.O. Box 86, Cheraw, CO 81030-0086.

Front Room Theatre, Seattle's theater by and about lesbians, is seeking **SCRIPTS BY LESBIANS WITH LESBIAN CHARACTERS AND THEMES**. (206) 233-8457.

INVOKING SPIRIT/ELEMENTAL POWER is the theme for *We'Moon '93*. Drawings, dreams, photos, stories, poems, songs, prayers, and other creative submissions are sought. Rituals and meditations are also accepted. Mother Tongue Ink, 37010 SE Snuffin Rd., Estacada, OR 97023. (503) 630-7848.

The new **DYKE REVIEW** is seeking all kinds of submissions. SASE to *Dyke Review*, 584 Castro St. #456, San Francisco, CA 94114.

Submissions are also being accepted for a new magazine that publishes short stories, novellas, and novel excerpts. SASE to Rachel Whalen, *Short Fiction By Women*, P.O. Box 1276, Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009.

LAVENDER LIFE is a new monthly entertainment/enrichment magazine for lesbians and gay men. Fiction/nonfiction sought. *Lavender Life*, 215 Cleveland Ave., Endicott, NY 13760.

The **ASIAN LESBIAN NETWORK NEWS-LETTER** reports on lesbian and feminist activities throughout Asia. The publication is free but depends on donations for survival. To make a donation, pay with an international money order payable to bank account #014-1-16590-1. ALN c/o Anjaree, P.O. Box 322, Rajdamnem, Bangkok, Thailand 10200.

Stories, dreams, poems, drawings, articles, journal entries, and more sought by **DISABLED WOMMIN'S NEWSLETTER**. Ideas, energy, suggestions, questions, and donations also encouraged. Subscriptions are available to disabled and non-disabled women. SASE to 2 Sun Lane, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

Upcoming topics for **SAGE: A SCHOLARLY JOURNAL ON BLACK WOMEN** include religion, male kin (relatives, not lovers), and African American women in academia. *SAGE*, P.O. Box 42741, Atlanta, GA 30311-0741.

ATHENA, the only international newspaper for victory over domestic violence, is soliciting input for upcoming issues, including the themes lesbian battering, ex-batterers speak out, and elderly abuse. *Athena*, Box 5028, Thousand Oaks, CA 91320.

BEING A LESBIAN IN ISRAEL is the topic of a new anthology. Send poems, stories, and prose to Ayelet HaMaidbar Publications, 1678 Shattuck Ave. #133, Berkeley, CA 94709.

Two anthologies—**SPORTSDYKES** (women and sports) and **WOMEN ON THE EDGE** (women and the outdoors)—are being compiled by Susan Rogers, Box 23, Bard College, Annadale, NY 12504.

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protective, and familiar, that expresses countryside, theatrical images, and the encircling, supportive arms of feminism. I have dug through hundreds of old picture books and family tapes recorded by our parents, who invested in tape decks instead of televisions. I have pored through files at Redwood Cultural Work. I've gone to Holly's tiny apartment at the beach and picked props from her real life for the show—a back brace, a beautiful quilt from Chile called an arpillera, an exercise jumper and a big ball she uses for back therapy, grandma's chair, carved wooden animals from around the world, an old 'Another Mother for Peace' medallion.

"Two young interns have searched the libraries for pictorial documentation of peace demonstrations in the '60s, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and the Women's Movement of the '70s, among other things. And they've asked again and again, 'Why didn't I hear about any of this in my history classes?' There are not a lot of pictures, and I recall that at protests back then, anyone with a camera was suspected of being with the FBI. So again we go to the picture files in friends' homes and draw from treasured snapshots...Is it odd for me to immerse myself in my sister's life? Not really. To study this life is to be reminded of what has gone on in our world over four extraordinary decades of accomplishments and failures.

"I see through her eyes—the eyes of an extreme idealist and the eyes of one of the most hopeful people I know. As I look at the roads Holly has taken and why, I naturally look at my own life and feel both relief and confusion. I think of the next decade, and I wonder how she will fit into it—and how I want to act in the context of a world perspective.

"In studying my sister, I study myself. And that's good; it's theater at its best. I thank her for having the courage and taking the time to come to my home at San José Rep and share a piece of her life...And of course it's great to have my pal here with me, as we stick our necks out like two great curious geese."

THE CRITICS RAVED

Timothy and Holly needn't have worried about sticking their necks out on this venture; the reviewers loved what the Near sisters created on that stage.

"From the tempestuous title of Holly Near's musical autobiography, *Fire in the*

Rain...Singer in the Storm, one might expect another tale of a tortured singing star, recovering from either a chemical or relationship addiction. But Near's story is that of a football princess turned peace activist, a functioning woman who has confronted her own struggles and the world's with a big heart and an even bigger voice," wrote Laura Jamison in the *San Mateo Times*.

"*Fire in the Rain* is something like *The Belle of Amherst*, Julie Harris's performance essay on Emily Dickinson, in that it presents art (for Dickinson it was poetry, for Near songs) as well as biography...It is an intimate view of a remarkable family. It brings their world literally to the stage. The wing chair, stage right, belonged to their grandmother, and the props—from a Chilean quilt to the tiny flying harness their mother made when little Holly played Peter Pan—are real, not recreations," wrote Judith Green in the *Portland Oregonian*.

In another review, for the *Mercury News*, she continued, "More interesting than her causes is the path that led her to them. The show pays loving homage to her parents, a North Dakota farmer and a New York debutante who met in a Los Angeles defense plant during World War II and raised their family on a ranch in Potter Valley (near Ukiah). One of the most moving sections is about their father, who marched for peace and feminism with his activist daughter while he was quietly dying of cancer...We jump from the child Holly as Peter Pan to a back disorder that crippled her on tour in Paris thirty years later. The director reinforces this unforced connection with a visual link between the homemade flying harness Holly wore at seven and the Iron Maiden back brace she laces herself into for her slipped disc...At first the show was so specific to Holly that she didn't think anyone else could perform it. But over the months of script construction and weeks of rehearsal, it has become a theater piece, independent of its subject," Judith Green observed. (The image of some powerful, idealistic young actress "doing Holly" in 2029—with the by-then-eighty-year-old singer/activist in the front row—is irresistible.)

And then there's my favorite: "I would dare anyone sitting through the first five minutes of Holly Near's musical docudrama not to fall in love with this extraordinarily charismatic performer," gushed Gene Price in the *San Francisco Bay Times*, echoing what women's music reviewers have been saying for almost two

decades now.

HOLLY ON HER SHOW

"From early childhood, I have been engrossed in discovering the artistic response to existence. Perhaps life's inequities were too painful to me. Out of necessity, I found I could channel the horror through the startling beauty of sound, color, and motion, creating a tolerable balance...and only then would I have the courage to stay connected to life rather than seek to escape it," she wrote in the program notes from the San José Rep production.

"Art has also kept me from being alone, for I do not think we create in isolation. Even the prisoner in solitary confinement creates characters and an audience with whom s/he survives. The 'ensemble' for this piece is huge...family, friends, audiences, lovers, people I have met around the world...all who have touched me and taught me and hurt me and loved me, all of whom are part of this play, even if their stories are not seen here tonight."

And about Timothy: "I love that wild and wonderful woman who has fascinated—and directed—me since birth. Again and again, throughout my career, she has, by example, extended me an invitation to embrace the magic of theater. So on the first day of rehearsal, I gave her a card that says, 'Who needs you?' and when opened, there was a little girl with red hair waving madly and shouting 'I DO!' This life is my life. This book is my book. This voice is my voice. This play is my play. But this production belongs to my sister, my director, Timothy Near."

• • •

Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm will be produced this coming August 2-September 27 at the Music Center of Los Angeles as part of the twenty-fifth anniversary season of the prestigious Mark Taper Forum. (The series also includes *Spunk*, three tales by Zora Neale Hurston, as well as the world premiere of *Unfinished Stories* by Sybille Pearson.) Should the L.A. run be successful, *Fire...Singer* may be taken to New York.

Holly's life, in so many ways an open book, is the chronicle of one family, one woman's life, one woman's career, and yet its chapters mirror so many of our own. I, for one, can't wait to turn another page.

• • •

Questions about Holly Near can be addressed to Jo-Lynne Worley Management, 1222 Preservation Park Way, Oakland, CA 94612. (510) 763-2034. •

WANDA from page 13

heavy canvas with cows loaded into the back of the truck. They passed the German guards and were left in a section of land between the two zones. Then she ran about a mile through a plowed field to the French side and freedom, to accompany Landowska to America."

In 1942, Wanda played at Town Hall in New York to the great praise of the critics. Of her performance, Virgil Thomson—an American composer who had studied in Paris with Nadia Boulanger—wrote, "She played everything better than anyone else ever does. One might almost say, were not such a comparison foolish, that she plays the harpsichord better than anyone else ever plays anything. That is to say that the way she makes music is so deeply satisfactory that one has the feeling of fruition, of a completeness at once intellectual and sensuously auditory beyond which it is difficult to imagine anything further." The Town Hall concert and the next three she gave were enough to establish her totally in the U.S.

In 1947 she again found an ideal setting for her teaching, a rented house in Lakeville, Connecticut. There she finished writing extensive commentaries to accompany her recording, *A Treasury of Harpsichord Music* (RCA Victor). In 1950 she played a benefit concert on the seventy-fifth birthday of Albert Schweitzer.

Very few of Wanda Landowska's

writings were published in the last fifteen years of her life. She was planning to revise her book *Music of the Past*, and include her most significant articles in the new edition. But she also wanted to record the complete *Well Tempered Clavier* of Bach, and at seventy-five years old she knew she could not undertake both projects. So in 1955 she turned the book task over to Denise Restout.

"One summer evening as I was reading aloud to Wanda Landowska some notes she had just dictated—they were, as I remember clearly, a description of the salient features of her interpretation that she wanted to discuss in the planned book—she suddenly said, 'It is for you to do.' Too stunned to find any better reply, I mumbled that I would never feel capable of undertaking such a task," wrote Denise of her initial reaction. "Still ringing in my ears is the indignant and sonorous 'Idiot!' that followed my cowardly statement. 'How I wish I were in your place,' she added. 'What a wonderful work I would do!' And to boost my courage, no doubt, she inscribed a copy of her commentaries on *The Well-Tempered Clavier* with these words: 'For my cherished companion Denise, without whom these commentaries could not have been written.' Finally she made clear in her will that I was to be the recipient of all her notes and documents on music as well as of her musical instruments and library."

Landowska died in 1959. Denise Restout did, in fact, work on and, with the editorial assistance of Robert Hawkins, publish the marvelous book *Landowska on Music* which is available today. Also, many of Landowska's fine recordings have been re-issued on CD, including the *Well Tempered Clavier* and the *Goldberg Variations* of her beloved Bach.

"The High Priestess of the Harpsichord"—the scholar, the teacher, the interpreter, and the composer—lives on through her writings and recordings, and will continue to inspire musicians and music lovers for generations to come.

For those of you wishing to learn more about this marvelous musician, I recommend the following books and recordings: (1) Landowska, Wanda. *Landowska On Music*, edited by Denise Restout, assisted by Robert Hawkins. New York: Stein and Day, 1969; (2) Lepage, Jane Weiner. *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies*: pp. 133-144. Metuchen, N.J., and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1980; (3) Bach, J.S., *Goldberg Variations*, W. Landowska, harpsichord, RCA/AGM1-5251 and Angel, CDH-61008; (4) Bach, J.S., *Two-Part Inventions*, Wanda Landowska, harpsichord, RCA/2-6217-1-RC; (5) Poulenc, Francis, *Concert Champetre*, Wanda Landowska, harpsichord, IPA/Dismar 2-106/1. •

VIDEOS from page 15

ship between Aurora and the drunken, youth-obsessed former astronaut (Jack Nicholson) who has been her next door neighbor for fifteen years.

Terms is rife with incredibly witty dialogue and outstanding performances, including those of young Huckleberry Fox, John Lithgow, and Danny DeVito. Shirley MacLaine and Jack Nicholson both won Oscars for their performances in this film.

STRANGERS: THE STORY OF A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

My favorite pick of the bunch is a toss up between *Secret Ceremony* and *Strangers*. This 1979 made-for-TV movie features one of Bette Davis's strongest performances, as Lucy Mason, a widowed jigsaw puzzle addict who lives in a small coastal town in Massachusetts. Gena

Rowlands is her daughter Abigail, who returns home after a twenty year absence.

When Abigail arrives, her mother is less than cordial. The darkened, unkept house and overgrown garden are evidence that Lucy has closed herself off from life. She has shut down to avoid the pain of rejection and abandonment she suffered—first from her husband, who doted on Abigail, and then from her daughter, who chose to resolve the situation by leaving home. Eventually, Lucy makes an effort to get to know this stranger who is her daughter.

But both mother and daughter are equally stubborn, which makes their reacquaintance difficult as they test the waters, trying to rekindle a friendship and kinship from the ashes of their relationship. When Lucy discovers why Abigail has come home, she must again deal with the impending doom of abandonment. Once she does, Lucy can give to Abigail the gift of forgiveness. Abigail's gift to her mother is self-sufficiency: the freedom of love,

laughter, and life.

Acceptance eventually triumphs as Lucy and Abigail both accept responsibility for the impasses in their lives. This is a wonderful film about letting go and learning to love again. •

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RONNIE from page 5

for the first time. We've been partners ever since, in every sense. In fact, we were sitting at the Bottom Line in New York, listening to The Rude Girls, and heard "The Girl in the Red Velvet Dress" for the first time. I was just thinking about Donna and me when a couple of people at a table in front of us turned around and said, "That's your song, Ronnie!" It certainly felt that way to me, too!

IF PEOPLE HAVE MATERIAL THEY THINK YOU MIGHT LIKE, DO YOU ACCEPT THEM SENDING IT TO YOU?

I encourage them to do it. I sometimes don't have time to listen to unsolicited tapes for months, but I eventually get to them. That's how I got "Music in My Mother's House." It's about honoring mothers, which *you* certainly can appreciate. I love it because everybody responds to that song, whether they had that kind of home or just wish they did. Yes, indeed, I enjoy doing music that has something to do with women.

THAT'S WHAT I THINK OF AS "WOMAN-IDENTIFIED." IT MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH BEING LESBIAN, BUT IT'S ALWAYS FOCUSED ON THE FEMALE

MARGA GOMEZ from 30

"This new play is more about me personally, my love life—and also I think it's going to include some clear gay archetypes. At this point, I think that it's going to begin on the eve of my appearance on a television talk show as a homosexual—which I say in the play is 'like lesbian jury duty'—to my high school nightmares of trying to find my math class but being naked at the same time, and my recollections of my first stirrings of sexual desire—and what it's like to be gay in this un-gay world," she says. "This one is a comedy—it's going to be played strictly for laughs."

If the new play is anything like *Memory Tricks*, it will also be self-revealing. What's it like for Marga to have an audience which knows so many details about her life?

"I'm a Gemini, and I have a few different personalities, so it will take a long time for an audience to get to know all about every single personality. Also, one can go a lot deeper in a show, and I don't know of any performance artist who re-

SENSIBILITY, AND ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FEMALES IN A RESPECTFUL, POSITIVE WAY—NOT BACKBITING OVER SOME GUY, WHICH IS THE USUAL WAY WOMAN-TO-WOMAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE REPRESENTED IN MAINSTREAM MUSIC. THERE'S AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF TYPES OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FEMALES; THE WOMEN'S COMMUNITY; A WOMAN'S FEELINGS ABOUT HERSELF—BEING "WOMAN-IDENTIFIED" MEANS FOCUSING ON TOPICS LIKE THAT.

Be sure to quote yourself in print—that's how I would have liked to say it; that's *exactly* how I feel about it. I go to concerts and hear certain women—they're wonderful songwriters, very talented, and a lot of the songs are clever or very funny, but they've got about as much consciousness as a woman—as Stallone has. They just don't get it.

I want to sing women's songs. I really want to do what I can to push women's music, to push the songs of women. Most people sing their own stuff, but I sing other people's; I want to be someone songwriters can count on to deliver their songs with appreciation, honesty, and respect. I hate the term "cover"—Music Biz-ese for recording a song already recorded by the writer. It's a trivializing term. For me,

veals *everything*. I have no problem with it, either; there's only so much that people can take. In this new play, I definitely am going to show how neurotic I am, what a freaked-out chick I am," she says. "It's funny that no matter how much I say something is true on stage, the audience still thinks that none of it was true. Like I say I can't speak Spanish very well; Spanish majors will try to dazzle me with their command of the subjunctive. I say I have a girlfriend; Spanish majors will come on to me. I say I can't dance; nobody buys it until they see me at the disco. But, that's what I do, I work with who I am."

Eventually, Marga would like to have *Memory Tricks* filmed, to be able to show it for youth, especially Puerto Rican and Cuban youth, as well as for caregivers. "I don't imagine playing it live forever and ever; it takes so much out of me, and I've resolved it," she says. "I am proud of it, and I want it preserved, but it's a personal play for me, and I want to move on in my life, focus on other concerns."

Also, Marga wants to have a repertoire of a couple of performance pieces which are tried and true ("with themes,

entering the world of a song is like entering the world of a play as an actor. I take it on, I become it. Something of me joins it, and there is a collaboration. I love it when singers sing each other's songs. I never think of it as a competition—oh, her version isn't nearly as good as *her* version—but as a broadening of the value of the song, of its possibilities.

Of course, some songs I love turn out to be simply inappropriate for me—the "I" in them is written from an age or sensibility that I can't feel honest about putting on. Then I pass it by, regretfully. I don't have a full concert's worth of material by women—*yet*. Maybe I haven't looked hard enough. I am looking, though. As long as women write the stories of our ordinary and extraordinary lives, I'll try to sing them. I know that the true experiences of women have the power to transform us—me and the audience—politically and personally.

Another article of interest to Ronnie Gilbert fans: the coverage of the 1987 March on Washington NJA Havadallah Service and Concert in the March 1988 issue of 'HOT WIRE.' Songwriters interested in contacting Ronnie may write to her and/or her manager Donna Korones at P.O. Box 8388, Berkeley, CA 94707. Special thanks to Lynn Wenzel ('New Directions For Women') for portions of the introduction to this article. •

titles, beginnings, middles, and ends—a whole package"), and which could be booked into cabarets and theaters. "I would like to work deeper than stand-up, which tends to diffuse; I definitely want to make people laugh, but I also want to share my emotions and to connect," says Marga. "*Memory Tricks* has seemed good for audiences. I want to make this new play very campy, and deal with issues that I want everybody—gay or straight—to feel better about.

"I want to play for the largest audience possible; I want to challenge people; I want to help people out of conservatism before they sink into the slime. There is alternative music and a lot of cookie-cutter comics, but not a lot of awareness of—or support for—an alternative comedy scene. I would like to build bridges with my comedy to include everybody," she says. "What I really want is to create some art that will give people joy after I'm gone."

Irene Pinn handles the bookings for Marga Gomez's theatrical work, and Marga herself does the bookings for her stand-up act. They can be reached at Plan B Productions, P.O. Box 460368, San Francisco, CA 94146. (415) 282-1682. •

CARTOONISTS from page 37

want to see a copy—or they could even be totally unaware of exactly what the network is about, but we send them the newsletter," Brandie says. "The members are mostly from the U.S.—they go all the way from New Hampshire to Florida, to California, up to Washington state; there are some people on the mailing list from Europe, Australia, and New Zealand."

Brandie is optimistic that the finances will continue to go as well as they

STONEWALL RIOTS



Andrea Natalie

THE GODDESS CREATES MEN

did in the early days of LCN. At this time, she is requesting a donation (but has set no specific price) to be on the mailing list to receive the quarterly newsletters, which average fifteen pages per issue.

One of the first things Brandie did after taking over was to send questionnaires asking the members what they'd like to see, and says she's gotten a good response so far. "Many expressed interest in artist profiles—who's doing what, who is this woman and what does she do. They're also very interested in art opportunities—who's putting a book together, who needs art. They also want to share technical information, like how-to stuff, what kinds of brushes or paper you use, that sort of thing," she says. "They also want to know which publications hold up to their promises and which ones don't."

Naturally, the newsletter prints cartoons by the members. What and how much depends each time on what gets sent in. Some issues are primarily artwork, and in any case, there's art on almost every page.

The exact roles that Brandie and

Andrea will each play in maintaining and developing the Lesbian Cartoonists Network are still quite flexible, though they intend to stay in close communication. "Andrea is the major head honchoess," says the woman newly at the helm of the organization's newsletter. "One of my goals is to stress visibility of lesbian artists—to say, *hey we are out here*. I was really surprised at the number of people who have contacted me wanting our mailing list because they need artists, or have art opportunities, or are doing stories or articles," says Brandie. "So we'll just try to get people in touch, and give as many opportunities as possible."

To get on the mailing list or send info to the newsletter, contact *The Lesbian Cartoonists Network* c/o Brandie Erismann, P.O. Box 6327, Daytona Beach, FL 32122. (904) 239-9782. Andrea Natalie can be reached at 7100 Blvd. East #14N, Guttenberg, NJ 07093. •

HOTLINE from page 53

STORIES FROM MOTHERS who have learned that their adult daughters were sexually abused as children/adolescents are sought for a new book by Mariel Burch and Monika Franzen. The collection will emphasize the mother's perspective as well as self-help info. *Mothers' Book*, 6732 E. State Blvd. #338, Fort Wayne, IN 46815.

RISING TIDE PRESS, a new lesbian publisher, will read and evaluate manuscripts for free. Now seeking lesbian romance, mystery, science fiction, and nonfiction for possible publication. SASE to Rising Tide Press, 5 Kivy St., Huntington Station, NY 11746. (516) 427-1289.

Submission sought on **LOOKSISM AND BODY IMAGE**. Send prose, fiction, poetry, nonfiction, drawings, photos, etc. to Anne, *Rites Magazine*, P.O. Box 65, Station F, Toronto, Ont., Canada M4Y 2L4. (416) 516-3363.

CANADIAN ANTHOLOGY is looking for stories, photos, dialogue, and letters for *Bloodlines: Writings by Lesbian Sisters*. Lynn & Jan Andrews, P.O. Box 4273, Station E, Ottawa, Ont., Canada K1S 5B3.

HerBooks is seeking essays, poems, stories, narratives, line drawings, photos for inclusion in the *DOWN TO EARTH: A LESBIAN TRADITION IN GARDENING* anthology. HerBooks, P.O. Box 7467, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. •

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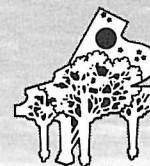
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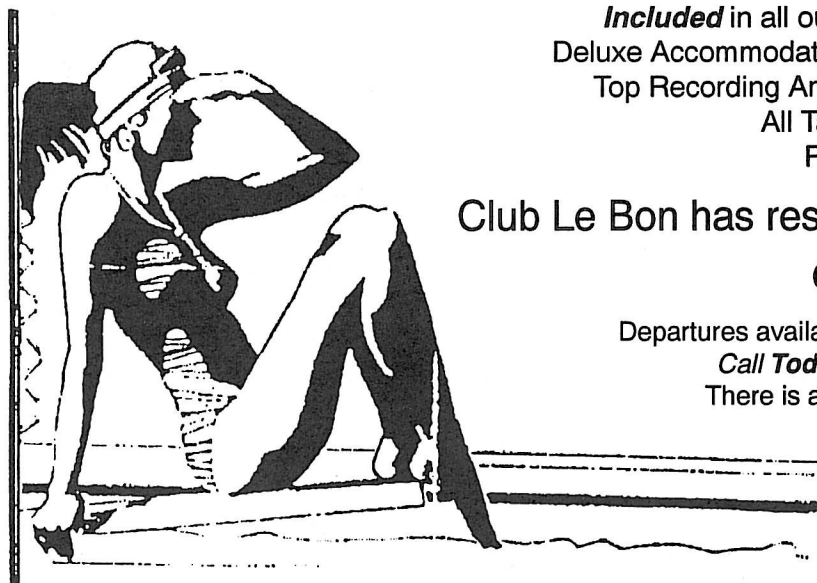
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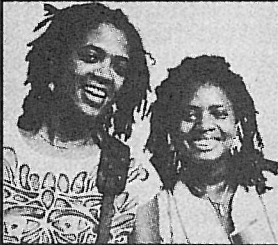
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cott, AZ 86303. (602) 445-5673. Pamper yourself in the beautiful serenity of the Arizona mountains.

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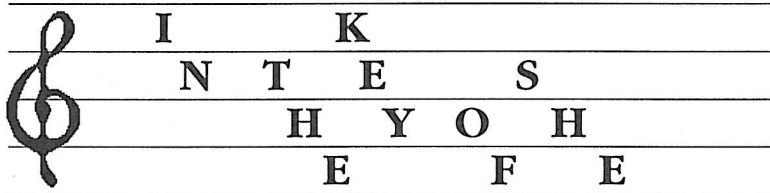
BRIGIT BOOKS. 3434 4th St. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33704. (813) 522-5775. Lesbian/feminist/women's books, music, jewelry, etc. Open every day.

INKLINGS—an alternative bookshop. 1846 Richmond Ave., Houston, TX 77098. (713) 521-3369. Full-service women's bookstore, with large selection of women's fiction & women's music.

LUNARIA. 90 King St., Northampton, MA 01060. (413) 586-7851 voice or TDD. Lesbian/feminist new, used, rare and out-of-print titles 100+ page catalog, \$2. (Refundable with order.)

NEW WORDS BOOKSTORE. 186 Hampshire St., Cambridge, MA 02139. (617) 876-5310. Boston's women's bookstore features extensive selection of women's, lesbian, and multicultural

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GRAPHIC SERVICES FROM A TO Z. Lambda Publications (publishers of *Outlines* lesbian/gay newsmagazine), 3059 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 871-7610. Using advanced desktop publishing, we can meet your artistic and graphic needs, including posters, menus, flyers, brochures, letterheads, newsletters, ads, resumes, and more.

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PERIODICALS

ACHE: Journal for Lesbians of African Descent. PO Box 6071, Albany, CA 94706. (415) 824-0703. Bimonthly publication by Black lesbians for the benefit of all women of African descent. 6x/yr; \$10-\$25 (sliding scale) subscription.

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

BROADSHEET. 476 Mt. Eden Rd. Box 56-147, Auckland, New Zealand. Phone 608-535. New Zealand's feminist magazine. Ten 40-48 page issues per year—regular music section.

BROOMSTICK. 3543 18th St. #3, San Francisco, CA 94110. National feminist political journal by, for, about women over forty. 4x/yr; U.S. \$15, Canada \$20 (US funds), Overseas/Institutions \$25, sample/\$5. Free to incarcerated women over forty.

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THE LESBIAN NEWS c/o Jinx Beers. PO Box 1430, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277. (818) 704-7825. A digest of information from Southern California and beyond. Monthly; \$12/yr.

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR WOMEN. PO Box 3000, Denville, NJ 07834-1973. (201) 568-0226. Women's health, family issues, racism, ageism, culture and sports from a feminist perspective. 6x/yr, \$12/yr, \$20/institutions, \$18/Canada & Mexico.

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

ON TARGET. PO Box 386, Uncasville, CT 06382. (203) 848-3887. Newsletter for women over 40 and their friends.

OUTLINES. Editor Tracy Baim, 3059 N. Southport, Chicago, IL 60657. (312) 871-7610. Free in Chicago; \$25/yr by mail. Lesbian/gay newsmagazine; extensive women's music & culture coverage. Midwest and national focus.

THE WORD IS OUT! Voices of Columbus, PO Box 02106, Columbus, OH 43202. A monthly microzine, in our 2nd year. Subs \$12-\$15.

RECORDINGS

A LITTLE LOOK AROUND, Rebel Voices. 4922 46th South, Seattle, WA 98118. (206) 722-1972. Topical and political songs including "I'm A Friend Of The Fetus."

AFRICAN POP, Dianaruth Wharton. A.E.L.O. Music Group 82 Wall St. Suite 1105, New York, NY 10005. First solo effort of this founding member of *Sweet Honey In The Rock*.

CLOSER TO HOME, Jamie Anderson. Tsunami Records, PO Box 42282, Tucson, AZ 85733. Women's music with strength & humor. Includes "Wedding Song," "Straight Girl Blues," and "Nothing."

CROSSFIRES OF CHANGE, Mari Hang. PO Box 97320, Milwaukee, WI 53203. (414) 427-0949. Songs of affirmation and recovery including "You Can't Do It For Me."

FELLOW TRAVELERS, Julie Stewart & Lena Einhorn. Rewind Inc. 6117 McCallum St. Philadelphia, PA 19144. A mix of feminist-folk-rock-percussive-serious-stand-up comedy.

FOR THERESE, Various Women Artists. Sea Friends Recordings, 1641 Rockford Place, Cincinnati OH 45223-1632. Betsy Lippitt, Kay Gardner, Sue Fink, Deidre McCalla, Nydia Mata, MUSE: Cincinnati's Women's Choir and Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus—perform the highest quality recording of women's voices singing women's music in today's feminist choral move-

Diane F. Germain

ment. Fifteen years of Therese Edell's choral, solo vocal, and instrumental compositions. Very good, very fun—a must. Sixty minutes on CD (\$16) and cassette (\$12).

FULL CIRCLE, Akia Woods. Purple Angel Records, PO Box 804, Grants Pass, OR 97526. 12 original songs of growth and recovery.

GARDEN OF ECSTASY, Kay Gardner. Ladyslipper Records, PO Box 3124, Durham, NC 27715. "These compositions describe the colors, fragrances, and sounds which have greeted me since I composed 'A Rainbow Path.' Rather than re-explore a meditative path, my muse this time took me on a different, more active journey." (All women musicians/techs.)

GATHERING THE FRAGMENTS, Janet Russell. Harbour Town Records, PO Box 25 Ulverston Cumbria LA12 7UN 0229 580577. An interweaving of old and new songs, including "The Secretary's Song."

IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN WRITERS. Redwood Cultural Work, PO Box 10408, Oakland, CA 94610. Includes: Isabel Allende, June Jordan, Harriet Goldhor Lerner and Holly Near.

IRISH AIRS & DANCES, Anisa Angarola. Dargason Music, PO Box 189, Burbank, CA 91503. Traditional music of Ireland on classical guitar.

IT'S A MIRACLE, Alice Di Micele. Box 281, Williams, OR 97544. Heartfelt songs about today's politics and environment.

NO LIMITS, Sisters Unlimited. Harbour Town Records, PO Box 25, Ulverston, Cumbria, LA12 7UN 0229 580577. Includes "Breastfeeding Baby In The Park."

PRINCE CHARMING DOESN'T LIVE HERE, Gerri Gribi. Lilyfern Records, PO Box 8021, Green Bay, WI 54308. Traditional and other songs including "Sister Thou Wast Mild and Lovely."

RETURNING THE MUSE TO MUSIC, Musica Femina. PO Box 15121, Portland, OR 97215. The flute and guitar duo of Kristan Aspen and Janna MacAuslan plays classical music from the 17th century to the present. \$10 cassette/\$15 CD, plus \$1 postage.

SINCLAIR - READY OR NOT. Quartz Apple Music PO Box 2104, Costa Mesa, CA (714) 722-6023. A collection of her songs performed for political rallies and fundraisers concerned with women's issues of domestic violence, peace, relationships and empowerment.

STRETCH, BREATHE & RELAX, Diana M. Grove, LMT. Dancing Mountain Productions, PO Box 76222, St. Petersburg, FL 33734. Movement designed to improve physical and mental well being through practice of flexibility exercises and basic yoga postures.

WAYS OF SEEING, Frankie Armstrong. Harbour Town Records, PO Box 25 Ulverston Cumbria LA12 7UN 1229 580577. Live concert recordings including "We Are Women."

WESTWIND, Linda Kanter. 91625 West Fork Rd. Deadwood, OR 97430. (503) 964-5371. Original instrumental fusion, jazzy with a hint of New Age.

YAHOO AUSTRALIA, Alix Dobkin. PO Box 727, Woodstock, NY 12498. (914) 679-6168. Recorded live during Alix's 1990 tour of the world's oldest continent.

BOOKS

CECILE by Ruthann Robson. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, New York 14850. Humorous and sensitive stories about the daily life of a lesbian couple.

FREE RIDE by Marilyn Gayle Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, New York 14850. Freewheeling tale of a lesbian rogue on the move.

INVERSIONS, Writing by Dykes, Queers & Lesbians. Press Gang Publishers, 603 Powell St., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6A 1H2. 24 authors explore questions of sexual identity, politics, creativity and more.

LESBIANS IN GERMANY: 1820s-1920s by Lillian Faderman & Brigitte Erickson. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Translations of turn of the century lesbian documents available for the first time.

REBELLION, Essays 1980-1991 by Minnie Bruce Pratt. Firebrand Books, 141 The Commons, Ithaca, New York, 14850. A vivid, lyrical collection of essays about personal and political change.

SHADOWS OF AGGAR by Chris Anne Wolfe. New Victoria Publishers, Inc. PO Box 27, Norwich, VT 05055. Swashbuckling adventure and romance on a medieval planet.

SOMEBODY TO LOVE by Leslea Newman. Third Side Press, 2250 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625-1802. Activities that empower women to rethink our relationships with food and people.

STILL WATERS by Pat Welch. Naiad Press, PO Box 10543, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Secrets at a luxury resort—a new Helen Black Mystery.

TOUCH OF MUSIC by Dorothy Clarke. New Victoria Publishers Inc., PO Box 27, Norwich, Vermont 05055. A contemporary romance about lesbian families.

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SOUNDSHEET

Produced by Joy Rosenblatt

LET THERE BE PEACE

LYRICS BY: Judith Casselberry & Jaqué DuPreé
MUSIC BY: Judith Casselberry
PERFORMED BY: Judith Casselberry (vocals, electric rhythm guitar); Jaqué DuPreé (vocals); Toshi Reagon (bass, lead guitar); Bernice Brooks (drums); Annette A. Aguilar (percussion); Kim Jordan (keyboard).

FROM: *Let There Be Peace*
Casselberry-DuPreé
P.O. Box 44
Amawalk, NY 10501
(914) 245-2519

Casselberry-DuPreé have long been known for their ability to combine different musical styles to create their own unique sound. "Let There Be Peace" blends both gospel and reggae influences, evoking a feeling of old-time spiritual and contemporary Caribbean culture. It speaks to the age-old issues of enjoying our differences and co-existing in peace. They have been credited with singing "...songs of struggle and hope that acknowledge the world as it is, and are at the same time uplifting." Well, they've done it again. *Enjoy!*



Leigh H. Mosley

CASSELBERRY-DUPRÉE

ANGEL PARK

WRITTEN/ARRANGED BY: Macula Lutea
PERFORMED BY: Macula Lutea
Shilcris Productions
P.O. Box 14342
Philadelphia, PA 19115
(215) 464-5129

Macula Lutea is the part of the (musical) eye that sees an ever-changing global ensemble. Her music celebrates the fertile meeting ground between traditional instruments and electronic expansion. "Angel Park" unites the rhythmic energies of marimbas, congas, and tablas with the contemporary sounds of electric guitar, synthesizer, and vibraphone. Macula Lutea works as a composer, arranger, and producer in a variety of artistic and musical mediums. "Angel Park" is part of an instrumental album in progress.



Maria Schuchardt

JAMIE ANDERSON

LINDA

WRITTEN BY: Pam Hall
PERFORMED BY: Pam Hall (vocals, acoustic & electric guitars); Jean Millington (bass); Janelle Burdell (drums); June Millington (opening dialogue with Pam, solo electric guitar); chorus: Sue Fink, Jane Emmer, Jean Millington, June Millington.

FROM: *Honey on My Lips*
Fabulous Records
P.O. Box 374
Bodega, CA 94922
(707) 876-3004

Pam Hall's debut album features her very "hot and out" performance style (no ambiguous gender references here, folks), her lesbian erotica lyrics, and her high-energy Southern-roots rhythm. Pam's "Linda" is a tribute to all long-legged, boot-struttin', women-lovin' dykes out there. She traveled from Mississippi to California to work with the women at the Institute for the Musical Arts to record her album over the Winter Solstice holidays. "We are particularly proud that this album was created with no male energy, except Eugene the Cat who walked softly in a room of Amazons," says Pam.



Nina J. Smith

LEAH ZICARI

NO CLOSET

WRITTEN BY: Jamie Anderson
PERFORMED BY: Jamie Anderson (lead vocal, acoustic guitar, tambourine); Randy Lopez (keyboards); Ralph Gilmore (drums); Steve Grams (bass); Barbara Bird (congas); Closet Chorus: Jamie Anderson, Mimi Baczewska, Laura Berkson, Cheryl Bucchino, Dakota, Jane Emmer, Sue Fink, Beth Johnson, Michelle Marquand, Karen Olch, Leah Zicari.

FROM: *Center of Balance*
Tsunami Records
P.O. Box 42282
Tucson, AZ 85733

This song was written in honor of National Coming Out Day [annually, on October 11], something that should be celebrated every day! It's a song that needs many voices, so Jamie invited a few friends to join her in singing this joyful anthem.



Toni Armstrong Jr.

PAM HALL

GLORY, GLORY

LYRICS BY: Leah Zicari
MUSIC: "Battle Hymn of the Republic"
PERFORMED BY: Leah Zicari with the City of Good Neighbors Chorale, Buffalo, New York (member of GALA)

FROM: *Wouldn't That Be Fun?*
Gender Bender Music
P.O. Box 164
Buffalo, NY 14207
(716) 875-6154

These lyrics were purposely set to the "Battle Hymn" [public domain] music because the music's glorious and proud feeling best reflected the sentiment of the song. The use of this music has angered some so-called "godly" types. They call it a sacrilege. If sacrilege is the expression of pride and love of our culture and of ourselves, then let sacrilege be our mission. Happy Gay Pride!

SOUNDSHEETS

Material is recorded on both sides in stereo. Do not bend the soundsheet. Place it on turntable at 33-1/3 rpm. A coin placed on the label where indicated prevents slipping. If your turntable has a ridged mat, placing the soundsheet on top of an LP may be advisable. Questions and comments about the soundsheets? Recording specifications and other details will be sent upon request.



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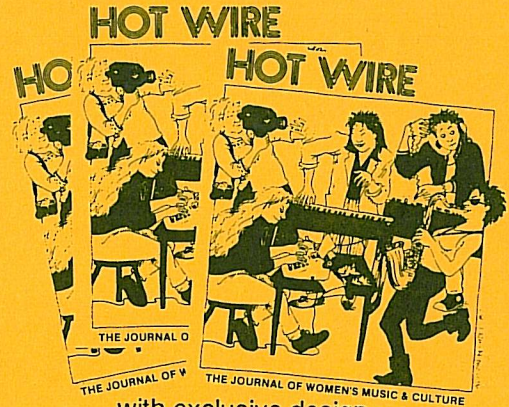
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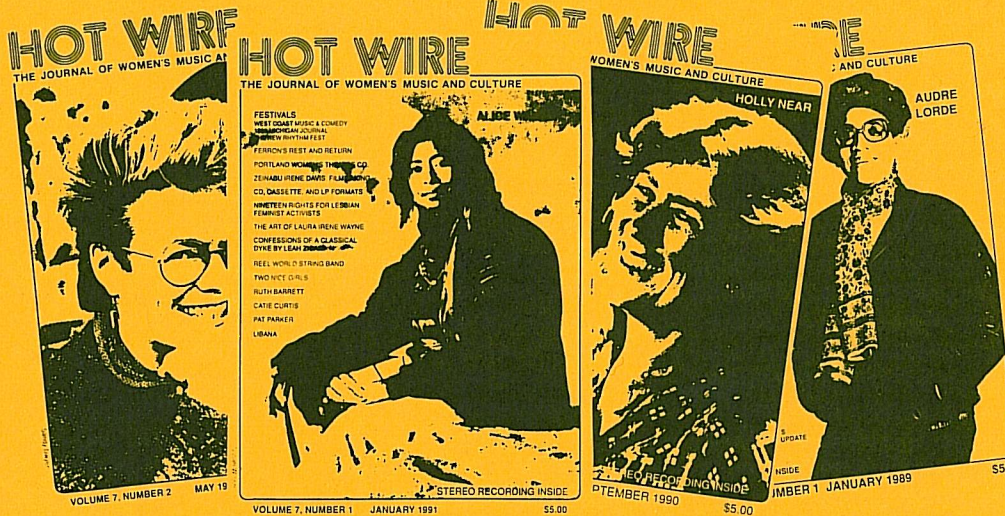
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The collaboration between Holly Near and Ronnie Gilbert was one of the highlights of women's music in the 1980s. In this issue, see the interview with Ronnie and also read about Holly's new musical docudrama, *Fire in the Rain...Singer in the Storm*. (Holly and Ronnie pictured at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco, 1983.)

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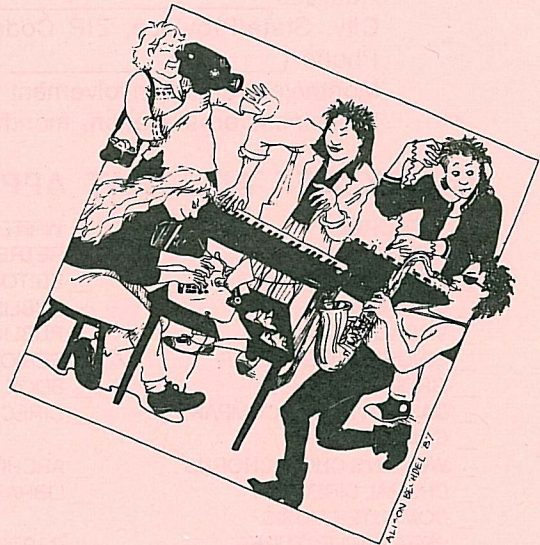
PLEASE NOTE: There is no charge for a basic listing (name, address, phone) in the directory. If you want a specific description printed, it is 25¢ per word, or \$5 for a 25-word description. (For example, performers will be listed under the general category of Performers; you may want a descriptive annotation included, such as: "R&B singer, dancer; ninety albums on own label; experienced emcee." Periodicals may want to specify frequency, price, and target audience, i.e., "Quarterly newspaper for feminist hypnotists in 12-step programs and their friends; \$15/year US, \$17/year Canada.") Write description on a separate sheet if you can't fit it somewhere on this page. We will accept postage stamps as payment if that's easier.

• RETURN TO: WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS, 5210 N. WAYNE, CHICAGO, IL 60640. •

WHAT IS WOMEN'S MUSIC PLUS?

- A unique directory of resources for the feminist women's cultural network.
- More than 3,000 names, addresses, and phone numbers.
- Illustrated with work by well-known feminist photographers, artists, and cartoonists.
- Categories include:

- Performers, speakers/lecturers, emcees, and ritualists
- Comedy, theater, dance, storytelling, and performance art
- Songwriters, composers, and instrumentalists
- Sign Language interpreters (ASL and English)
- Writers, publishers, editors, and writers' resources
- Photographers (live events, fine arts, studio work)
- Producers of concerts and theater events
- Coffeehouses, clubs, bars, and other performance spaces
- Festivals, gatherings, talent shows, and conferences
- Theater companies, directors, and playwrights
- Cartoonists, visual artists, and craftswomen
- Bookers, managers/agents, and publicists
- Women's choirs and choruses
- Bookstores that carry feminist materials
- Periodicals and special-interest book titles
- Catalogs, directories, and bibliographies
- Film/video and television contacts
- Radio shows, DJs, and programmers
- Financial aids: grant-givers, grantwriters, consultants
- Record distributors and record label owners
- Album producers and recording engineers
- Live sound and radio engineers
- Lighting technicians and set designers
- Stage managers and stage crew
- Organizations and support groups



- Compiled by the women who bring you *HOT WIRE: The Journal of Women's Music & Culture*; published by Empty Closet Enterprises, Inc.

WHO CAN BE LISTED?

- Individual women and women's organizations/businesses involved in any aspect of the feminist women's music and culture scene.
- Simply fill out the form on the other side of this page and return it to us.

COST?

- There is no charge for a basic listing (name, address, phone).
- If you want a specific description printed it is 25¢ per word, or \$5 for a 25-word description. (See other side of this page for details.)
- Display ads: \$10/column inch camera-ready; \$15/column inch if we design
- To purchase the directory: \$12 plus \$2 postage and handling.
- 40% discount on bulk orders (ten or more ordered at the same time).

ORDER FORM

.....

____ copies of *Women's Music Plus* Directory @ \$12 plus \$2 postage & handling. \$ _____

____ Words of specific description @ 25¢/word or \$5/25 words. \$ _____

Outside USA: add extra \$2 for postage—all money must be in US dollars only. \$ _____

BULK ORDER (10 or more): ____ copies of *WMP* @ \$7.20 each, plus \$5/per ten ordered in USA for postage & handling. (Outside of USA, write for extra postage rates.) *Bookstores can be billed.*

TOTAL: \$ _____ \$US

Send *Women's Music Plus* to:

_____ (zip code) _____

Mail payment to:
 Women's Music Plus
 5210 N. Wayne Ave.
 Chicago, IL 60640 USA

SEVENTH ANNUAL 'HOT WIRE'

READERS' CHOICE AWARDS

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

• Please vote for one individual and one organization.

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

• Readers' Choice votes and surveys for this year can be written on a separate piece of paper or photocopied from this page. (Don't feel compelled to rip up your magazine).

• Please vote only once.

We must receive Readers' Choice selections by June 10, 1992.

Send to: 'HOT WIRE' Readers' Choice, 5210 N. Wayne, Chicago, IL 60640.

INDIVIDUALS

ROSEANNE ARNOLD for her uncompromising feminist TV show and her pro-lesbian statements to the press.

ALISON BECHDEL for her *Dykes to Watch Out For* cartoon series, calendars, and books.

TERRY GRANT for not giving up on the women's music distribution business despite the severe economic recession.

WANDA HENSON for her crusade to bring woman-identified culture to the Deep South.

K.D. LANG for breaking the taboo barrier with her homoerotic music videos, and for her performance in *Salmonberries*.

CATHERINE ROMA for her almost-two-decades of commitment to the feminist choral movement.

KAREN WILLIAMS for forging new political paths with her comedy.

ORGANIZATIONS

EAST COAST LESBIANS' FESTIVAL for being the most openly lesbian-identified of all women's music festivals.

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

LADYSLIPPER for maintaining the world's most comprehensive catalog of music, videos, and other resources by women.

LESBIAN HERSTORY ARCHIVES for lovingly maintaining the world's largest collection of lesbian materials.

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

FAVORITES

Vocalist _____	All-time favorite album _____
Group/band _____	Album producer _____
Songwriter _____	Live sound engineer _____
Bass player _____	Recording engineer _____
Percussionist _____	Album cover _____
Drummer _____	Fiction book _____
Electric guitarist _____	Nonfiction book _____
Acoustic guitarist _____	Periodical _____
Keyboard player _____	Author _____
Instrumentalist _____	Poet _____
Wind instrument player _____	Cartoonist _____
Comic/comedienne _____	Photographer _____
Emcee _____	Movie/film _____
New performer _____	TV star _____
All-time favorite performer _____	Film star _____
Current song (last 2 years) _____	Film director _____
All-time favorite song _____	Mainstream performer _____
Current album (last 2 years) _____	Other _____