

In the Life

Newsletter of the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection

No. 7

Summer 1994

About this Issue . . .

This issue of *In The Life* is devoted to Women's/Lesbian Music. For many lesbians, "women's" music was intimately involved in our coming out process, and it was/is an underlying thread in the creation of a Lesbian culture. "Our" music validated our lives and empowered us, and the recognition and humor of songs such as "Leaping Lesbians" or "Ode to a Gym Teacher" helped to counter the pain.

The beginnings of the grassroots Women's Music Movement of the 70s had its origin here in Los Angeles, where Maxine Feldman first performed her out Lesbian song, "Angry At this," in 1968. She released it as a single the following year, but it wasn't until 1973 that Women's Music really took off all over the country. On the West Coast Holly Near founded Redwood Records and Kate Millett hosted the first California Women's Music Festival. That same year, on the East Coast, Alix Dobkin and Kay Gardner released the first Lesbian-produced LP, "Lavender Jane Loves Women"; and Olivia Records was founded.

We hope the four interviews in this issue will give a taste of the different directions "Women's Music" and its performers have taken since then. We would love to explore some of the issues raised and welcome your responses. We have a rich and varied herstory, which the Mazer Collection hopes to continue to document.

This issue's origins came from a simple intention to focus just one column, our "Highlights of the Collection," on our record shelf, as a volunteer had recently completed cataloging all of our albums. Then we added a couple of interviews on some local lesbian musicians. Coincidentally, new Mazer Board member Marcia Schwemer was hatching the

exciting idea of a special concert-oriented 5th Anniversary Event (see page 4). In honor of that upcoming tribute, we've added two more interviews with lesbian performers and some graphic examples from the Collection's music files.

We invite you to visit the Collection to explore the rest of the music files: reminisce about past musical events you attended, peruse the file on your favorite performer, or learn about her predecessors. And if you have any old concert flyers, tickets, photos, or other memorabilia please remember to donate them so others can enjoy discovering them in the future.

—IW

Save the Date!

Sunday, October 16, 1994
Noon to 5:00 pm

The Mazer Collection's 5th Anniversary Concert Extravaganza

Alix Dobkin • Judy Fjell with Crystal Reeve
Sue Fink • StrangeFruit • Teresa Mendoza
Lynda Montgomery • Denise Uyehara
Desborde • Ruth Barrett
Flower & McLaren, with Teresa Chandler
and others to be announced

See page 4 for details

An Interview with Alix Dobkin, A Musical Foremother

by Irene Wolt

"She's mythic," Lesbian historian/Mazer Board member Lillian Faderman told *The Advocate* in 1992. "She's a foremother of women's music. It took a lot of vision, a lot of courage to do what she did."

Alix Dobkin's contribution to Lesbian/womyn's music has spanned more than two decades, from before the appearance of her first album, *Lavender Jane Loves Women* (produced in 1973, with Kay Gardner) to the present. *Lavender Jane*, which cost about \$3,300 for its first pressing, was the first internationally distributed Lesbian album. *Gaia's Guide* wrote that it "swept women off the fence by the thousands."



Alix Dobkin

Photo by Joanne Gigant

Since then Alix has released five other albums, culminating in her compilation recording, *Love and Politics: A 30 Year Saga*, in 1992. She has also authored *Alix Dobkin's Adventures in Women's Music (More than a Songbook)*.

Through her music and writings, her outspokenness, and her commitment and energies, Dobkin helped to lay the foundation for Lesbian culture in the early '70's. And she has continued to be a part of its evolution. As one Lesbian fan recently remarked, she is "one person who has always stayed true to the community."

Dobkin, who will perform at the Mazer
(Continued on page 8)

Safeguard Your Legacy

by Sandra Golvin

One of the great creations of lesbian culture is the re-defining of history as our common lives—not simply that we are included in history, a footnote or parenthetical, but that we *are* history. Each of us who has found her way to the love of other women has something important to tell about the journey of her life. This is the legacy of invisibility: that we understand the precious nature of the story of each lesbian that came before us.

Even now, in this time of opening for our people, our history is only beginning to be told. Even now, we can barely begin to imagine how our foremothers lived, who they were, what life was like for the women who loved women in the years gone by. We are hungry for the details of their lives, as the lesbians who come after us will be hungry for the details of our lives. Where do we go to touch/taste/see/smell/feel/hear the intimacies of these women's lives? Where will our children go?

Until very recently this question could not be answered. But today there is the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection, a unique resource center dedicated to preserving the history of lesbian lives.

You have the power to stop the legacy of forgetting; you can donate your

papers, books, journals, diaries, letters, records, posters, videos, t-shirts, audio tapes, scrapbooks, etc. to the June Mazer Lesbian Collection. Stifle your urges to throw away the materials which may reveal your life to future generations—the June Mazer Collection wants it all! Safeguard your legacy from destruction by naming the June Mazer Collection as a beneficiary in your Will or Living Trust. Do it now! And remember . . .

Memory is power. The generations of lesbians who come after us are our children. Though born of others, our heirlooms belong to them. When these, our future children, go seeking themselves in history, our photographs, letters, drawings, posters, flyers all say to them: "We were here. We lived our lives in this way. We had these things to say to one another. We took care of one another like this. We have left you our stories because we believed we mattered. In the everyday details of our lives, take comfort. For you are not alone."

Contact us at the Mazer Collection, 626 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood to let us know what materials you can donate. Bring the items when you visit the Collection, or call us at (310) 659-2478 to make arrangements.

Newsletter Committee Openings

Do you like to write, research, edit, proofread, do photography, etc.? If so, why not join the Mazer Collection newsletter committee? We are always looking for women who are interested in contributing articles or graphics on lesbian herstory topics for our twice-yearly newsletter. If you have an idea for an article or you would like to help us by typing, photographing Mazer events, or anything else having to do with the newsletter, please call Irene or Degania at (310) 659-2478.

Thank You

Thanks to all the dedicated women who make the Mazer Collection a living treasure by contributing their time, money, and personal material: Angela Allen, Alicia Austin, Rosalie Barco, Carla Barboza, Jinx Beers, Edwina Conley, Sophia Corleone, Jo D., Jeri Deitrick, Erica Endrijonas, Lillian Faderman, Lillene Fifield, Nancy Fox, Carol Fulton, Gianna G., Candace Gillette, P. S. Gold, Caryn Goldberg, Sandra Golvin, Cathy Grijalva, Leah Grossman, Anne H., Alice Hom, Leslie Hope, Phyllis Irwin, Sheryl Kaplan, Kim Kralj, Debra M., Katherine M., Colleen Martin, Nancy McConn, Louise Moore, Lore Oehmichen, Pat Parks, Lisa Powell, Vaughan Rachel, Sandy Rios, Marcia Schwemer, Valerie Spenser, Deanne Stevenson, Beth Styles, Francesca Taylor, Sandra Tignor, Martha Townsend, Debra W., Toni Wallace, Sonya Walker, Simone Wallace, Ginger Wilson, Irene Wolt, Tygor Womon, and Sarah Wright; and to SCWU, and the Women of ULOAH and Lesbianas Unidas.

Special thanks to the women who made our 2nd Annual Emma Goldman fundraiser dance such a success: Pat C., Jeri, Francisca, Bea, Barbara E., Nancy F., Candace, Degania, Leslie H., Sister Taxi Hopscotch, Ann H., Christie, Debra M., Colleen, Louise M., Lore, Marsha R., Helene S., Marcia S., Jeremy, Margaret S., Valerie S., Francesca, Irene, and Sarah W. Thanks also to the following businesses for their generous donations for the raffle: Sisterhood Bookstore, masseuse Atheena Harmonie, and tax preparer Linda Moore.

Thanks also to Naiad Press, Firebrand Books, Deborah Bergman, and all the publishers who send us complimentary books and periodicals.

And many thanks to the City of West Hollywood for providing the wonderful space we occupy and, especially, to Terry House for all his help.

We regret if any names have been omitted. We love and need you all.

We Need . . .

- A fax machine: either a donated machine or a financial donation so that we can buy a new one.
- A 6-foot long couch: in good condition, please.
- Seed money to purchase a new computer: we need a 486 or faster machine with more memory to better handle our mailing list and cataloguing needs (we have been working, up till now, with two donated very old, very slow 286 models).

REMEMBER . . .

Volunteer work parties are held at the Mazer Collection on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. New volunteers are invited to drop in. Upcoming dates are August 17, September 19, and October 21.

Highlights of the Collection: Women's Music

Looking through the Mazer Collection's shelves of donated albums, one can't help but notice that the line between women's music and lesbian music is sometimes a bit thin. Interspersed with the records by known lesbians like Alix Dobkin, Cris Williamson, Phranc, Meg Christian, Ferron and so on are others by: women-identified performers who might be bisexual or straight, women whose sexual orientation was/is unclear, and women singers who some lesbians just happen to like to listen to.

Joan Baez, for instance, was popular with lesbians and admits in her book *And A Voice To Sing With* that she did indeed have an affair with a girl when she was 22. But, she is definitely not a lesbian (and has complained in interviews of being "inundated at my concerts with homosexual women").

Dusty Springfield is another performer whose work is in our collection. Patricia Juliana Smith, in an article we have at the Collection, quotes Springfield on being a lesbian in 1970: "A lot of people say I'm bent, and I've almost learned to accept it . . . I know I'm as perfectly capable of being swayed by a girl as by a boy. More and more people feel that way and I don't see why I shouldn't."

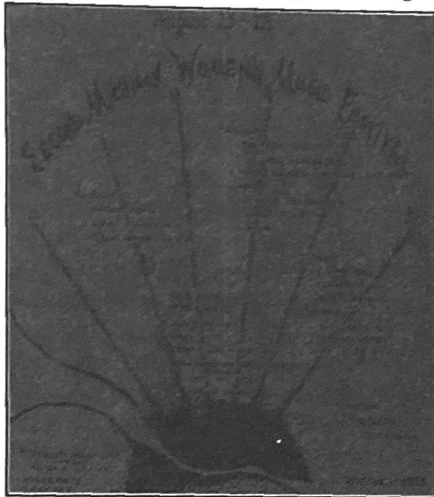
Among the eclectic selection of 500+ records that we have in the Collection are:

- a very early Cris Williamson album, "The World Around." Recorded in 1966 in Sheridan, Wyoming, it includes Cris singing such folk music classics as "Mr. Tambourine Man." The cover photo shows her with long hair flipped up on the ends and over one eye.

- "Mama Lion," (1956) by Malvina Reynolds.
- "Side by Side: Reenactments of Scenes

from Women's History, 1848-1920."

- "Jazz Women: A Feminist Retrospective."
- "The Girls of the Golden West, 1933-1938."
- "The Immortal Ma Rainey" (1924).
- Frances Faye's "Caught in the Act."
- A 1934 recording of Gertrude Stein doing "Readings From Her Works."



1977 Michigan Women's Music Festival program. (Advance tickets were \$20 for the 4-day event.)

- "The Mother of us All: An Opera" (1947; lyrics by Gertrude Stein, music by Virgil Thompson).

- Beverly Shaw's "Songs 'Tailored to Your Taste.'" [Shaw was a popular singer in the early LA lesbian bar scene.]

- "Wild Women Don't Have the Blues" (Ida Cox, 1961).

- "Trying to Survive" by The Berkeley Women's Music Collective (1975).

- Doris Day's "Day Dreams."

The Collection also has several music videos including: A k.d. lang interview, "All you get is me," as well as her "Harvest of Seven Years;" "Brown Sugar" #1-#4, a video series about early Black Women Musicians; and "Tiny & Ruby: Hell Divin' Women," about jazz trumpeter Tiny Davis and her partner of over 40 years, drummer and pianist Ruby Lucas.

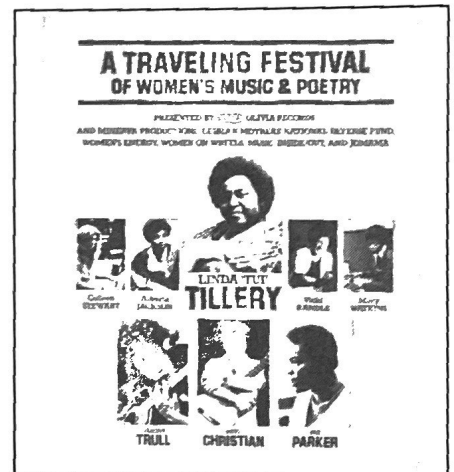
Despite the size of our Music Collection we still have many gaps which we would like you to help us fill. We are presently without any k.d. lang, Joan Armatrading, Tracy Chapman, Indigo Girls, or Melissa Etheridge. And we only have one Janis Ian.

Donations of works by any of the above musicians, or anything else we are missing, would be greatly appreciated. Drop in to see and hear what we have.

[Contributors to this column include Louise Moore, Irene Wolt, and Debbie W., who recently completed alphabetizing and listing our entire collection of record albums.]

Fifield Donation Chronicles Women's Music

Apropos of our theme for this issue of *In The Life*, the Mazer Collection wishes to thank Lillene Fifield for her recent contribution of material relating to women's music. Lillene produced women's music performances—Cris Williamson, Tret Fure, Alix Dobkin, Judy Fjell, and others—from 1975 to 1985. Included in her donated materials are concert programs, publicity information, ticket stubs, and a wealth of information on how women's concerts were produced at that time.



Concert Program. From the Fifield Papers.

Lavender Unicorn presents
in conjunction with the
Alternative Life Styles Conference

TRISH NUGENT and ALIVE!

Saturday
JUNE 9, 1979
8:00 p.m.

Robert Frost Auditorium
4401 Elenda, Culver City

\$5.00 with conference registration
\$5.25 at ticket outlets
\$6.00 at box office

From the Fifield Papers.

Peg Brewer: Lilith Remembered

by Louise Moore

Peg Brewer was a member of a seven-women funk/jazz band called Lilith which was founded in 1972 by guitar-player Beth Caurant. During the seven years of the band's existence there were a total of 38 different band members. The primary group of musicians (those who appeared on their album *Boston Ride*) consisted of: two lead vocalists, Jannis Warner and Lou Crimmins; Marianne Pontoppidan on saxophone and percussion; Laurel Blanchard on drums and percussion, (with Jannis Warner also playing percussion); bass player Deborah Campbell; and Peg on trumpet and keyboards.

The band started in the Northhampton area of Massachusetts and then later went to Georgia. They played a lot of NOW meetings and functions for women but also played at army bases. Besides their album, Lilith also produced a 45.

Peg plays brass instruments, trumpet, trombone, baritone horn and a little guitar, as well as piano and synthesizer.

Louise Moore spoke with Peg and her lover in West Hollywood. She questioned Peg about whether or not Lilith identified as a women's music band or a lesbian band.

PB: At no point did anyone ever sit down and talk about that. We never billed ourselves as a lesbian band. At the time the band was developed we were looking to do what men's bands had been able to do; be a live, fun, rock band—a jazz band, a funk band, something to dance to. We were strictly top 40. Although we did write some of our own stuff. We were a women's band.

LM: There weren't that many dance

bands.

PB: Most of the individual artists were doing what we always called personal music. We played some Chaka Khan, Santana. We did some Gato Barbieri. Our sax player was real strong.

LM: What was your largest concert?

PB: It was probably at the Paradise Club in Boston, about 1978. One of the reasons it was exciting was that they had Ticketron tickets. Bette Midler, when she was in town, played there, and other big

name bands. Bonnie Raitt came to see us at Jack's in Cambridge. We played there quite a bit. We were going to do a warm-up for her up in New Hampshire. But, as it turned out, it was near the end of her concert schedule and she got sick and canceled the last of her concerts, and one of them was ours. We used to do concerts with the Deadly Nightshade sometimes.

LM: What happened with your 45?

PB: It had "Moondance" on one side and "Mr Big Stuff" on the other.... I think I have 300 of them in my basement in Connecticut.

LM: Why did you decide to do an album?

PB: Someone approached us. Someone who liked the band and wanted to make an investment.

LM: Did she make any money?

PB: I doubt it.

LM: Were you full-time musicians?

PB: A few of us off and on had jobs, but for all of us the satisfaction in our lives came from being in the band. After Georgia we came back up to Boston, and at that point we were one of just a few bands operating in the black. We even incorporated.

(Continued on page 7)



Lilith members (clockwise from bottom l):
Lou Crimmins, Beth Caurant, Peg Brewer,
Marianne Pontoppidan, Deborah Campbell,
Jannis Warner, Laurel Blanchard.

Save the Date!

Sunday, October 16, 1994
Noon to 5:00 pm

The Mazer Collection's
5th Anniversary
Concert Extravaganza

Featuring:

Alix Dobkin

Judy Fjell with Crystal Reeves

Sue Fink

StrangeFruit

Lynda Montgomery

Teresa Mendoza

Denise Uyehara

Desborde

Ruth Barrett

Flower & McLaren, with

Teresa Chandler

and others to be announced

At the Old Lodge Area
in Elysian Park

Tickets:

\$20-\$40 in advance

\$25-\$50 at the event

Plan now to spend a special afternoon celebrating five years of the Mazer Collection. Enjoy five hours of your favorite musical and comedy performers, both local and national, in a lovely, secluded outdoor setting surrounded by Lesbian culture. (There will be art and historical exhibits from the Collection; information tables on other local lesbian organizations; and lots of other womyn.) We hope to make this a real community event, with participation representing the wonderful diversity of Southern California lesbians. If you would like information on how to arrange for a table or booth for your organization, call us at (310) 659-2478. Or let us know of any groups to contact.

Food and drinks will be on sale, or bring your own picnic. (No alcohol, please.) Bring a blanket or beach chair and join old friends, lovers, sisters and all of us from the Collection for this day of Lesbian herstory in the making.

This is festival (i.e. on the grass) seating, so come early for a good seat. For ticket information or directions, call the Collection at (310) 659-2478.

Elaine Miller: Behind the Scenes

by Louise Moore and Irene Wolt

Elaine Miller has been intimately involved in Women's music since the opening of the Los Angeles Women's Building on Spring Street in 1975. She helped produce Twinklestar night, a women's talent show at the Women's Building; participated in a lesbian mothers' performance at "Lalala," a celebration of Lesbian culture; wrote music for and produced a 16-piece orchestra concert at the Women's Building; and has written pieces for full orchestra.

In 1977, Elaine sang backup for Sue Fink at a concert for International Women's Year, after which she became involved with the Los Angeles Women's Chorus, primarily as an arranger. She also accompanied Silvia Kohan at women's events, bars, and coffeehouses for eight years and played keyboard with the women's dance band Dell Street.

Elaine's original choral music and arrangements have been performed by the L.A. Women's Chorus, Denver Women's Chorus, Portland Lesbian Chorus and San Diego Women's Chorus.

LM: What was your first women's music event?

EM: La-La-La, I think. I'm fuzzy on this. There was also a talent show, Twinklestar Night, at the Women's Building at the same time. La-La-La was a large event at the Women's Building that was supposed to be a Lesbian celebration of art. At the time there was no child care at women's events because of a sentiment in the Lesbian community that mothers were not to be visible. Those of us who were mothers put on a show. The organizer was really Sharon MacDonald who wrote two songs for it, one called "Please Mother a Mother Today." We took all our kids there—we were not a welcome crowd—and we put on a half-hour vignette, with me on the piano, of what it's like to be a Lesbian mother and have your friends not understand.

[At] Twinklestar Night I sang a solo of

"Woman Spirit," which I had written before this—probably in 1973—on a bus going to my job at CalTech. After I arranged it for the Chorus, it stayed with them for ten years, where it was used as a warm-up to settle our minds and get together. We performed it some, but more than that it was a way of drawing and keeping us together because it was about comforting each other.

I met Sue [Fink] at the Women's Building Twinklestar Night. After my



Elaine Miller, on keyboards, at the farewell performance of Dell Street.

performance she asked me if I would do back-up for International Women's Year, for "Leaping Lesbians." So I did the wah-ah along with three other people. The Chorus was starting around then, too.

LM: How old were you when you started playing music?

EM: I was three. I used to watch my mother's hands, my nose on the piano as she played. I remember playing shortly after that. But I never had lessons. We were poor, so my mother taught me a little, how to read music. I basically taught myself until college, when I took more formal classes in music.

LM: What instruments do you play?

EM: I played keyboard first, then guitar, viola and bassoon. I became interested in arranging orchestral music in college.

LM: Did you play "Women's Music" or did you play "Lesbian Music"?

EM: It depends on who I played with. In my history, the Chorus was certainly

women's music. With Dell Street, we did Buddy Holly songs, lots of old rock. Lesbian music? No. Women's music? Yes. I don't identify as Lesbian music. Because I feel like I'm more inclusive than that, as a mother, particularly.

LM: When did you start writing music?

EM: Do I remember not ever writing music? I wrote music when I was a teenager, usually instrumental. Words came when my daughter Jenny was born. I started writing children's songs; I started writing about anything that happened to me. I put out a record at that time of one of my songs. It's a song of transition between being straight and being gay that's rather comical. That's 22 years ago. I would say that's my first gay song.

LM: Are you working as a musician now?

EM: No. I want to do more writing again; I'm building a studio in my garage. The last writing I did was "Nostalgia," for the Denver Women's Chorus in 1986. I wrote one other piece two years later that has never been done by a chorus called "Doorways Through Silence." It's about a woman healing from abuse. That's the last choral writing I did. The last four years I've been working as a teacher. I have done musicals at schools where I teach.

LM: Were you ever totally employed as a musician?

EM: No, I always worked as a teacher. Then, I met Silvia [Kohan]. I saw her in Venice, singing a capella all by herself in a purple jumpsuit. I loved her voice. I met her about three months later at the Woman's saloon on Fountain near Western. (The saloon lasted for a very short time.) She was singing and I gave her my card, saying, "If you ever need an accompanist." She had someone at that time; I think it was Mary Watkins. She called a little while later. We started finding places to play. We would play woman's bars or coffeehouses in San Francisco, here or San Diego.

LM: So Silvia's the first person you played with?

EM: The first person professionally. We made fifty bucks a shot or something. We performed at the Artemis up in San Francisco. Down here we played Mary's

(Continued next page)

Place. That was the beginning of everything: I met Sue then; I met Silvia then; the Chorus was just starting. It was very exciting. It seemed like this was going to be a real opening for music as a wonderful way to have people understand issues of importance to women.

LM: When you say you arrange music, what does that mean?

EM: Let's take Sweet Honey in the Rock, for instance. Sweet Honey is music that no one else could arrange in the Chorus. I always ended up doing it. I did "Joanne Little," "Ought to be a Woman," "Breaths," and a few others. I once talked to Bernice Reagon for two minutes and I said, "I'm having a lot of trouble on 'Joanne Little,' I don't know what you do in here," and I asked, "Do you have anything written down?" And she answered, "Why do you want to write it down for?"

I wanted to write it down so ninety women could sing it. I had to take vocal slides and other kinds of things that were there very naturally, coming from their mouths, and put 'em on a piece of paper so that the Chorus could sound like that. That's arranging.

Holly Near, whose work I also arranged a lot, was easier. I did "Foolish Notion," "You Bet," and a couple others. With Holly, who's already arranged it on her record, you have to be a little careful that you take what she did as hers, while also putting in your own input so that you can really say you are the arranger and you're not plagiarizing. So an arranger is a person who takes something that already is a package perhaps, and makes it a different package. There is some composition in that.

When I'm listening to a tape of Sweet Honey and transcribing what they do, putting it on paper it's a very logical thing. There's the craft as well as the musicianship of the sound. Jamming is one kind of music. Or improvising is one kind of music. But what I'm better at is sticking down the music on paper—and that's a skill in itself—and making it sound good at the end. There's the artistry of what it sounds like at the end. But there's also that craft of just getting the right note on the paper.

LM: How much of that has been recorded?

EM: I'm not on anybody's album. A lot of my contribution is behind the scenes.

If you arrange a song you're not out there playing it. You're not conducting it.

One of the best experiences in my life was handing Sue a piece of music and then seeing what would happen with it, because I just wrote things on paper, and her hand would bring out a whole other thing. We had arguments sometime. I'd say, "Sue, why'd you stop it right there? Don't you want that to do this?" But not bad arguments, just musician arguments. My work was to feed the music to the people and not to be in front.

LM: Were you involved with the Chorus until it disbanded?

EM: No. I left a little bit before that. I left before the tenth anniversary.

LM: Can you tell us about the beginning of the Chorus?

EM: I remember everybody talked about the original seven people, seven or nine people. There's Jo Lynne and Silvia and Sue, and a few others that met, I guess, for a long time. I came in right after them. They put out publicity, and I think there were maybe thirty people [at the] first rehearsal, and then the next time we had almost double that. The word started getting out.

What I remember most was that first concert. It was at that Union Hall on Fourth Street in Santa Monica. I remember the march of the women when they first came in. It was just great. Those of us who were in it didn't know that was going to happen at that first concert. We had rented a very small hall. We had a bigger audience than we ever expected. It was one of those things that you know is going to happen for a long time. Even though we weren't sure before the concert whether it was going to fly and whether we were going to be able to keep doing it.

LM: Why were you interested in a chorus?

EM: It was a place we could go and be with women and they had child care. And then Sue was very giving and wanting me to grow and do my music and help arrange, and so that relationship was cementing. It helped me as a musician to grow. [Also because of] the social atmosphere, and the feeling that we were doing something that was politically important, that we might be changing something. I don't think we did, but we tried.

LM: You played with them at most of the concerts, didn't you?

EM: Usually for my own piece, "For

Being a Woman." Sometimes on others also; I think I played "March of the Women" once.

LM: How often would you meet?

EM: Once a month. [We worked as a] collective. Whoever wanted to come could, whatever your work input was. You could do nothing and come to the collective and you would have one vote.

LM: How long were you involved in the Women's Chorus?

EM: Nine years, it looks like. That ninth year was neat. We had slides of marathon runners—it was the women's marathon, the first women's marathon, about that time—and Joanna Cazden had written "The Marathon Song," so I had trumpets and trombones playing the Olympic theme. Later, I played keyboards on her recording of this song. That same year they did Kay Weaver's "One Fine Day." It [the Chorus] got big, and then I burned out and left. And then I think it got smaller and then it ended. I think Sue burned out about a year later, right after the tenth anniversary.

LM: What about Dell Street? It was a small band, right?

EM: Yes, it was Marge Gugino, Kate Waterman, Nancy Peterson, drummer Colleen McCullough, and me on keyboards.

LM: And that was when?

EM: I would say 1982 to '84. That came from Nancy and Chorus, when we arranged together. When I joined, the band already existed. We played a bunch of different bars, had a good time, played anything that came up. We played some women's music but that wasn't the focus. The focus was a fun band to dance to.

LM: What has been your biggest thrill as a musician?

EM: Certainly the Chorus's first year concert stands out in my mind. But [also], International Women's Year with Sue, doing back-up singing. The reason that stands out is because in the audience was my sister's best friend when we were growing up, who is now a Lesbian, and she came up afterward and it was like my life made more sense somehow. It's like someone from your past where you're sort of leaving your past and not telling anybody what you are comes up and says, "Me, too; I'm a Lesbian, too." And that was very important.

A lot of McCabe's concerts with Silvia were really exciting. They were always fun, and brought out a lot of the

community, and Silvia was always great. Travelling up north too. The best one up north was the Moonrise Café in Santa Rosa. There's a whole community of women there, and it was the warmest, most wonderful concert I've ever given.

What stands out most in my mind, though, was an orchestral concert I produced. Right after the Women's Building opened, after that wave of events and the Twinklestar night, I started the Coffee House Collective where we did monthly concerts. We had Ardy Tibby, I remember. It was basically me and one other person doing all the production. Then I decided to do an orchestration I had written. So I had Marcy Dicterow and one of her friends on violin. I had two violins, two cellos, two clarinets and two trumpets. I gathered the most beautiful people, 16 pieces in all. I rewrote the piece because it was for full orchestra—I only had a sixteen piece orchestra—and we played that and we played a Beethoven piece. Sue Fink conducted; I played the piano instead. And then we had a talent show after that. It went on almost all night. We had 600 women. Women were everywhere. That orchestra still stands out as a major event because it's not often you gather those kinds of musicians. They were beautiful.

Mazer to Host Community Meeting

On September 18, 1994, at 2 pm, the June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection will host a community meeting to assist us in developing a program of across-the-board support for the only Lesbian-only-identified resource in Los Angeles.

The meeting will consist of a dialogue about the future direction of the Collection and how to assure its permanency. We need to hear from *all* kinds of Lesbian voices, representatives of organizations as well as unaffiliated lesbians. This is *your* Collection, and we want to ensure that it represents all of you.

The afternoon discussion will start off with an introduction to the Collection via a presentation of a slide show about the Collection. Afterwards, tours of the Collection will be held.

The meeting will be held downstairs, at 626 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood. Call (310) 659-2478 to reserve a space.

Brewer from page 4

LM: Had you been making a living in music before that?

PB: I taught junior high school music, and had organist/choir director jobs, but when I got associated with the band I was working for AT&T.

LM: Were you forced to take piano lessons?

PB: Yeah, my grandmother taught all the kids in town. It wasn't 'til I was in junior high that I started to like it, and my best friend also took lessons from my grandmother. Suzanne was her name. I wanted do better so Suzanne would be impressed by my musical abilities.

Because of women leaving the band, Lilith ended up with a drummer and lead guitarist who "happened to be men." For the next year or so that the band was together, it just wasn't the same. The band broke up in 1979.

The sax player now has her own band in the Boston area; Lou Crimmins continues to perform; and Debbie Campbell is in *Somebody's Ex*, and played with Sally Landers. After a hiatus from music due to a broken wrist, among other things, Peg is currently playing organ for a Metropolitan Community Church.

Lorde Tribute Funds Women of Color Collection

A diverse, appreciative audience packed the house at Plummer Park on February 27 to pay tribute to poet Audre Lorde. Co-sponsored by the Mazer Collection, Lesbianas Unidas, LAAPIS (Los Angeles Asian Pacific Islander Sisters) and ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage), the event featured readings by Ayofemi Folayan, Collette Jackson, Eloise Klein Healy, Teresa Mendoza, Edwina Conley, Robin Podolsky, Sandra Golvin, Alice Hom, Leah Grossman, Carmen Canto and Kimberly Purnell (who also emceed).

Over \$600 was raised to benefit the Mazer Collection's Women of Color holdings. Women from the sponsoring groups will be involved on an ongoing basis in the acquisition process which these funds will generate. Any other women who are interested in this special collection, or who have relevant items to donate, please contact the Collection.

In Memory . . .

During the past year, we have lost several beloved women from the community. All of them remembered the Mazer Collection in some way.

Donna Smith died of cancer at 72. Her first-hand accounts helped document much of 1930's and 40's Lesbian-Gay Los Angeles. A Board member of IGLA (the International Gay and Lesbian Archives), Donna was also active in the ACLU Gay Rights Chapter, Project Rainbow—G&L Seniors, and SCWU (Southern California Women for Understanding). The Mazer Collection has been named as one of the beneficiaries in her will.

Silvia H. Dobson, an English citizen who lived in this country for 35 years, was a writer and a poet, and lifetime friend of the poet H.D. She was a long-time partner of Betty Shoemaker, former owner of Santa Barbara's Choices Bookstore, who described Silvia as "a brilliant, loving, gentle woman who supported just about every humane feminist and lesbian organization." Silvia was 74 when she died in October 1993. As specified in her will, some of Silvia's writings and other personal effects have been left to the Collection.

Diana M. Johnson died of cancer, at age 46, on May 20, 1994. Active in the Los Angeles Women's Building during the 1970s, Diana operated The Graphics Place for many years. Most recently she served as typesetter and graphic designer for SCWU's Newsletter. Due to her commitment to the preservation of our lesbian heritage, her partner Laurie Stephens has asked that contributions be made in her memory to the Collection.

Address Change Request: Bulk Mail is Not Forwarded

If you are moving, please note: when you give a forwarding address to the Post Office, bulk mail is *not* forwarded. It just ends up in a Post Office/dead-end limbo.

If you have moved and are no longer getting our newsletter, or are planning a move, please notify the Mazer Collection of your new address. Also, if your name is misspelled on the mailing label, please send us a correction. Thanks.

Dobkin from page 1

Collection 5th Anniversary Celebration in October, spoke with us by phone from her home in Upstate New York, where she is presently at work on her memoirs.

IW: What spurred you and Kay Gardner to produce *Lavender Jane*?

AD: Well, I had all these songs and I wanted to record them. And I blew a contract at Columbia and Electra.

It didn't work out with Columbia because I told them I wasn't sure about singing for men. I hadn't even thought about it. The words just came out of my mouth at a meeting. That was the end of my career at Columbia!

And at Electra Records, I told those people there that I needed to have final control of every image that went out about me, because I was an out Lesbian and I didn't trust those boys. I knew them from the old days. So I couldn't get a contract with Electra. It was up to me. Kay Gardner and I really clicked and the rest is herstory.

IW: How many copies has that album sold?

AD: I should know, shouldn't I? I'd guess 50,000, but I don't really know.

IW: How did you get started writing and performing music specifically for women? I know you were a folk singer first.

AD: Right. I found myself becoming more and more interested in women and went to a consciousness-raising group and my mind was just focused on women. I started writing these songs; and then I had a vision in which I saw a sea of women's faces. I hadn't even come out yet; but I saw a vision of my audience. And I thought "this is for me, this is what I want."

Then I had an astrological reading shortly before I came out and the astrologer told me that I could be either a heterosexual or a Lesbian but that I would probably be happier as a Lesbian. He was gay himself. He saw a real future for me combining my creative talents and my work with my Lesbianism, with my women's consciousness. And I thought "Ok. I'll do that."

I had already written a couple of songs like *My Kind of Girl* and *Fantasy Girl* and *The Woman in Your Life*. I was really on a track. And he encouraged that, and I thought "Why not? Sounds good to me." So . . .

IW: What year was this?

AD: That was in early 1973, I think.

IW: What kind of women's music scene was around then?

AD: Well, there wasn't any.

IW: Is that it?

AD: Maxine Feldman had recorded "*Angry At This*." But I hadn't known about it; I hadn't heard it. I just had all this music and I was comfortable with it. I had written music before, songs about myself; and it was the most natural thing. I was blown away that there wasn't any more of this around.

IW: When did it start to build and become a real women's music community?

AD: I like to think it's right around late

Alix Dobkin: a 1980 Texas concert flyer.

'73, early '74, around the time *Lavender Jane* came out.

IW: What kind of response did you get when it first came out?

AD: Incredible. It was an idea whose time had come. Immediately, there was a huge positive response to it. Great reviews. Everybody was very excited about it. It was a wonderful, wonderful debut.

IW: And what changes have you seen in the Lesbian music scene since then?

AD: Well, it's gone everywhere. It's had greater influences than we could even imagine. As is proper. Women's music, of course, is more of a consciousness by, for and about women. It's not a particular sound. When I was starting, some of the early artists--Willie Tyson,

Casse Culver, Kay and I, Maxine--were folk singers. All with guitars. Then Meg came along and after her, Cris. So it became very identified with folk, female folk with guitar.

But in the twenty years [it is] clearly not just girl with guitar. Anybody who knows anything about women's music, who has been to a festival, knows that it certainly is not one sound. It's any kind of music for women with a consciousness. It has really filled out and become tremendously influential and has provided women with a foundation on which to move forward into the mainstream or wherever they want to go.

IW: Do you think that Lesbian music is synonymous with women's music?

AD: It's really hard to define even what "Lesbian" means—which is one of the reasons I love being a Lesbian. It's indefinable. You can't really nail it down. You can't really categorize it neatly. There is always that ambiguity: is it "women's music" or is it "Lesbian music"? It crosses the border all the time. Because it deals with women loving ourselves and women who love other women. And that is what our movement is about. That is what Lesbianism is about. And that's what women's love is about. So it expresses that on the whole spectrum; and you can't really define it at any one particular place. So, it's as indefinable as "Lesbian" is indefinable.

IW: In the Mazer Collection's files, I found a 1979 concert program which described you as "one of the sincerest and most seriously involved Lesbian musicians in the United States". Do you agree with that description?

AD: Who knows! I don't know what exactly that means. I am very seriously concerned with philosophy and defining and analytical, intellectual pursuits. So, in that respect maybe I'm more involved.

IW: Do you think that's different from other Lesbian performers?

AD: Well, everybody has her own agenda. We're each unique. My agenda is to further transformation in a political, intellectual, analytical way. I think we each have our own contribution to make.

IW: Do you still have a women-only policy for your concerts?

AD: I haven't had that for a dozen years. It depends on the production. It depends on the producer, on the situation. But I have been doing mixed concerts

now for a long time.

IW: Why did you change that?

AD: I changed for two reasons. One, I wanted to have my music go out further than just women who were willing to come to a women-only concert. And I wanted to make more money. I couldn't support myself just doing women-only concerts.

IW: Are there many men that come to hear you?

AD: No. But a lot of women will come if they think men are allowed to come.

IW: Have you lost anybody because of it?

AD: Separatists I know are realistic. They live in the world and understand it. Maybe one or two have stayed away because of men in the audience, but not many. Women can go to a festival and hear me with women only. And many of my concerts *are* women-only.

IW: How did it feel to be part of the growing women's music movement? And to be creating it?

AD: Well, we're still doing that. It's very exciting. I wouldn't be anywhere else.

IW: Do you feel like there are still changes going on?

AD: Yes! Serious stuff. Pick up the last issue of *Hot Wire* Magazine. It's fabulous. It has some really good roundtable discussions—two articles in particular. One is about mainstreaming women's music, women's culture. The other one I am a part of, and I am talking with a couple of riot grrrls.

They were wonderful discussions. I feel like a resource, and I hope that women will feel free to use me as a resource. I've got a lot of experience and I am very interested in what other new creative artists are doing. So that's really, in my mind, the most exciting direction that women's music is making—with, you know, riot grrrls, the young women coming up, the young Lesbians. [They're] really fierce.

IW: Are you planning to do another album?

AD: No. I am writing my memoirs now.

IW: Any idea when they're going to be done?

AD: I don't have a deadline. I figure another year or two ought to do it. I've been working on it two years now; but I have to keep leaving town and going on the road. That's very disruptive. So, I

hope it'll be out in two years.

IW: What about the Carnegie Hall Lavender Jane reunion? How did that come about?

AD: That's on June 26. Lin Daniels, our producer, wanted to do it. We did it in '89, and it was great. We're doing it again for the twenty-fifth Stonewall.

IW: Are all the folks who were involved going to be there?

AD: We haven't located our bass player. Toni Armstrong, who is the editor of *Hot Wire* (Toni Armstrong, Jr.), is playing bass, as she did in '89. But Kay [Gardner] and I will be there. And our special guest will be Phranc. Kay and Nuru [Nurudafina Pili Abena] will do a set from their *One Spirit* album.

IW: Lastly, what are your thoughts on the importance of Lesbian archives?

AD: In writing my memoirs I have been doing a lot of research and remembering, thinking-back. I was just revising the part in which I first tried to find out about homosexuals. And I just couldn't get anything satisfactory at all. So, of course, our own collections are invaluable. It's very important for us to have our identity institutionalized in this way. In fact, that was my major inspiration for *Lavender Jane*, making a Lesbian institution. It would let women know that there are Lesbians out there. That's part of the same importance of the archives, the Collection. I'm thrilled that there is an active, operating archive on the west coast. I know I will be thrilled when I am actually standing there. I can see the original collection very well.

IW: The original Oakland one?

AD: Yes. I have a very clear memory of standing in that room. It was very bright and kind of small. There was a new copy machine. [The room was] not very large, but very sincere.

IW: Did you know that it was moved to L.A.?

AD: I had read about it. I was delighted that it was going; it's very sad to lose our institutions.

IW: Do you have anything else you want to add?

AD: Congratulations on your anniversary. I am delighted to be a part of it. I feel very pleased that you thought of me because I am always delighted to be associated with any Lesbian institution that furthers our culture and helps establish us on the planet.

Mazer Co-hosts Video Program

On July 12, the Mazer Collection and the Gay & Lesbian Media Coalition will co-host a video program at the L.A. International Gay & Lesbian Film & Video Festival. "Video Program #3: Lesbian Culture," will play at 9:30 pm at the Director's Guild of America.

Included in the program will be three short videos. *Shirley and Florence*, a 26-minute documentary, looks at a 55-year friendship between two Jewish women, one a lesbian and one straight. *Not Just Passing Through*, a one-hour video, documents: African-American Mabel Hampton (1902-1989); the N.Y. Lesbian Herstory Archives and the retrieval of the personal affects of Marge McDonald; a profile of Asian-Pacific lesbian culture (including June Chan's erotic slide show); and backstage at the WOW cafe with the Five Lesbian Brothers. *Todo lo que viene del jardin de las flores*, an 11-minute short, features the perspectives of four latina lesbians.

All ticket proceeds will go to the Gay & Lesbian Media Coalition. For ticket information, call (213) 466-1767.

New Volunteer Coordinator

The Mazer Collection is pleased to announce that Colleen Martin will serve as our new Volunteer Coordinator. Colleen has been a Mazer volunteer for several years and replaces former volunteer coordinators Martha Townsend and Erika Endrijonas, who are heading out for the greener pastures of Vermont). We send our thanks and best wishes to them (and our fond memories of the wonderful bakery delights which Erika provided).

If you'd like to volunteer, please call Colleen at (310) 659-2478 or (310) 470-0549 to see how you can help. As an all-volunteer enterprise, the Collection is always in great need of help with a myriad of tasks, including: cataloging, filing, fundraising, publicity, answering correspondence, carpentry, computer entry, wo-manning the phones, archiving and collecting materials, etc.

Drop by on a Wednesday or Sunday and find a project you'd like to work on or a file drawer to "adopt." Or join us on work party night (the third Wednesday evening of each month). This is a fun way to meet other women in the community, and learn about our fascinating herstory. No amount of volunteer time is too small.

Bridging Musical Transitions: An Interview with Vicki Randle

by Irene Wolt

Vicki Randle is a singer, songwriter, guitar-player, and a percussionist who has been performing professionally since the early 1970s. She has performed solo, as well as in conjunction with many of Olivia Records artists, with whom she also recorded. Her unique vocal style has been described as a blend of jazz, funk, pop, rock, and folk.

Besides performing in Women's Music concerts, Vicki worked as a touring musician, doing backup singing and playing percussion for many big jazz and pop groups. She has toured and/or recorded with Herbie Hancock, Angela Bofill, Rufus and Patti Austin, George Benson, Lionel Richie, and Kenny Loggins. Since 1992, Vicki has been a percussionist with the Tonight Show band on NBC.

IW: How long have you been performing?

VR: Probably since I was sixteen, which is a long time. I've been performing professionally for about 25 years.

IW: Did you perform at women's clubs in the seventies?

VR: There weren't any women's clubs in the seventies. There were women's unions on college campuses and independent productions. I did quite a lot of those. I worked a lot with some of the more well known women's music labels and artists, mostly background singing.

IW: Can you mention some names?

VR: Linda Tillery, Margie Adam, Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, Holly Near—basically almost anybody who recorded for Olivia. I was pretty much a first-call back-up singer. I did a lot of arranging and work like that.

IW: How did you get started working with Olivia and Women's music?

VR: It was an outgrowth of playing with the first two women musicians I ever met—when I was about twenty-one. We played at a big NOW convention in L.A. and, as a result of that, I met a woman who produced the first women's music concert on the West Coast. I can't remember where, but it had Margie Adam, Cris Williamson and myself as the headliners.

IW: What led you to play at the NOW convention?

VR: I was working as a cashier at a gas station and my manager was the first out lesbian I had ever met. I wasn't out yet. She adopted me and my boyfriend, who also worked at the gas station. She was in a political action group—probably one of the first lesbian political action groups—which called themselves the Dyke Patrol. My boyfriend and I got adopted as their mascots. She introduced me to different places, different women's events, including the NOW convention.

IW: Were you writing your own songs?

VR: I hadn't been writing at that point. I sang Margie's songs because she wasn't performing then. Eventually she wanted me to sing a certain way and I told her, "Why don't you sing it? You can sing well enough." I was getting more interested in doing other forms of music.

I was raised mostly in very white areas of L.A. I went to high school in Orange County where I was *the* Black person at my school. I grew up listening to rock and roll, metal mostly, and then this really obscure folk music. That's what I started playing. After awhile, I began paying more attention to jazz and R&B and other forms of music that I had never really listened to. I started doing jazz scat-singing and that became a big part of my show. I wanted to synthesize the things that I had grown up listening to with the experiences I had been having in jazz and R&B. I began writing music where I tried to synthesize all those things.

IW: Was this performing to women's music audiences?

VR: I've never exclusively performed for women audiences. I've always played clubs, worked locally. When I was about twenty-two I moved to San Francisco and kept playing. I always had a very strong connection with other women artists. I played a lot with Teresa Trull and Linda Tillery. The choice of the people that I ended up working with was based more on the kind of music they were doing.

IW: When did you do the Women on Wheels tour?

VR: After I had met Linda Tillery, and I was working a lot with the people from Olivia. I did the tour with Linda, Pat Parker,

Mary Watkins, Gwen Avery and a few other musicians. We went all over the United States, mostly colleges and independent production companies.

IW: And you had already been playing with jazz bands?

VR: I had been playing percussion since I was about eighteen. When I was about 23 or 24, I began recording and doing background vocals, and I became a touring musician. I spent months and months on the road, a lot of times overseas, with different kinds of bands. That's when I started working with bigger groups—some jazz, some pop. I kept doing that until two years ago when I got the Tonight Show gig.

IW: Who did you work with?

VR: I worked with George Benson for eight years. I did lead vocals with him, a duet, played percussion and did background. I did a big Lionel Richie tour. In 1990 and 91, I played with Kenny Loggins. In May 1992 I started the Tonight Show.

IW: How did you get that job?

VR: Basically, the same way I got every other gig. Once you start working, people pay attention to you. When Branford [Marsalis] was putting this band together he suggested me. He had seen me play because I had done a lot of jazz festivals with him on the same roster.

IW: You're a percussionist in the band?

VR: Officially. As a band member I do mainly percussion. I'm also singing now though. When I started working it was fun because I started doing a lot of things I had never done before, like acting in skits. So I've been one of the more versatile members of the band in that respect.

IW: Are you still performing at women's festivals?

VR: The only women's festival that I have performed at and still do perform at is the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. It's a very well done and very professionally run festival.

I've had a long history with the women's community, but I wanted to continue to grow and learn. I worked with other musicians, and I had to be judged on my musicianship rather than on the fact that I was a woman playing that instrument.

In one respect, being a woman musician, especially working in the women's community, became an easy way to get a gig; because you were the only bass player in town or the only whatever player in town, they would call you. Since you didn't have to compete with anybody you never had to really worry

about getting better as a musician. The musicians I chose to work with were women who I think really had musical excellence in mind. I judge people based on their skills.

IW: Did you feel that way earlier?

VR: Definitely. I spent a lot of time getting frustrated, because we would go to different colleges and different production companies and, in town after town, it would be the same mistakes over and over again. They would call themselves a production company because they came up with a name, but they had no idea how to do production and they'd never ask anybody. We would go from town to town explaining how to put on a production. And they would inevitably lose money because they had no idea how to do it. It was really hard.

IW: Did you see any benefits to doing things that way?

VR: It's very comforting to be surrounded by people who you know aren't going to judge you, who aren't going to automatically think you can't do it because you're a woman. It's definitely not as stressful as working out here, with guys. In most of the bands, I was the only woman musician they ever worked with and it's been very lonely and difficult a lot of the

time. But, for the most part I feel like I eventually got judged on my talents and my skills rather than on the fact that I was a woman. And that's important.

IW: Are you out as a lesbian in that environment?

VR: Mostly. When I was on the road the people who were close to me knew. But I wasn't running around telling people, because I felt like that was probably not smart. The people that I work with now know, and it isn't a big deal. I found that the more out I am the easier it is. It's much easier to hurt someone when they're lying than when they're not.

Kenny Loggins was kind of happy that I was a lesbian. He thought if he was only going to have one woman in the band it could cause problems. It was sexist, on the one hand, but I had never been hired by a guy particularly because I was a lesbian.

IW: Do you think things have changed in the industry?

VR: Not a lot. I think things change more on the personal level than they do on the global level. It's much easier for someone to make an exception, even if they grew up thinking that gays were

sinful or mentally ill, if they meet someone who's gay and get to know them. They change their opinion, at least about that person. And it will make a difference next time. That has worked for me, with male musicians, both as one of the few female musicians they've worked with and also as a lesbian. They get to know me as a person, and then they put the idea of "Lesbian" on that instead of having an abstract concept of what a Lesbian is.

IW: How does working in that environment compare with working in the women's music community?

already been made. The fact that there were women musicians that could do this kind of work was well established. I wanted to take it to the next level—that women musicians could play jazz well.

IW: Were there other issues that concerned you?

VR: One of the problems I was having with "women's music" was the perception that it was basically made by white women for white women. It started out that way and it has pretty much stayed that way. A lot of the written history of women's music doesn't include people like Linda Tillery, Mary Watkins, Gwen Avery, and Pat Parker. Occasionally you'll hear mention of Bernice Reagon, but most of the time the large Black women's community and Latina women's community was virtually ignored.

IW: What about the Women on Wheels tour with those women?

VR: We played primarily for white audiences as the women's production companies were all white and they only knew how to outreach to the white community. That's why I stopped doing so much work with women's music, especially the festivals. The only festival that I know which particularly

works on trying to get as much diversity as possible is the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Their roster every year is pretty fabulous. I feel comfortable there because they know it is a problem and they have worked very hard to establish a place where women of color feel comfortable and included.

There was a period of time where they were trying to define women's music. (Nobody wanted to use the word "Lesbian" at the time; "women's music" is still the common euphemism.) They talked about how Aretha Franklin couldn't be a "women's" musician because of what she sang about, like none of us ever got our hearts broken. Women would pay \$20 a pop to see Aretha Franklin and they'd come back and complain that the sliding scale didn't go down low enough to see Cris Williamson. It was a double standard that existed for a long time.

It was really difficult for Black women musicians. We tried hard to work with it, but it was not something that changed dramatically. Most of the women's pro-

(Continued next page)

OLIVIA PRODUCTIONS 1979 CONCERT SERIES

TERESA TRULL & BAND

VICKI RANDLE & BAND

July 14

Oakland Auditorium 8:30pm

Tickets \$6-116 & under (60 & over - disabled \$21) at all BASS or Nestland Record Factory stores - call to check tickets by phone call 415-835-4347 or 408-297-7527, and at A Woman's Place, Old West Town, The Actress Society, Modern Times, McAtlas Press, Pacific Human Books, The Grub, Sacramento Women's Center Bookstore. Or by mail from: T.O., Olivia Productions, P.O. Box 12084, Oakland CA 94608, before July 4.

Free childrens, sign language interpretation, wheelchair accessible.

VR: There's pros and cons to both. I want to be able to move easily between all of these places. I don't think there's a place in the women's community that makes me feel so good that I wouldn't want to go back to the jazz community. The women's music community also has a lot of the problems that men do. We still compete with each other. We just like to think we don't.

IW: You seem to be one of few women to bridge the communities.

VR: I guess so. And it's funny, because I am so opinionated. I've definitely made a lot of people mad over the years.

IW: I read that you declined to do a solo album for Olivia because they wouldn't allow you to use male musicians.

VR: At the time, I had been working with both men and women musicians. I didn't want to make a record using only women musicians because I didn't think that the people that I would have to use would be of the quality that I wanted. Now I think I could do that, because I know an enormous number of excellent women musicians. The point at the time was mainly to make a statement. I felt that the statement had

Randle from page 11

duction companies at the time—and most white women in women's music and the women's political community still—have had a lot of trouble understanding that racism doesn't just disappear because you become conscious of issues that affect other white women. That's been an ongoing issue. We found it was a lot easier to work with male musicians and deal with being a lesbian than it was to deal with the kind of insidious, unacknowledged, but very clear racism that existed in the women's music community. It wasn't overt; everybody was very sincere and trying to work very hard, which made it even doubly difficult. It wasn't about being a bigot. It was about, "Why didn't you go to the places where black people go and advertise this concert?" Or, "Why don't you get headliners that are black women, instead of a very well-known white woman performer which guarantees that you are going to get a three-quarters white audience?"

IW: Did those kinds of discussions happen?

VR: Those discussions happened constantly. But it never really changed. Because politics are linked with economics. It became very clear that Cris Williamson or Teresa Trull were the ones who were selling records. Teresa made a real effort. She practically stopped working with all white people. She grew up with Gospel/Black music. So she wasn't comfortable in that role of the girl folksinger. She wanted to put a band together and have it funky.

As I said earlier, there was a mandate to come up with a description of women's music. And what they came up with was that there were certain instruments that were women's instruments, like acoustic guitar. Anything electric was male-oriented. So if you were a woman musician and you played drums or bass or horns you were playing a male-oriented instrument. Eventually that became exposed as racist, because that meant that all funk music, all soul music, all R&B, all blues, anything rock'n'roll was not women's music no matter who was playing it and how it was being played or what it was about. Eventually they started to look at these arbitrary definitions which left a whole lot of women out of the loop.

C A L E N D A R

Once again, the Mazer Collection will be sponsoring a number of interesting and diverse events. Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar now. Unless otherwise noted, all events will take place downstairs at 626 N. Robertson Blvd., West Hollywood. As seating for these events is limited, please call (310) 659-2478 for reservations.

July 12, 1994, 9:30 pm: The Mazer Collection co-hosts Video Program #3: "Lesbian Culture," at the Los Angeles International Gay & Lesbian Film & Video Festival. At Theater II at the Director's Guild. (See article on page 9.) Call (213) 466-1767 for tickets.

Wednesday, July 20, 7 pm: Teresa Barnett, senior editor/interviewer for the UCLA Oral History Program, will conduct a **Workshop on Oral Histories** and how they can be used to gather and preserve our lesbian heritage. Come and learn how to do oral histories for the Mazer Collection. If you would like to participate in this workshop, please call to reserve a space. Attendance is limited to 10 women. Upstairs at the Mazer Collection.

Wednesday, August 3, 7 pm: Attorney Carolyn Fank will discuss **Wills and Trusts**, with particular emphasis on their importance in the lesbian community. A donation of \$5 will be requested.

Sunday, September 18, 2 pm: The Mazer Collection will host a **Community Meeting** about the future of the archives. (See article on page 7.)

Sunday, October 16, noon to 5 pm: The Mazer Collection's **5th Anniversary Concert Extravaganza**, with Alix Dobkin, Judy Fjell and many other exciting performers. (For more information on the event and how to order tickets, see page 4.)

Tuesday, October 18, 7 pm: An **Evening with Alix Dobkin**. Alix will read from her memoirs-in-progress and/or lead a workshop on "Beyond Lesbian Visibility." The workshop will center around an open discussion of the role of Lesbians as agents of transformation. A \$5.00 donation will be requested.

October/November ? (date and time to be announced): Dr. Susan Love, Associate Professor of Clinical Surgery and Director of the UCLA Breast Center, an out lesbian and dynamic speaker, will talk about breast cancer and potential risks for lesbians. This event is co-sponsored by the Lesbian Physicians of Los Angeles (LPLA). A \$5.00 donation, to the Mazer Collection, is requested, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection

626 North Robertson Boulevard, West Hollywood, CA 90069
(310)659-2478

Open:

Wednesday, 6:00-10:00 pm • Sunday, 11:00 am-5:00 pm;
and by appointment

Board of Directors: Lillian Faderman, Degania Golove, Alice Hom, Kim Kralj, Marcia Schwemer, Irene Wolt

Newsletter Volunteers: Irene Wolt (Editor), Caryn Goldberg (Desktop Publishing), Degania Golove, Louise Moore (Contributors), Cathy Grijalva, Sara Wright (Tape Transcription)

© 1994 June L. Mazer Lesbian Collection