

“We Shall Go Forth”: A Musical Analysis of the Women’s  
Music Movement, 1969-1985

By

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## Abstract

In the wake of the social and political movements that defined the 1960s, the women's music movement emerged as a means to cultivate an outlet for young lesbian musicians who saw themselves as equal to their straight male counterparts, but were unwilling to compromise their musical integrity in order to perform on major labels. The movement became a social experience, as women's music artists would tour coffee shops, college campuses, and feminist bookstores to perform their woman-identified woman music to all-female audiences. The concerts eventually grew into larger events, such as the National Women's Music Festival and the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which offered women of myriad backgrounds a safe space to gather as friends, family, and lovers.

Within this cultural movement were musicians Margie Adam, Meg Christian, Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, Holly Near, Linda Tillery, Mary Watkins, and Cris Williamson. Together they created a soundtrack for lesbians throughout the 1970s. There was no unifying genre to the music produced during this movement. Some women were folk singer-songwriters, while others were classically trained musicians and composers. Their experiences were eclectic, and often encompassed other social and political causes of the decade. Many songs dealt with the topic of sexual identity. Some were anti-war anthems, while others explored non-western cultures and the medicinal power of music. It is because the music of this movement has not been analyzed in previous discussions of this topic that these pieces require attention. This dissertation surveys a selection of songs from each of the eight artists listed above during the period from 1969-1985. These pieces demonstrate the diverse output of this movement. They are also indicative of a variety of influences, which can be linked to mainstream popular artists and classical composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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I am grateful to the staff at the Lesbian Herstory Archive in Brooklyn, NY, the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women at Harvard University, and the Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History at Smith College. This dissertation would not have been complete without the materials found in these collections. I am especially grateful to the women of the women's music movement who were willing to speak with me, and took the time to connect me with countless sources. These women include: Margie Adam, Toni Armstrong, Jr., Jenifer Butler, Alix Dobkin, Sue Fink, Juliana Forbes, Leslie D. Judd, Bonnie Morris, and Holly Near. Words cannot capture the magnitude of my appreciation for all of you. Thank you for taking the time to correspond with me, interview for this project, and entrust me with your music. I am honored and humbled by your generosity.

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## Table of Contents

List of Music Examples .....	vi
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Literature Review.....	2
Methodology .....	8
<b>Chapter One: Second-Wave Feminism and Other Concurrent Movements .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Betty Friedan and <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> .....	19
National Organization for Women .....	23
Radicalesbians and “The Woman-Identified Woman” .....	25
Women’s Liberation Movement .....	29
Radical Feminism .....	30
Lesbian Separatism .....	33
Women of Color and Second-Wave Feminism.....	37
Gay Liberation Movement .....	40
Stonewall Riots .....	41
The Lavender Scare .....	45
Representation of Women in Mainstream Music.....	51
<b>Chapter Two: Biography – Artists of the Women’s Music Movement .....</b>	<b>59</b>
Maxine Feldman.....	61
Alix Dobkin .....	63
Kay Gardner .....	76
Holly Near .....	81
Meg Christian .....	88
Cris Williamson .....	93
Margie Adam.....	98
Women’s Music – Record Labels .....	103
Women’s Music – Publications .....	111
Women-Only Spaces .....	119
<b>Chapter Three: Music Analysis – “Women On Wheels” .....</b>	<b>126</b>
Meg Christian .....	127
Cris Williamson .....	146
Margie Adam.....	160
Holly Near .....	179
<b>Chapter Four: Music Analysis – “Lavender Jane and Other Wise Women” .....</b>	<b>192</b>
Kay Gardner .....	192
Alix Dobkin .....	218
Linda Tillery .....	235
Mary Watkins.....	246
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>Discography .....</b>	<b>265</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>274</b>

## List Of Music Examples

Example	Page
3-1 Meter shifts in “Song to My Mama,” mm. 1-4.....	131
3-2 “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” mm. 20-22.....	134
3-3 “Morning Song,” mm. 7-10.....	136
3-4 “Scars,” mm. 10-11.....	139
3-5 “Song of The Soul,” mm. 12-16.....	151
3-6 Transition to Section B, “Ship Of Fools,” mm. 10-12.....	156
3-7 “Best Friend (The Unicorn Song),” mm. 5-8.....	162
3-8 Opening melody of “Beautiful Soul,” mm. 1-2.....	166
3-9 Final Chorus, “We Shall Go Forth!,” mm. 37-42.....	172
3-10 Theme 3 from “Naked Keys,” mm. 55-57.....	175
4-1 Guitar Ostinato from “Touching Souls,” mm. 1-2.....	194
4-2 <i>A Rainbow Path</i> , Movement II “Dorian Hills,” mm. 43-44.....	205
4-3 <i>A Rainbow Path</i> , Movement IV “Greenwood: Heart Chakra,” mm. 1-4.....	208
4-4 <i>A Rainbow Path</i> , Movement V “Castle In The Mist,” mm. 66-69.....	212
4-5 <i>A Rainbow Path</i> , Movement VII “Soaring,” mm. 8-9.....	215
4-6 <i>A Rainbow Path</i> , Final Movement “Fountain Of Light,” mm. 26-27.....	217
4-7 Bridge from “A Woman’s Love,” mm. 52-59.....	226
4-8 Chorus from “View from Gay Head,” mm. 30-43.....	230

## Introduction

Ignited by Betty Friedan's groundbreaking book *The Feminine Mystique* and second-wave feminism, the women's music movement established a creative outlet for lesbian feminist artists wanting to channel their frustration with patriarchal society through music. This musical revolution emerged from the political and cultural theories of radical feminism and lesbian separatism. Beginning with the pioneering song, "Angry Atthis" by Maxine Feldman (1972), women's music became a safe-haven for female artists to compose and record music for and about other women. In order to maintain complete independence from the patriarchy of the mainstream music industry, women of the movement created a parallel infrastructure, controlling performance, production, and distribution. Feminist contemporaries of the women's music movement such as Muriel Fox, Betty Friedan, and the women of the National Organization for Women (NOW) promoted the importance of economic independence. As Friedan insightfully explained, "for women to have full identity and freedom, they must have economic independence. Equality and human dignity are not possible for women if they are not able to earn."<sup>1</sup> At the center of the women's music movement were artists such as Margie Adam, Meg Christian, Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, Holly Near, Linda Tillery, Mary Watkins, and Cris Williamson, as well as the bands Bebe K'Roche, Berkeley Women's Music Collective, Fanny, and Sweet Honey in the Rock. These women inspired subsequent generations of musicians, including Tracy Chapman, Ani DiFranco, the Indigo Girls, k.d. lang, Melissa Etheridge, Tegan and Sara, and Mary Lambert.

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<sup>1</sup> Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell Books, 1963), 370-71.

## Literature Review

Although there have been many investigations of the women's music movement, they mainly focus on its non-musical elements, particularly the social and cultural aspects of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, a weeklong event held on 650 acres of Michigan woodlands.<sup>2</sup> MichFest, as it is often called, was first held in August 1976 at the height of the lesbian separatist and women's liberation movements.<sup>3</sup> While controversy followed the festival throughout its forty-year run, the women who attended each year found comfort in the place they simply dubbed "the land." As playwright Carolyn Gage wrote,

At MichFest, she can experience a degree of safety that is not available to any woman any time anywhere except at the Festival. And what does that mean? It means she achieves a level of relaxation, physical, psychic, cellular, that she had never experienced before. She is free, sisters. She is free. Often for the first time in her life.<sup>4</sup>

In "Reconstructing Gender, Personal Narrative, and Performance at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival," Lisa L. Higgins uses personal accounts and interviews to illuminate the music festival as a place for gender expression (a key component being nudity) and female exploration.<sup>5</sup> Higgins approaches her research through ethnography, and makes the interviews she conducted a major part of her study. In "Conflict and

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<sup>2</sup> Alternate spellings such as "womyn" and "wimmin" were used in an effort to remove the terms "men" and "man" from the word. While the author will continue to use the typical spelling of woman, both alternate spellings will be seen throughout this document in sources and direct quotes from this period.

<sup>3</sup> The term women's liberation is often used synonymously with the feminist movement. However, women's liberation was a branch of the second-wave feminist movement. The women involved in the liberation movement were primarily a younger generation, and were more concerned with gaining control over their sexuality, reproductive rights, and pushing back against the established perception that women were merely sexual objects. These were issues that went unaddressed by the "conservative" feminist movement, which dealt with issues of child care and work equality.

<sup>4</sup> Victoria A. Brownworth, "Michigan Womyn's Music Festival to End after 40 Years," *Curve* (April 23, 2015), <http://www.curvemag.com/News/Michigan-Womyns-Music-Festival-to-End-after-40-Years-447/>.

<sup>5</sup> Lisa L. Higgins, "Reconstructing Gender, Personal Narrative, and Performance at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival" (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2008).



Community in a Lesbian Feminist Space: An Autoethnography of Workerville at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival," Sara F. Collas examines the culture and community of "Workerville," the women's working community at the festival.<sup>6</sup> Focusing on the women and dynamics of Workerville, Collas explores the areas of boundaries and identities, work and power, conflict and community, gender and sexuality. In her examination of gender, Collas pays particular attention to Camp Trans, the protest group formed in the mid-1990s that challenged the festival's "women born women only" policy.

Musicologist Boden Sandstrom analyzed the ritual and ceremonial aspects of MichFest, specifically the opening and closing ceremonies.<sup>7</sup> She frames her discussion of gender and identity through the performances and how they contributed to the subculture of MWMF. Sandstrom offers some commentary on the broader subject of the women's music movement. However, she devotes no more than twenty of three hundred pages of her document to these subjects, leaving much to be explored. She is also one of the few music scholars, along with ethnomusicologist Eileen Hayes, to investigate the festival. The fieldwork conducted by Hayes for her dissertation, "Black Women Performers of Women-Identified Music," led to her 2010 publication, *Songs in Black and Lavender: Race, Sexual Politics, and Women's Music*.<sup>8</sup> Hayes is particularly interested in demonstrating the significance of women's music festivals as a place for black feminist consciousness to emerge. Amy Barber's dissertation, "Woods of Their Own: Feminism, Community, Music and Politics at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival," is an

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<sup>6</sup> Sara F. Collas, "Conflict and Community in a Lesbian Feminist Space: An Autoethnography of Workerville at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> MichFest and MWMF will be used as acronyms for the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

<sup>8</sup> Eileen M. Hayes, "Black Women Performers of Women-Identified Music" (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1999).

examination of MWMF through social, musical, and political discourse, demonstrating how these concepts overlap and exist in opposition.<sup>9</sup> While Barber's dissertation also focuses on the MWMF, her methodology moves beyond the ethnographic approach of previous studies.

Laurie J. Kendall's dissertation, "From the Liminal to the Land: Building Amazon Culture at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival," also explores the culture of the festival, asking in what ways the women make this culture and experience meaningful. Kendall separates her research from that of Boden Sandstrom by reminding the reader that her dissertation focuses on "festigoers," whereas Sandstrom studied festival workers and musicians. The theoretical framework of the dissertations also differs greatly. Sandstrom frames her study in the liminal theory developed by Victor Turner. According to Turner, festivals existed in "liminal time periods, betwixt and between the structures of everyday life."<sup>10</sup> Through his study of festivals, carnivals, and other celebrations, Turner described a process of "ritual marginalization," through which the social norms of everyday life are nonexistent, and individuals are free to explore unstructured, non-binary relationships. Kendall is not satisfied with this depiction of lesbian and gay space, and instead chooses to invert the concept of "liminal" space. Through Turner's definition, lesbian and gay spaces are often categorized as liminal. Kendall cites several historians who construct their research on the basis of this definition, but cites this as frustrating, as the LGBT community is already marginalized.<sup>11</sup> She acknowledges the liminal elements

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<sup>9</sup> Amy Clarissa Barber, "Woods of Their Own: Feminism, Community, Music and Politics at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Laurie J. Kendall, "From the Liminal to the Land: Building Amazon Culture at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2006), 8.

<sup>11</sup> The term LGBT was adopted in the 1990s to refer to the gay community. In the 1980s, the abbreviation was LGB, and prior to this, all members were simply referred to as part of the gay community. As of the publication of this document, LGBTQ is the abbreviation most commonly used. Throughout this document,

that exist in gay and lesbian spaces, but overall it is not the term she prefers for her research. By inverting the term, Kendall's research redirects to focusing on gay and lesbian space as the norm, and the lives these women lead outside of the festival becomes liminal space.

In her dissertation "A Rhetorical Criticism of Women's Music and the Lesbianfeminist Movement," Victoria Nogle argues that the songs of this movement are "grounded within a lesbianfeminist perspective." Nogle defines lesbianfeminism as the fusion and expansion of the terms "lesbian" and "feminism." The expanded definition relegates sexual activity between women as a single component of the definition, rather than the entire definition. "Feminism" is expanded beyond a term meaning women supporting other women and a quest for equality to include the possibility of relating to each other sexually. She continues,

Wimmin putting wimmin rather than men at the center of their lives changed everything. Wimmin loving themselves and other wimmin as they had been previously socialized to love men was the transformation that makes lesbianfeminism more than sexual activity among feminists.<sup>12</sup>

Through this lens, Nogle examines song lyrics by Alix Dobkin, Margie Adam, Meg Christian, Holly Near, Teresa Trull, and Susann Shanbaum of the Berkley Women's Music Collective. Although her dissertation devotes more attention to the music of the movement than others before and after, Nogle does not explore these songs beyond the text.

In 1984, Cynthia Lont completed her dissertation, "Between Rock and a Hard Place. A Model of Subcultural Persistence and Women's Music." This document focuses

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these terms will be used based on the period in which the documents referenced were written and/or published.

<sup>12</sup> Victoria Louise Nogle, "A Rhetorical Criticism of Women's Music and the Lesbianfeminist Movement" (PhD diss., University of Nebraska, 1984), 63.

on Holly Near's record label Redwood Records as a case study in subcultural persistence. As Lont explains, "the template, the frame through which Redwood was seen, was the process of persistence but the method of study was naturalistic inquiry."<sup>13</sup> Through fieldwork and interviews, Lont gathered information on the day-to-day operations of Redwood Records. Her categorical breakdown includes organizational structure, architecture, climate, and motives. This allows her to cater her questions accordingly. Lont's research is an early introduction into the women's music movement through the lens of these independent labels.

The article "The National Women's Music Festival: Collective Identity and Diversity in a Lesbian-Feminist Community" was written by Donna Eder, Suzanne Staggenborg, and Lori Sudderth. This essay examines the role National Women's Music Festivals play in women's communities and lesbian identity as a central part of the festivals. Again, the significance of the music festivals is portrayed as strictly social and cultural.

Published in 1980, a collection of essays entitled *Heresies #10: Women and Music* includes articles on women in music from Hildegard of Bingen to Sorrel Hays. In addition to essays, pieces by women composers are also represented, including works by Kay Gardner. Although the information on Gardner is limited and other women from the music movement are not included, the significance of this journal is the overall breadth and depth it provides for women's contributions in music. A more general study of lesbian representation in popular music is the essay, "Lesbians in Popular Music: Does It Matter Who Is Singing?" in *Popular Music: Style and Identity*. In her chapter, Barbara

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<sup>13</sup> Cynthia Marion Lont, "Between Rock and a Hard Place: A Model of Subcultural Persistence and Women's Music" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1984), 145.

Bradbury analyzes discussions on the nature of writing as a lesbian. Bradbury notes that “listening practices raise similar puzzles around the performer of a song as are raised around the author of the text.”<sup>14</sup>

Books such as Lucy O'Brien's *She Bop II* and Marion Leonard's *Gender in the Music Industry* do an excellent job of exploring the subject of women in mainstream music, but leave out the lesser-known leaders of the women's music movement. These books are also predominantly focused on rock 'n' roll, and many previous analyses of women in music fall into that genre. Bonnie J. Morris' *Eden Built by Eves: The Culture of Women's Music Festivals* is another example of the emphasis placed upon festivals in the women's music movement rather than the music itself. Morris, a longtime festival enthusiast, surveys twenty-five years of women's music festivals. Through interviews with performers, producers, technicians, and other attendees, Morris provides a comprehensive overview of the experiences had by these women and the freedom they experience in women-only spaces. Again, this is predominantly an analysis of the festival itself and the artists are a supporting character to her narrative. Other sources, such as Julia Penelope and Susan Wolfe's *Lesbian Culture: An Anthology*, offer a collection of articles and song lyrics by women's music artists, but do not attempt to analyze aspects of the movement or the music itself. I hope to add to the already existing literature on the women's music movement, as well as providing a new perspective to the broader category of women and music.

In 2002, documentarian Dr. Dee Mosbacher directed and produced *Radical Harmonies*. The documentary recounts the beginnings of the women's music movement,

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<sup>14</sup> Barbara Bradbury, “Lesbians and Popular Music: Does It Matter Who Is Singing?” in *Popular Music – Style and Identity*, ed. Will Straw, Stacey Johnson, Rebecca Surham, and Paul Friedlander (Montreal: Centre for Research on Canadian Cultural Industries and Institutions, 1993), 33.

with interviews of founding musicians, record label executives, journalists, festival founders and attendees. While the documentary is an excellent resource for gaining a broad overview of this movement, Mosbacher and co-producer Sandstrom frame the documentary in a social context, rather than a musical one.

Karin Pendle surveys twenty-five years of feminist writings and research on music to create *Women in Music: A Research and Information Guide*. While comprehensive, it underscores the limited resources on this subject. In an annotated bibliography with nineteen categories spanning nearly three thousand entries, fewer than twenty are devoted to the women's music movement or aspects pertaining to its key players.

### **Methodology**

The significance of MichFest to the women's music movement cannot be overstated. Yet, in the studies done on this event the music is always a secondary consideration, and the heart of the women's music movement is the music itself. Musicians from various backgrounds, identities, races, religions, and genres came together to create a soundtrack for feminism, separatism, and gay liberation. While the music of this movement ranged from classical to country, folk to funk, the one tie that bound them together was the all-female cast of characters involved in its creation.

For my research, I relied on several archives for photos, concert posters, interviews, and other primary sources. The Lesbian Herstory Archive in New York is home to collections on the women's liberation movement and exhibits such as "Queer Covers: Lesbian Survival Literature" and "Keepin' On: Images of African American Lesbians from the Lesbian Herstory Archives." This is also the home of Alix Dobkin's

special collection and a music library of the women's music movement on vinyl, CD, and cassette tape. There are also several interviews maintained in their spoken word archive, a digitized collection of interviews, workshops, festivals, and other historical footage. These interviews were conducted in 1984 by one of the archivists at LHA and are primary sources from artists such as Kay Gardner, Meg Christian, and Alix Dobkin. Another important archive is the Sophia Smith Collection, located at Smith College in Massachusetts. The "Women's Music Archives Collection" consists of bibliographies, biographical sketches, clippings, correspondence, flyers, newsletters, photographs, posters, publicity materials, songbooks, sound recordings, videotapes, and memorabilia. The bulk of the collection dates from 1975 to 1995 and includes live and studio-produced recordings by women— including many lesbian musicians— women's music festivals, retreats, and conferences. My research required that particular attention be given to the sheet music of Margie Adam, Kay Gardner, Cris Williamson, and Holly Near. I was also fortunate in finding first-hand accounts of the women's music movement through the eyes of the artists in question, interviewed for a Women's Studies course taught at the University of California, Santa Cruz. I also consulted documents at the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, located in the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. The Alix Dobkin collection includes business correspondence, fan mail, fliers and programs from concerts, writings, material on lectures and workshops, t-shirts, and photographs, as well as a separate collection of audio files. The Holly Near collection includes letters, photographs, business records, television and movie scripts, audio and videotapes.

I also conducted interviews with Margie Adam, Alix Dobkin, and Holly Near. I spoke extensively with the children of Kay Gardner, who passed away in 2002. The editor of *Hotwire* magazine, Toni Armstrong Jr., also became an important source, as she was able to connect me with other artists and leaders in the movement. Prominent lecturer and women's studies professor Bonnie J. Morris offered suggestions on a number of archives and resources for me to consider. J.D. Doyle, creator of the website *Queer Music Heritage*, connected me to several people in the movement and methods through which to access their materials. As my research focuses specifically on the music of this movement, a comprehensive discography of the women's music movement has also been included in the appendix.<sup>15</sup>

An examination of newspapers, radical publications, women's music magazines, periodicals, and popular music magazines allowed me to conduct research on the reception of this movement. Among the most fruitful were *Hotwire*, *Paid My Dues*, *Off Our Backs*, and *Lesbian Tide*. I took into consideration the response of women in the community, as well as women outside of the movement.

Feminist theory is an investigation of both the inequality in gender relations and the construction of gender. Many branches within feminist theory have formed throughout the twentieth century, including cultural feminism, lesbian feminism, lesbian separatism, and radical feminism, among others. As radical feminist and separatist theories played a major role in shaping the ideals of the women's music movement and its members, so too have they played an important part in my approach to this topic. The

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<sup>15</sup> This discography includes the eight founding mothers whose music was analyzed in this document, as well as additional artists from this period who contributed to the soundscape of women's music but are peripheral to this study.



terminology used for my analysis has been carefully considered. As Kathy Rudy observes,

Any name I use to represent the kind of feminism that dominated many communities in the late 1970s and 1980s will be unsatisfactory...I am settling, therefore, for the term radical feminism...it was what we called ourselves.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the earliest statements from the women's movement were made from a radical feminist perspective, and women who identified as radical feminists created many of the albums in the music movement.

An in-depth study of the music of this movement required several approaches, as I dealt with an eclectic group of genres. My analysis of these pieces included an examination of song structure, instrumentation, key or mode, rhythm and phrase structure, as well as melody and harmony as they pertained to the lyrical content and genre. While many of these artists wrote songs with lyrics, several others, such as Margie Adam and Kay Gardner, wrote entire albums of instrumental music. For these pieces my main objective was to demonstrate how they fit in the category of women's music through other musical elements, as well as how they represent the greater output of these artists. I categorize songs according to their narratives, according to genre, instrumental versus songs with text, and the lyrical make-up of songs that do have words. My purpose is to determine how these lyrics assisted in forming a lesbian identity for these artists, and transmitting that identity to their audience. I also take an intersectional approach to these lyrics, as my analysis pertains to the construction of racial and gender identity. Although many of the audiences witnessing this music were predominantly comprised of gay, middle-class white women, not every woman in attendance identified as a lesbian, nor

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<sup>16</sup> Kathy Rudy, "Radical Feminism, Lesbian Separatism and Queer Theory," *Feminist Studies* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 193.

were they from a white, suburban background. Therefore, my analysis also evaluates how the women's music movement addressed issues of race and sexual identity.

In order to truly understand the musical, cultural, and social significance of the women's music movement, it is necessary to first explain its relationship to the civil rights movement, as well as the women's and gay liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, Chapter 1 will explore the cultural backdrop of the movement. I look at the broader scope of second-wave feminism, radical feminism, lesbian feminism, and lesbian separatism as it pertains to the women's music movement.<sup>17</sup> In 1962, Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique*. Capturing the frustration and despair of a generation of well-educated housewives, Friedan's book is largely credited with sparking the second wave feminist movement. Radical feminism was an offshoot of the women's liberation movement. A radical feminist is one who believed that all women were to be regarded as potential allies in a struggle for liberation that brings them into conflict with all men.<sup>18</sup> The most extreme example of radical feminism was separatism. Lesbian separatists refused to cooperate with heterosexual women, disassociated themselves from men by creating women-only spaces, and argued in favor of political lesbianism as a natural choice for a woman-identified woman, a term used in relation to radical feminism. It was first introduced in the 1972 paper, "Woman-Identified Woman," written

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<sup>17</sup> This document will focus on second-wave feminism, as this was the period in which the women's music movement began. The first-wave feminist movement began in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, centering on women's suffrage. Second-wave feminism occurred during the 1960s and 1970s, and was dedicated to fighting for equality in all aspects of society, specifically employment. Third-wave feminism began in the mid-1990s. Daughters of the second wave who felt that the previous generation had not done a sufficient job acknowledging the needs of non-white, lower class women, started this wave. The fourth-wave of feminism is not always separated from the third. However, it is distinct through its prioritization technology. The use of social media and other public forums to promote feminist critique is the focus of this wave. For more on these waves, see "Feminism 101: What are the Waves of Feminism?" by Victoria Sheber. <https://femmagazine.com/feminism-101-what-are-the-waves-of-feminism/>.

<sup>18</sup> David Macey, "Radical Feminism," in *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 323.

by the group Radicalesbians. In their document, the Radicalesbians argue the importance of a woman identifying her own interests in relation to all other women. In the book, *Women-Identified-Women*, editors Trudy Darty and Sandee Potter define this term as “women who relate emotionally and/or sexually to other women.”<sup>19</sup>

Another smaller faction of the women’s liberation movement and second wave feminism was lesbian feminism, which claimed that the interests of lesbians were not necessarily identical to those of heterosexual women. Similar to lesbian separatism, this stemmed from radical feminism and promoted political lesbianism.<sup>20</sup> Radical feminism, second wave feminism, and their political offspring all impacted the musicians of the women’s music movement, many of whom identified as lesbian separatists. Alix Dobkin and others would perform women-only concerts, and the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival was a women-only space. In this chapter I will also discuss in what way the circumstances surrounding the Stonewall Riots in June 1969 affected the women’s music movement. The Stonewall Riots began in the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, when officers raided the Stonewall Inn, a prominent gay club in New York City. The riots and subsequent demonstrations became the catalyst for the gay rights movement, leading to the formation of the Gay Liberation Front and other gay, lesbian, and bisexual civil rights organizations.<sup>21</sup>

Many women who became founding members of the women’s music movement were activists speaking out against male oppression, prejudice, and other social and political issues of the time. Before coming out as a lesbian and performing women’s

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<sup>19</sup> Trudy Darty and Sandee Potter, “Glossary,” in *Women-Identified-Women* (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1984), 306.

<sup>20</sup> Darty and Potter, “Glossary,” 226.

<sup>21</sup> David Carter, “We’re Taking the Place!,” in *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004), 137-140.

music, singer-songwriter Holly Near was involved in the Free the Army tour, a group opposing the Vietnam war that performed skits based on veterans' stories.<sup>22</sup> Folk musician Alix Dobkin was a long-time Communist Party member and social activist years before realizing she was gay and writing women-centric music. Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, founder of the all-female African-American a capella group Sweet Honey in the Rock, was also a Freedom Singer and civil rights activist. Although women's music was largely based on the issues of male oppression, patriarchy, and promoting lesbian relationships, other social issues important to these artists were represented as well.

Chapter 2 is an examination of the founding women of this movement. The contributions of Mary Watkins, Linda Tillery, Holly Near, Margie Adam, Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, Kay Gardner, and Alix Dobkin are analyzed, along with biographical and career information that significantly affected the music movement. In this chapter I also provide a detailed description of other important developments and key figures in the women's music movement. Journals such as *Hotwire Magazine*, *Off Our Backs*, and *Paid My Dues* played an important role in marketing women's music and printing compositions by associated artists. Artists in the movement collaborated with producers who saw a need for studios and distribution companies that would work with these musicians. Margie Adam, Holly Near, Barbara Price, Judy Dlugacz, Alix Dobkin, and others formed the record labels Olivia, Redwood, Pleiades, and Ladyslipper. Sound engineers such as Marilyn Ries and Boden Sandstrom, women's music journal editors such as Toni Armstrong, Jr., and music festival producers and founders Lisa and Nancy Vogl also nurtured the careers of these artists. Although music festivals such as MichFest

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<sup>22</sup> Holly Near, "Biography," accessed May 23, 2016, [http://www.hollynear.com/pdf/bio\\_text\\_0311.pdf](http://www.hollynear.com/pdf/bio_text_0311.pdf).

and the Boston Women's Music Festival have been carefully documented in publications, dissertations, and books, it would be impossible to discuss the movement without devoting some attention to these music festivals.

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to analysis of the music of the founding women, citing key songs and albums that drove this movement, and influenced contemporaneous artists inside and outside of the women's music movement. In Chapter three, I will analyze the music of Meg Christian, Margie Adam, Holly Near, and Cris Williamson, who often collaborated on each other's albums and briefly toured together in 1976. Chapter four will continue with the artists Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, Linda Tillery, and Mary Watkins. As with the first group, these four women occasionally worked together, but are appropriately grouped in this chapter for their compositional styles as well. The artists of this movement were not restricted to any one particular genre, so the music requires various analytical approaches. A brief explanation of genres such as jazz, folk, singer-songwriter, classical, and world music helps better understand the compositions of this movement. Previous dissertations have analyzed the lyrics of women's music songs. In *A Rhetorical Criticism of Women's Music and the Lesbian feminist Movement*, Victoria Louise Nogle studied the lyrics of songs such as "Leaping Lesbians," "Mountain Song/Kentucky Woman," and "Woman-Loving Women." Her comparison of the rhetoric surrounding the lesbian feminist movement and lyrics by women's music artists demonstrates the interaction between them. As Nogle's focus is on rhetorical language, it does not go into detailed descriptions of the music to which these lyrics are attached. My study includes lyrical analysis in relation to other musical elements. I also categorize songs according to their narrative. Categories include: songs about romantic relationships

between women, songs about platonic relationships between women, feminist songs, and separatist songs, among others. I also analyze instrumental pieces by artists such as Margie Adam and Kay Gardner, demonstrating how these artists still fit the categorization of women's music, despite lacking text.

The final chapter will conclude with a brief discussion of artists who were influenced by this movement. These include popular artists such as Melissa Etheridge, the Indigo Girls, and Tracy Chapman, each of whom have credited the women's music movement with inspiring them to become musicians. Additionally, artists such as Tegan and Sara, Mary Lambert, Chely Wright, and other contemporary musicians are mentioned as individuals who have been indirectly influenced by this movement. The coverage of mainstream artists, such as the ones mentioned in this chapter, has been far more extensive than that of the first generation artists of the women's music movement. Therefore, it is unnecessary to provide a full examination of these artists and their works. However, excerpts of their material are discussed, and I conduct a general survey of their output.

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## Chapter One: Second-Wave Feminism and Other Concurrent Movements

A few years from now, your sole responsibility will be taking care of your husband and children.

-Nancy Abbey, *Mona Lisa Smile*

In the film *Mona Lisa Smile*, Marcia Gay Harden portrays Nancy Abbey, a widower who teaches poise and elocution to the young female students of Wellesley College. Responding to a student's glib remark about divorce, Abbey continues, "You may all be here for an easy 'A,' but the grade that matters the most is the one *he* gives you, not me." As the film progresses, first-year professor Katherine Watson addresses a pupil in her art history lecture, discussing post-graduation plans.

**Katherine:** And it says here that you're pre-law. What law school are you gonna go to?

**Joan:** I hadn't really thought about that. I mean, after I graduate, I plan on getting married.

**Katherine:** And then?

**Joan:** And then I'll be married.<sup>1</sup>

One of the more poignant moments of the film comes when Professor Watson leads her class through a lecture in which she displays ads promoting the perfect housewife and her necessary tools.

**Katherine:** What will the future scholars see when they study us? A portrait of women today? (Referencing the ad) There you are, ladies. The perfect likeness of a Wellesley graduate. *Magna cum laude*, doing exactly what she was trained to do.<sup>2</sup>

As she moves through each slide, Professor Watson facetiously comments on the "Rhodes scholar" who vacuums the living room and "recites Chaucer while she presses

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<sup>1</sup> Mike Newell, *Mona Lisa Smile*, Culver City: Revolution Studios, 2003, DVD, 33:56-34:10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1:09:27-1:09:50.



her husband's shirts." As she dismounts her soapbox, Professor Watson leaves her class with this final thought:

The smartest women in the country. I didn't realize that by demanding excellence, I would be challenging... "the roles you were born to fill..." It's my mistake.<sup>3</sup>

While the film's depiction of post-war female attitudes regarding marriage and education may seem trite, it is in this pre-women's liberation era that a young Betty Friedan began to see beyond the idyllic housewife persona rendered in every television and magazine advertisement, and ask for more.

### **Betty Friedan and *The Feminine Mystique***

When Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, desperate housewives rejoiced in the realization that their desire for more out of life than the humdrum of domesticity was a universal truth amongst American women. After graduating with a degree in psychology in 1942, Friedan quickly married and began her "career" as a mother, wife, caregiver, and homemaker. Friedan also worked as a freelance writer for several women's magazines, although even she admitted to downplaying her accomplishments prior to publishing *The Feminine Mystique*. In her introduction to the tenth anniversary edition of her book, Friedan recalled,

A suburban neighbor of mine named Gertie was having coffee with me when the census taker came as I was writing *The Feminine Mystique*. "Occupation?" the census taker asked. "Housewife," I said. Gertie, who had cheered me on in my efforts at writing and selling magazine articles, shook her head sadly. "You should take yourself more seriously," she said. I hesitated, and then said to the census taker, "Actually, I'm a writer."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., *Mona Lisa Smile*, 1:10:38-1:11:26.

<sup>4</sup> Betty Friedan, "Introduction to the Tenth Anniversary Edition," *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), 44.

At her fifteen-year reunion at Smith College Friedan realized that her struggle to define herself in the mid-1950s reality represented in films such as *Mona Lisa Smile* was a shared sentiment amongst her peers. As she discussed marital bliss with her fellow female classmates, she found that many felt unfulfilled in the quintessential housewife role. Armed with this information, Friedan felt compelled to publish her findings. At first, Friedan brought her research to the attention of *Redbook*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, and other magazines with which she had worked in the past. The male editor of *McCall's* would not entertain the article at all, and the others would not agree without substantial changes. Friedan continued to gather interviews and data, and the result was the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* on February 17, 1963. Friedan's research exposed the circumstances of married women across the country, revealing that regardless of status or education, many wanted more than their position as homemaker and nurturing mother required. As one woman told Friedan,

I wash the dishes, rush the older children off to school, dash out in the yard to cultivate the chrysanthemums, run back in to make a phone call about a committee meeting...By noon I'm ready for a padded cell. Very little of what I've done has been really necessary or important.<sup>5</sup>

Not long before this groundbreaking book was published, women were becoming more empowered through their integral role in society. As first-wave feminism came to a close in 1920, women had gained the right to vote, and over 40 percent of college students were women.<sup>6</sup> As America entered World War II, women's employment grew

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<sup>5</sup> Betty Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," in *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1963), 28.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas D. Snyder, ed., "Chapter 3: Higher Education," in *120 Years of American Education: A Statistical Portrait* (Center for Education Statistics: 1993), 65. According to the Center for Education Statistics, the percentage of college students 18 to 24 years-old rose from 2 to 7 percent from 1900-1930. Of the 7 percent, nearly half were women.

from 26 percent in 1939 to 36 percent in 1943.<sup>7</sup> However, when the war ended and men returned home, most women discovered how replaceable they were, finding themselves out of a job and immediately sent back home to fulfill their duties as wives and mothers. The impact of the first feminist movement and the momentum felt at its close in the 1920s began to dwindle as advertisements portraying happy suburban housewives effectively silenced the suggestion that women were dissatisfied with their reality. A 1953 Hoover print ad for vacuum cleaners read, “Christmas morning (and forever after) she’ll be happier with a Hoover.”<sup>8</sup> The gratitude of the young woman is made evident by the smile on her face, as she lies on the floor in her green and white printed gown, caressing her new appliance. By the mid-1950s, 60 percent of women were dropping out of college to marry, at the average age of twenty.<sup>9</sup> As women voiced their frustration, media outlets such as the *New York Times* and *Redbook* explained away the problem of the “trapped housewife” by asserting that the issue stemmed from incompetent repairmen or excessive PTA duties. Perhaps these women suffered from excessive travel for their children’s activities, or worse, they were too educated. One report from the *New York Times* alleged:

Many young women—certainly not all—whose education plunged them into a world of ideas feel stifled in their homes. They find their routine lives out of joint with their training. Like shut-ins, they feel left out. In the last year, the problem of the educated housewife has provided the meat of dozens of speeches made by troubled presidents of women’s colleges who maintain, in the face of complaints, that sixteen years of academic training is realistic preparation for wifhood and motherhood.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sundrai Anitha and Ruth Pearson, “Striking Women,” (Lincoln: University of Lincoln), accessed April 26, 2016, [www.striking-women.org](http://www.striking-women.org).

<sup>8</sup> “Sexism in the 1950s,” *The Visual Past*, accessed September 8, 2016, <https://visualpast.wordpress.com/2014/08/27/sexism-in-the-1950s/>.

<sup>9</sup> Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name,” 58.

<sup>10</sup> Phyllis Lee Levin, “Road From Sophocles to Spock is Often a Bumpy One: Former Co-eds Find Family Routine is Stifling Them,” *New York Times* (June 28, 1960): 24, <http://search.proquest.com.www2.lib.ku.edu/docview/115213149?accountid=14556>.

In March of 1960, *Newsweek* had the audacity to proclaim there was no solution for this problem at all. It was simply what came with being a woman. The article stated,

She is dissatisfied with a lot that women of other lands can only dream of. Her discontent is deep, pervasive, and impervious to the superficial remedies which are offered at every hand...An army of professional explorers have already charted the major sources of trouble...From the beginning of time, the female cycle has defined and confined woman's role. As Freud was credited with saying: "Anatomy is destiny." Though no group of women has ever pushed these natural restrictions as far as the American wife, it seems that she still cannot accept them with good grace.<sup>11</sup>

For women who were ready to take on the overwhelming societal oppression, Betty Friedan's book did not simply create a dialogue; it gave voice to a movement. As Anna Quindlen observed in her introduction to the 2001 reprint,

...it changed the lives of millions upon millions of other women who jettisoned empty hours of endless housework and found work, and meaning, outside of raising their children and feeding their husbands. Out of Friedan's argument that women had been coaxed into selling out their intellect and their ambitions for the paltry price of a new washing machine...came a great wave of change in which women demanded equality and parity under the law and in the workplace.<sup>12</sup>

*The Feminine Mystique* was authorization for women to speak out against the status quo. Chapters entitled, "The Problem That Has No Name," "The Crisis in Woman's Identity," and "Progressive Dehumanization: The Comfortable Concentration Camp," were enlightening concepts and invigorating statements that many women felt but few articulated. This was the first step toward liberation.

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<sup>11</sup> Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," 68-69.

<sup>12</sup> Anna Quindlen, "Introduction," *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 13.

## National Organization for Women

Enraged and empowered, Friedan co-founded the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW began in June of 1966 as an informal conversation held in Friedan's hotel room at the Third National Conference of Commissions on the Status of Women. In October of that year, the founding members held the organization's first conference.<sup>13</sup> As the first major women's organization in U.S. history, NOW was particularly interested in taking legal action in response to income and employment inequality. As founding member Muriel Fox recalls, "The most important motivation for all of us in founding NOW was jobs. Employment discrimination."<sup>14</sup> Want ads posted in the classifieds were often listed as "Help Wanted—Male," particularly for more advanced career opportunities. Former NOW New York Chapter President Jacquie Ceballos explains, "All the good jobs, the career jobs, were for the males. In fact, there was one ad that said, 'Just got your BA? Want a job to be secretary of a good-looking executive? You might end up as his wife.' I swear to you!"<sup>15</sup> Founding members immediately set to work creating task forces, such as Equal Opportunity of Employment and Legal and Political Rights.

In 1967, NOW began working diligently to repeal all abortion laws and adopt passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. The ERA was first introduced by suffragist leader Alice Paul in 1923 as a natural follow-up to women gaining the right to vote three years earlier. In 1972, the ERA was passed by Congress, thus initiating a seven-year time

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<sup>13</sup> "Honoring Our Founders & Pioneers" *NOW: National Organization for Women*, accessed April 29, 2016, <http://now.org/about/history/honoring-our-founders-pioneers/>.

<sup>14</sup> Mary Dore and Nancy Kennedy, *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*, Interview with Muriel Fox (Chicago: Music Box Films, 2014) Netflix, 6:20-6:28.

<sup>15</sup> Dore and Kennedy, *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*, 6:34-6:53.

period for ratification amongst the states.<sup>16</sup> The Equal Rights Amendment stated, “Equal rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”<sup>17</sup> This amendment and other issues formed the group’s “Bill of Rights for Women.” In their first ten years, the members of NOW assisted in the practical implementation of *Roe v. Wade*, establishing clinics after the Supreme Court case was decided. They were instrumental in fighting for the ERA and Title IX, and declared August 26 as Women’s Equality Day. Although it was eventually vetoed by President Nixon, NOW also campaigned for the Comprehensive Child Care Act. The bill was a crucial step toward women’s equality in the workforce, as it would have established day care services, as well as medical and social aid. The need for proper childcare facilities and support from government institutions was a priority for the members of NOW at the onset of the organization. As Muriel Fox observed,

One of the earliest battles was for childcare. It’s in NOW’s statement of purpose. We knew that women could not hold jobs and be promoted until society recognized its obligation to help take care of our children.<sup>18</sup>

Another important moment in the organization’s early history came in 1971, when members adopted a resolution recognizing that lesbian rights were also an important and legitimate concern of feminism.<sup>19</sup> Although many members were lesbians, the organization did not initially welcome them and these women were not out to the other members. While their straight counterparts did not overtly accept lesbian feminists, the movement was inadvertently paving the way for their liberation. As the average age of

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<sup>16</sup> “The Equal Rights Amendment: Unfinished Business for the Constitution,” accessed June 3, 2016. <http://www.equalrightsamendment.org>.

<sup>17</sup> Tom Hanks, Gary Goetzman, and Mark Herzog, “Battle of the Sexes,” *CNN Original Series: The Seventies*, Episode 6, Interview with Terry O’Neil (Herzog & Company, Playtone, June 2015), Netflix, 5:49-5:57.

<sup>18</sup> Dore and Kennedy, *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry*, , 59:36-59:59.

<sup>19</sup> “History-Highlights,” *NOW: National Organization for Women*, accessed April 29, 2016, <http://now.org/about/history/highlights/>.

marriage began to increase in the 1950s, so too, did the divorce rate. A widespread cultural acceptance of unmarried women and sexually active women outside of marriage also sent a clear message to lesbians that the dynamic of “normal” relationships was changing. Books such as *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (1971) challenged the myth that women’s sexual pleasure was dependent on male genitalia.<sup>20</sup> Women began discussing their sex lives and the intimate details of the female orgasm, and quickly discovered they were not alone in their dissatisfaction. Women’s liberation helped create a space to accept nonstandard romantic relationships through the rejection of “traditional” sexual positions and the presumed inevitability of heterosexual marriage.<sup>21</sup>

### **Radicalesbians and “The Woman-Identified Woman”**

The inclusion of lesbian rights came after the 1970 publication, “The Woman-Identified Woman” by Radicalesbians. The group formed as a reaction to remarks made by Friedan, in which she addressed lesbian issues as constituting a “lavender menace” to the progress of the women’s rights movement. Friedan’s remarks were published in *The New York Times* in March 1970 in relation to comments made by men regarding the women’s movement, arguing, “They’re nothing but a bunch of lesbians and frustrated bitches.”<sup>22</sup> Friedan’s fear was that acknowledgement of lesbians within the feminist movement would undermine its credibility. The Radicalesbians initially called themselves the Lavender Menace, in an effort to confront Friedan and NOW. Founding

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<sup>20</sup> Boston Women’s Health Collective, ed., *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Massachusetts: New England Free Press, 1971).

<sup>21</sup> Linda Gordon, “The Women’s Liberation Moment,” in *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women’s Movements*, ed. Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon, and Astrid Henry (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 86-87.

<sup>22</sup> Susan Brownmiller, “‘Sisterhood is Powerful:’ A Member of the Women’s Liberation Movement Explains what it’s all About” *New York Times* (March 15, 1970), 140.

members wrote the manifesto that was read at the Second Congress to Unite Women on May 1, 1970.<sup>23</sup> The opening line reads, “What is a lesbian? A lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion.”<sup>24</sup> Radicalesbians sought to politicize the term lesbian. Rather than a word used to describe women who were emotionally and sexually attracted to other women, lesbian was redefined as a political ideal to which all women should subscribe. According to the Radicalesbians, being a lesbian was a necessary tactic to fight against patriarchy. Claiming the word would also effectively shatter its negative connotation. As explained by the Radicalesbians, “As long as male acceptability is primary—both to individual women and to the movement as a whole—the term lesbian will be used effectively against women.”<sup>25</sup>

Equally important in their quest to reclaim the term lesbian was the group’s effort to detach the cultural definition of women from men. It was their belief that the inevitable societal link of women to men denied any chance for a woman to define herself on her own terms. A woman attached to a man was a “real woman;” a woman on her own was “invisible, pathetic, inauthentic, unreal.”<sup>26</sup> As with *The Feminine Mystique*, the Radicalesbians’ essay pointed out that while many women were probably unhappy with their roles as wife, mother, homemaker, etc., most would deny such discontent if asked, or didn’t recognize it in themselves. Whether they labeled it as discomfort or anxiety, numbness or restlessness, Friedan and the women of Radicalesbians were confident that most women experienced some level of dissatisfaction with their societal position.

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<sup>23</sup> Linda Rapp, “Radicalesbians,” *gbtq* (2015), accessed April 29, 2016: 1-3 [http://www.gbtqarchive.com/ssh/radicalesbians\\_S.pdf](http://www.gbtqarchive.com/ssh/radicalesbians_S.pdf).

<sup>24</sup> Radicalesbians, “The Woman-Identified Woman,” (Pittsburgh: Know, Inc., 1970), 1.

<sup>25</sup> Radicalesbians, “The Woman-Identified Woman,” 3.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.



One of the most vocal members of the Radicalesbians was Rita Mae Brown. Brown grew up on the Mason-Dixon Line in a family of farmers. Her mother and aunts marched for the women's right to vote, which inspired Brown's activism. She became involved with the feminist movement and NOW after being expelled from the University of Florida for speaking out on issues of civil rights and sexual orientation. She soon found herself ostracized from the feminist movement when Friedan and other NOW leaders determined her out-spoken lesbian agenda would only work against their cause. Brown recalls, "It was very clear to me, those women, most of whom were rather privileged and very bright, treated lesbians the way men treated them."<sup>27</sup>

Although Brown was the first lesbian to be kicked out of NOW, she was not the last. These women formed the Radicalesbians and later the organization The Furies Collective, which published a monthly newspaper of the same name. In 1973, Brown published *Rubyfruit Jungle*, a coming-of-age novel with overt depictions of lesbian relationships. The book sold out countless printings, and is still finding new audiences. Radicalesbians and other similar organizations created a safe space for lesbians to come out and fight against issues that resonated with their lives, and eventually gained the support of the feminist movement. In 1973, NOW established the Task Force on Sexuality and Lesbianism. The organization also passed a resolution that defined homosexuality as a civil rights issue, and declared that the group should "actively introduce and support civil rights legislation to end discrimination based on sexual orientation...in housing, employment, credit, finance, child custody, and public

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<sup>27</sup> "Rita Mae Brown: Author and Activist," in *Makers: The Largest Video Collection of Women's Stories*, PBS-AOL, accessed May 27, 2016, 3:34, <http://www.makers.com/rita-mae-brown>.

accommodation.”<sup>28</sup> The acceptance of lesbian issues within NOW and the feminist movement as a whole was validation to gay women that their voices were necessary to the cause and their concerns were universal.

Of course, not all women agreed with the new world order proposed by NOW and the feminist movement. Gail Collins remembers, “There were a mess of housewives, grandmothers, mothers, who felt as if they were being, not only left out of this, but denigrated by it. That the movement was saying that their choices were stupid and dumb.”<sup>29</sup> Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative activist, became the movement’s strongest opponent. Schlafly, a Harvard graduate with a degree in political science, did not agree with the idea of equal rights for women. Schlafly was a staunch conservative who believed in family values and feared the feminist movement, specifically the ERA, would lead to same-sex marriage and encourage abortions.<sup>30</sup> She began a monthly newsletter called *The Phyllis Schlafly Report* in 1967. In 1972, as the ERA was making its way through state legislatures, she wrote an article entitled, “What’s Wrong with Equal Rights for Women?” Here Schlafly outlined the potential risks involved in granting equal opportunities to both genders. Among her biggest concerns were unisex bathrooms, an end to alimony, and women being forced into serving their country in combat. Finding other women with similar concerns, Schlafly led an anti-ERA group known as Stop ERA, which lectured around the country against the proposed amendment. In an interview from March of 1973, Schlafly explains,

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<sup>28</sup> Ruth Rosen, “Chapter Three: Limits of Liberalism,” *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women’s Movement Changed America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 83.

<sup>29</sup> Tom Hanks, Gary Goetzman, and Mark Herzog, “Battle of the Sexes,” *CNN Original Series: The Seventies*, Episode 6, Interview with Gail Collins (Herzog & Company, Playtone, June 2015), Netflix, 28:37-28:50.

<sup>30</sup> “Phyllis Schlafly: Conservative Activist,” in *Makers: The Largest Video Collection of Women’s Stories*, PBS-AOL, accessed June 1, 2016, 4:20, <http://www.makers.com/phyllis-schlafly>.

Since the women are the ones who bear the babies and there's nothing we can do about that, our laws and customs then make it the financial obligation of the husband to provide the support. It is his obligation and his sole obligation. And this is exactly and precisely what we will lose if the Equal Rights Amendment is passed.<sup>31</sup>

By 1980, after lobbying the state legislators for nearly a decade, Schlafly and her cohorts had successfully stalled the passage of the ERA. In 1982, the amendment lost its final three states necessary for ratification, and thus failed.<sup>32</sup>

### **Women's Liberation Movement**

As the feminist movement entered the 1970s, its members had gained considerable traction through organizations, publications, and activism. With steady growth and momentum, many women began to find new factions within the movement that better suited their personal interests and ideals. The women's liberation movement became an alternative to the feminist movement for younger women seeking an outlet for issues more pertinent to them. While the feminist movement was largely comprised of women involved in NOW, the women's liberation movement embraced a younger crowd that wasn't as concerned about childcare and equal pay. They fought for their sexual liberation, such as birth control, abortion rights, and same-sex relationships. As Mary Jean Collins explains, "Part of what distinguished the women's liberation branch from the more middle-aged, middle-class group was the interest in sexuality and personal

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<sup>31</sup> Michel Martin, "Phyllis Schlafly Still Championing The Anti-Feminist Fight," March 30, 2011, in *Tell Me More*, Transcript, accessed June 2, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=134981902>.

<sup>32</sup> The fight for the Equal Rights Amendment has never lain dormant. It has been reintroduced to every Congress since the 1982 deadline. In 1994, ERA advocates began pursuing alternative routes to ratification, including the "three-state strategy," which theorizes that if three of the fifteen states that did not originally ratify the ERA change their vote to yes, the process would withstand legal challenge to ratify the Amendment.

liberation.”<sup>33</sup> Between 1967 and 1969 this younger generation of women, largely influenced by the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam Movements, came together to form the women’s liberation movement. Activists in this subgroup sought a more holistic transformation of society. The ideology of women’s liberation was to do away with male dominance completely, challenging traditional gender patterns. Women involved in this movement were frustrated with the old regime, and believed that they were not militant enough. The movement continued to grow and become much more varied. By the 1970s, the many branches that comprised the feminist movement created the largest social movement in U.S. history.<sup>34</sup>

### Radical Feminism

One subgroup of the feminist movement was radical feminism. A radical feminist defines herself as one who believed that all women were to be regarded as potential allies in a struggle for liberation that brings them into conflict with all men.<sup>35</sup> Their emphasis on male-female antagonism led to the separatist stream of feminism known as lesbian separatism, which unrealistically sought to disavow all male-dominated institutions through secession. Thus, many radical feminists defined lesbianism as a political choice rather than a sexual orientation. This faction of the women’s liberation movement was led by several key figures, including the author-activist Shulamith Firestone.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Dore and Kennedy, *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry*, 44:51-45:10.

<sup>34</sup> Linda Gordon, “The Women’s Liberation Moment,” *Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women’s Movements*, ed. Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon, and Astrid Henry (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 69-72.

<sup>35</sup> David Macey, “Radical Feminism,” in *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (England: Penguin Books, 2000), 323.

<sup>36</sup> Gordon, “Women’s Liberation Moment,” 88.

In 1970 Firestone published *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*. Firestone, a feminist activist barely twenty-five at the time of publication, was a founder of the Chicago Women's Liberation, West Side Group, and Redstockings. She also worked with the St. Louis Congress of Racial Equality from 1961-1963.<sup>37</sup> Born the second of six children to Orthodox Jewish parents, Shulamith Bath Schmucl Ben Ari Feuerstein began her life in Ottawa, Canada, but her father uprooted the family to Kansas City shortly thereafter. Firestone's upbringing was a mixture of accusations, guilt, and violence, with Shulamith often taking the brunt of their father's rage. When she moved to Chicago to attend the Art Institute there, Firestone quickly found the beginnings of the women's liberation movement. She later moved to New York City, where she penned her provocative publication.<sup>38</sup> In *Dialectic of Sex*, Firestone broke down the current (c. 1970) groups involved in the women's movement into three categories: conservative feminists, politicians, and radical feminists. Conservative feminists, according to Firestone, were Betty Friedan and her cohorts. Firestone believed that the women of NOW only concentrated on the superficial symptoms of sexism, and that their political endeavors most resembled the suffragist movement decades previous. The politicians were women whose loyalties were more to the Left (i.e. "The Movement") rather than to the women's liberation movement proper. Firestone observed three subgroups within the politicians, which she labeled the Ladies Auxiliaries of the Left, the Middle-of-the-Road Politicians, and the Feminist Politicians. Radical feminism, as Firestone described, was a result of these other categories. As she explained,

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<sup>37</sup> Barbara J. Love, "Shulamith Firestone," in *Feminists Who Changed America, 1963-1975* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 149.

<sup>38</sup> Gordon, "Women's Liberation Moment," 78-79.

The women in its ranks range from disillusioned moderate feminists from NOW to disillusioned leftists from the women's liberation movement, and include others who had been waiting for just such an alternative, women for whom neither conservative bureaucratic feminism nor borrowed leftist dogma had much appeal.<sup>39</sup>

While Friedan's feminism fought against legal inequalities, Firestone demanded a sexual revolution that she determined would overthrow a male-run society. Women's oppression stemmed from the biological differences between the sexes. The ability to reproduce and the dependence of children on their mothers created the societal imbalance from which women were suffering. In order to rectify this imbalance, society would ultimately have to abolish the emphasis placed upon sex distinctions and create a culture in which genital differences were of no significance.<sup>40</sup>

In her final chapter, "Feminism in the Age of Ecology," Firestone argues that an important step in feminism is women's control over reproductive procedures, and envisions a society in which artificial birth becomes a mainstream reality. A Gallup poll conducted at the time of Firestone's essay found that less than one percent of the individuals questioned regarded population as a major issue moving forward. However, as she confirms, population experts estimated an increase of 180 million people born over the next forty-four years would result in radical changes in the human condition.<sup>41</sup> Firestone astutely observes the importance of artificial reproduction and population control in relation to the women's liberation movement, as well as the quality of life for all. As she brings this chapter to a close, Firestone remarks, "The feminist movement has

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<sup>39</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1970), 42.

<sup>40</sup> David Macey, "Firestone, Shulamith," in *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (England: Penguin Books, 2000), 129-30.

<sup>41</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1970), 194.

the essential mission of creating cultural acceptance of the new ecological balance necessary for the survival of the human race in the twentieth century.”<sup>42</sup> While most of Firestone’s ideas were widely accepted by those invested in radical feminism, her vision for a future society reminiscent of Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* was highly controversial and contentious within feminist circles.

### Lesbian Separatism

Another branch that started to grow out of this period was the separatist movement. Lesbian separatism was also referred to as political lesbianism. The most extreme example of radical feminism, lesbian separatists refused to cooperate with heterosexual women, disassociated themselves from men by creating women-only spaces, and argued in favor of political lesbianism as a natural choice for a woman-identified woman. The term “woman-identified woman” has long been linked to radical feminism. It was first introduced in the 1972 paper “Woman-Identified Woman.” In their book of the same title, editors Trudy Darty and Sandee Potter define the term as “women who relate emotionally and/or sexually to other women.”<sup>43</sup> Jackie Anderson described the fundamental difference between feminists and lesbian separatists in an article published in 1994 for the journal *Signs*. She wrote,

Separatists begin with the assumption that the social injustices we live with are best understood as expressions of hatred enforced with violence... This issue of how to respond to violence against women may be the line that divides the separatist from the non-separatist... I am not suggesting here that feminists have not considered violence important but,

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<sup>42</sup> Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, 202.

<sup>43</sup> Trudy Darty and Sandee Potter, “Glossary,” in *Women-Identified-Women* (California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1984), 306.

rather, that it has too often been considered secondary to issues such as reproductive freedom and the glass ceiling.<sup>44</sup>

Lesbian separatists were often political lesbians, meaning they chose to live with other women to disassociate themselves from men, but not to engage in relationships with other women. The Furies Collective was a communal lesbian separatist group that formed in the spring of 1971, and for a period of two years lived together in Washington, DC and published a bi-monthly newspaper.<sup>45</sup> The small consort of nine women celebrated the virtues of communal living, raising their children as a community and sharing clothes and other property with each other. Rita Mae Brown, the activist who formed the Radicalesbians and initiated the fight for lesbian rights included in NOW, led the Furies.<sup>46</sup> More than two dozen women participated in the organization from 1971 until the summer of 1973. In their first issue, the Furies explained the story behind their name. Ginny Berson described,

The story of the Furies is the story of strong, powerful women, the “Angry Ones,” the avengers of matricide, the protectors of women... We call our paper The Furies because we are oppressed by male supremacy. We have been fucked over all our lives by a system which is based on the domination of men over women, which defines male as good and female as only as good as the man you are with.<sup>47</sup>

In Anderson’s “Separatism, Feminism, and the Betrayal of Reform,” the author discusses the insignificant impact that reproductive freedom and political power would have in a society that still allowed male violence to continue. Lesbian separatism was an extraordinary response to a broken system. Many lesbian separatists were involved in the

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<sup>44</sup> Jackie Anderson, “Separatism, Feminism, and the Betrayal of Reform,” *Signs* 19, no. 2 (Winter 1994), 437.

<sup>45</sup> There were a total of ten issues of *The Furies: Lesbian/Feminist Monthly* dating from January 1972 until its final issue, dated May-June 1973.

<sup>46</sup> Other members included Charlotte Bunch, Sharon Deevey, Nancy Myron, Jennifer Woodul, Joan Biren, Helaine Harris, Susan Hathaway, and Ginny Berson.

<sup>47</sup> Ginny Berson, “The Story of the Furies,” *The Furies: Lesbian/Feminist Monthly* 1 (January 1972), 1.



women's music movement, both on and offstage. Several artists excluded men from attending their concerts, creating women-only spaces. Alix Dobkin was one of the most outspoken lesbian separatists of the women's music movement, and an artist who produced women-only concerts. As Dobkin explained,

My concerts are for women only. I feel it's a very important part of a boy's education to learn that there are places where he can't go. It doesn't mean there's anything wrong with him, it doesn't mean he's a bad kid, it doesn't mean anybody hates him. Kids don't need to go everywhere with their mothers. It's just a fact of life and it doesn't need to be threatening or hostile. It's the mother's attitude which will convey any damage to the kid, not the fact of women-only. Women-only does not hurt little boys.<sup>48</sup>

Dobkin, whose career and output will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, began her career as a heterosexual folk singer in New York's Greenwich Village. When she came out in 1972 she joined the women's music movement with her first album, *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. The album was a collaborative effort, with flautist Kay Gardner and bassist Patches Attom, to record seventeen tracks about women loving women. One of the songs from that first album, "View from Gay Head," is a direct reflection of the lesbian separatist concept of political lesbianism. The lyrics read:

I heard Cheryl and Mary say  
There are two kinds of people  
in the world today  
One or the other  
A person must be  
The men are them and  
The women are we!  
They agree it's a pleasure to be a

Chorus: Lesbian. Lesbian  
Let's be in no man's land  
Lesbian, Lesbian  
Any woman can be a Lesbian

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<sup>48</sup> Carol Anne Douglas, Alix Dobkin, and Denslow Brown, "Interview: 'A' is for Alix Dobkin," *Off Our Backs* 11, no. 10 (November 1981), 22.

Liza wishes the library  
Had men and women placed separately  
For theirs is the *kingdom*  
She knows who she'll find  
In the *history* of *mankind*  
But then she's inclined  
To be ahead of her time. She's a...

Chorus

Carol is tired of being nice  
With a sweet smile and a pretty face  
Submissive device  
To pacify the people  
For they won't defend  
A woman who's indifferent to men  
She's my friend. She's a Lesbian and

Women's anger, Louise explains  
A million second places in the master's game  
It's real as a mountain  
It's strong as the sea, besides  
An angry woman is a beauty  
She's chosen to be a Dyke like me, she's a...

Chorus

The sexes do battle and batter about  
The men's are the sexes I will live without  
I'll return to the bosom where my journey ends  
Where there's no penis between us friends.  
Will I see you again when you're a...

Chorus<sup>49</sup>

The song embodies the separatist movement that was emerging in the women's liberation movement. In verse three, Dobkin sings "she's chosen to be a Dyke like me..." reiterating the concept of politicized lesbianism. Although Dobkin was a lesbian by the traditional definition, her song lyrics embraced women who did not want a sexual

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<sup>49</sup> Alix Dobkin, "Gay Head," in *Lesbian Culture, An Anthology: The Lives, Work, Ideas, Art and Visions of Lesbians Past and Present*, ed. Julia Penelope and Susan Wolfe (California: The Crossing Press, 1993), 155-56.

relationship with other women. They wanted to live with other women and separate from the opposite gender in order to regain power within their personal and professional relationships. However, political lesbianism was a double-edged sword. By defining a lesbian as a woman who chooses to denounce a traditional relationship with men in order to embrace a matriarchal society, anti-gay rhetoric could challenge the argument that homosexuality was a predisposition from birth. The final line of the chorus, “any woman can be a lesbian,” defies the long-standing argument that sexual orientation is not something you can choose or change. While an early representation of Dobkin’s output, “View from Gay Head” does speak to her politics throughout her thirty-year career. In an interview with *Off Our Backs*, Dobkin discussed her relationship with separatism and her feelings about radical feminism. According to Dobkin,

Women are at core, tremendously radical, and they don’t all know it. They have no way to be in touch with that and so I act as a vehicle for women to uncover ideas which they already know or they feel very comfortable with once they get over that initial threat.<sup>50</sup>

### **Women of Color and Second-Wave Feminism**

While the women’s movement began to fracture into a number of subcategories which best represented a variety of specific agendas, one group that was still finding themselves cast aside by the feminist movement were African American women. Although the Civil Rights Movement is arguably the single-most influential movement of this period, African American women still struggled to find a voice within the predominantly white, middle-class women’s movement. In an interview presented in the film *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry*, activist Linda Burnham argued,

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<sup>50</sup> Karen Claudia and Alix Dobkin, “Interview: Alix Dobkin as Separatist/Symbol/Songwriter,” *Off Our Backs* 18, no. 2 (February 1988), 14.

It was very difficult for middle-class white women to have any conception about what was going on in communities of color. And those differences could have been in conversation with each other, but if there isn't even an acknowledgement that there is differences in experiences and perspective, and the voice of one is used as the voice of all, then you have a problem.<sup>51</sup>

Women of color began forming their own groups within the women's movement, starting with the Third World Women's Alliance in 1968. Originally the group was known as the Black Women's Liberation Committee, but transformed into the Third World Women's Alliance in 1970 as a result of its continued efforts with Puerto Rican women. That same year, the TWWA distributed a pamphlet entitled, *Black Woman's Manifesto*, comprised of shorter texts by women in the organization, including Frances Beal and Eleanor Holmes Norton. The article "Black Women and the Struggle for Liberation" exposed the circumstances of black women as exploited breadwinners and child bearers. In her opening paragraph, Maxine Williams discussed the 1965 publication, "The Negro Family— The Case for National Action." The booklet was issued by the U.S. Department of Labor, and suggested that the African American community was suffering from a matriarchal structure. This delineation from the traditional patriarchal structure was believed to be the cause of problems within the black community. Issues of unemployment and crime could be solved simply by reversing the household dynamic. Williams systematically breaks down the myth of "Black matriarchy" by launching into a brief history of black women's oppression.<sup>52</sup> While some of the problems facing black women in the 1960s and 1970s were gender-specific, others were based more on their skin color than gender. Williams explains that while white women are fighting to be seen as equal in the workforce amongst their male counterparts, "Sixty-one percent of Black

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<sup>51</sup> Dore and Kennedy, *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*: 36-59:59.

<sup>52</sup> Maxine Williams, "Black Women and the Struggle for Liberation," in *Black Woman's Manifesto* (Third World Women's Alliance: New York, 1970), 9.

married women were in the labor force in 1966.”<sup>53</sup> She continues to refine her argument, stating,

Women in the women’s liberation movement assert that they are tired of being slaves to their husbands, confined to the household performing menial tasks. While the Black woman can sympathize with this view, she does not feel that breaking her ass every day from nine to five is any form of liberation. She has always had to work. Before the Emancipation Proclamation she worked in the fields of the plantation as Malcolm X would say, “from can’t see in the morning until can’t see at night.”<sup>54</sup>

In her piece, “The Black Movement and Women’s Liberation,” Linda La Rue claimed,

“Common oppression” is fine for rhetoric, but it does not reflect the actual distance between the oppression of the black man and woman who are unemployed, and the “oppression” of the American white woman who is “sick and tired” of *Playboy* fold-outs, or Christian Dior lowering hemlines or adding ruffles, or of Miss Clairol telling her that blondes have more fun. Is there any logical comparison between the oppression of the black woman on welfare who has difficulty feeding her children and the discontent of the suburban mother who has the luxury to protest the washing of the dishes on which her family’s full meal was consumed?<sup>55</sup>

The common theme amongst these writings is a sense of disdain toward white women for their use of the word “oppression.” There was a fear and distrust amongst many black women toward women’s liberation. The idea of fighting for childcare and laws which supported improved working conditions for women was appealing. However, very few issues beyond those two were relatable between the groups. There was also a concern that even if black women joined the fight for equality between the genders, there would still be a lack of equality between black and white women. African American musicians brought similar concerns into the women’s music movement, which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

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<sup>53</sup> Williams, “Black Women and the Struggle for Liberation,” 14.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>55</sup> Linda La Rue, “The Black Movement and Women’s Liberation,” in *Black Woman’s Manifesto* (Third World Women’s Alliance: New York, 1970), 35.

## Gay Liberation Movement

As the feminist movement gave voice to the women hoping to rise above their domestic circumstances, so, too, did the Gay Liberation Movement challenge the social norms of sexuality and empowered lesbian and gay men to enact change. The first step took place at the Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1969.

On June 24, 2016, just two weeks after the deadliest attack on the LGBTQ community in U.S. history occurred at a gay nightclub in Orlando, President Barack Obama confirmed a long-rumored decision to designate the Stonewall Inn, a National Historic Landmark since 2000, as the first national monument dedicated to the LGBTQ movement.<sup>56</sup> The bar, which is the location of the famous Stonewall Riots that gave birth to the gay rights movement, is remembered by thousands of LGBTQ people as a second home in a time when many of them were not welcome in their own. President Obama spoke about the significance of the bar and the riots that took place almost forty-seven years ago to the day, explaining that, “the riots became protests, the protests became a movement; the movement ultimately became an integral part of America.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, had just announced last call when shots rang out. Omar Mateen, a 29-year-old security guard from Fort Pierce, Florida, had entered the nightclub with a semi-automatic and began firing. Patrons of the club were initially confused by the sound and believed the source may be fireworks or a BB gun. As young men and women began to fall from the gunfire, the crowd of nearly 300 people scattered. The massacre lasted three hours, as Mateen barricaded himself and several hostages inside the club, before finally being gunned down by police. Forty-nine people were killed and over fifty were severely injured.

<sup>57</sup> Alexander Mallin, “Obama Designates Stonewall as First National Monument for LGBT Rights,” *ABC News* (June 24, 2016), <http://abcnews.go.com/US/obama-designates-stonewall-national-monument-lgbt-rights/story?id=40107660>.

## Stonewall Riots

In June of 1969, a group of New York City police officers stormed the Stonewall Inn and demanded the patrons of the bar exit on grounds of illegal activity.<sup>58</sup> Although the bar had been raided on prior occasions, on this night the men and women at Stonewall decided they had had enough.<sup>59</sup> The raid broke into a riot, and the patrons barricaded the police officers inside. As the night continued, fights broke out on Christopher Street and throughout Greenwich Village. Gay men and women paraded around the blocks, thwarting police at every turn. As one rioter remembers, “Our goal was to hurt those police. I wanted to kill those cops, for the anger I had in me. And the cops got that.”<sup>60</sup> The riots continued for several more days. As each morning broke, the crowd dissipated, but as night returned, so did the regulars at the Stonewall Inn. When the riots ended six nights later, the men and women involved were determined not to lose the momentum of this nascent moment. At a town hall meeting held shortly after the events at Stonewall, Martha Shelley and Craig Rodwell suggested there should be a protest march to commemorate the riots. In June of 1970, the first gay pride parade was held. Though they feared that they would be harassed, attacked, or possibly killed, thousands of men and women marched from Christopher Street, where the Stonewall Inn was located, with the intention of ending the parade in Central Park. Most of the attendees did not expect very

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<sup>58</sup> In the 1960s, it was illegal to operate a gay and lesbian bar. By 1969, the Stonewall Inn was controlled by the Mafia, and would serve watered-down drinks without a liquor license, which had been denied them as a result of previous raids.

<sup>59</sup> Although this event is largely considered a gay men’s triumph, multiple sources cite a lesbian as the instigator of the fight. Several accounts of that evening are given in David Carter’s *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*. One refers to her as a “dyke—stone butch.” Carter references Leo E. Laurence’s “Gays Hit N.Y. Cops,” an article in *Berkeley Barb* from July 1969, which quotes the woman as yelling back to the crowd of men as she is shoved into a police car, shouting, “why don’t you guys do something!?”

<sup>60</sup> John O’Brien, *American Experience: Stonewall Uprising* (USA: PBS American Experience, 2010), YouTube, 52:47-52:58, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYIeJfllG2M>.

many people to participate, or that they would not make it to the parade's destination. Instead, the streets were filled with thousands of protestors. Fred Sargeant, a retired police lieutenant who marched in the first pride parade recalled,

I was astonished; we stretched out as far as I could see, thousands of us. There were no floats, no music, no boys in briefs. The cops turned their backs on us to convey their disdain, but the masses of people kept carrying signs and banners, chanting and waving to surprised onlookers.<sup>61</sup>

While the riots at the Stonewall Inn were seen as a triumphant step for progress, other key moments in the fight for equality became devastating reminders of the road yet to pave. One of the deadliest attacks on the gay community prior to the massacre at Pulse Nightclub occurred in June of 1973, when the UpStairs Lounge, a gay bar in New Orleans, was deliberately set on fire.<sup>62</sup> Thirty-two people died that evening, but little coverage or honor was bestowed upon the victims. Clayton Delery, author of *Nineteen Minutes of Hell*, recounted the appalling treatment of the fallen men:

There were no proclamations of outrage or sadness from politicians at any level. There were no arrests. There'd have been no memorial service if the Metropolitan Community Church, a primarily LGBT Christian denomination whose New Orleans church counted many of its members among the dead, hadn't sent their founder, Troy Perry, into town to organize one. Troy Perry and the other clergy and activists had a difficult time even finding a location for a service. When they asked for cooperation, they were turned down by clergy and leadership from the Catholic, Episcopal, Baptist and Lutheran churches. Only one Unitarian congregation and one unusually liberal Methodist congregation were

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<sup>61</sup> Fred Sargeant, "1970: A First-Person Account of the First Gay Pride March," *The Voice* (June 22, 2010), <http://www.villagevoice.com/news/1970-a-first-person-account-of-the-first-gay-pride-march-6429338>.

<sup>62</sup> The bar was entertaining a number of guests, most of who had stayed for a beer and fellowship after a meeting of the Metropolitan Community Church. Reverend Troy Perry founded the gay-affirming church. When the bartender heard someone at the front door, he asked a patron to see who it was. There, the patron was met with flames that quickly spread from the stairwell to the carpet and drapes. The bartender was able to assist thirty people out safely, but the back door he was using mysteriously locked at some point in the hysteria, and the rest of the patrons were trapped.



willing to cooperate. In the end, they went with the Methodist church, because it was in the French Quarter and close to the scene of the fire.<sup>63</sup>

The anti-gay rhetoric that dominated the 1970s did not halt in the wake of this tragedy. Churches, politicians, and fellow citizens voiced their animosity for the people who had died that evening. Many believed they deserved their fate. The city's mayor, Moon Landrieu, was on vacation when the attack occurred and chose not to cancel his trip.<sup>64</sup> The crime has never been solved, mostly because very little investigation was done at the time. Most of the men were buried in unmarked graves, either a result of family members refusing to identify their loved one's remains, or unaware that they were one of the lives lost that evening.<sup>65</sup>

In the decades surrounding the Stonewall Riots, gay men and women were persecuted for their sexual orientation. Often portrayed in public service announcements as "promiscuous" and "mentally ill," homosexuals were regarded as society's lepers. A 1967 episode of *CBS Reports* entitled "The Homosexuals" featured the research of psychoanalyst Dr. Charles Socarides, who explained, "The average homosexual, if there be such, is promiscuous. He is not interested in nor capable of a lasting relationship, like that of a heterosexual marriage."<sup>66</sup> In another cautionary tale entitled "Boys Beware," Lieutenant Williams of the Juvenile Division for the Inglewood (California) Police

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<sup>63</sup> Wayne Self, "Arson Kills 32 LGBT People, No One Notices: Why the 1973 UpStairs Lounge Fire Should Matter," *The Huffington Post*. February 2, 2016, Interview with Clayton Delery, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/wayne-self/upstairs-lounge-fire\\_b\\_2567541.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/wayne-self/upstairs-lounge-fire_b_2567541.html).

<sup>64</sup> Liyna Anwar and Eve Claxton, "Out of Ashes, An Unwavering Resolve: 'That's the Legacy. We Never Ran Away,'" *Morning Edition* (June 24, 2016), NPR, <http://www.npr.org/2016/06/24/483134445/out-of-ashes-an-unwavering-resolve-thats-the-legacy-we-never-ran-away>.

<sup>65</sup> Liam Stack, "Before Orlando Shooting, an Anti-Gay Massacre in New Orleans was Largely Forgotten," *The New York Times* (June 14, 2016), [http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/15/us/upstairs-lounge-new-orleans-fire-orlando-gay-bar.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/15/us/upstairs-lounge-new-orleans-fire-orlando-gay-bar.html?_r=1).

<sup>66</sup> Dr. Charles Socarides, "The Homosexual," *CBS Reports*. As reported in the documentary *American Experience: Stonewall Uprising* (USA: PBS American Experience, 2010), YouTube, 4:40-4:46, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYIeJfilG2M>.

Department narrates the story of Ralph and Jimmy. A small string ensemble provides a jovial tune as Lieutenant Williams explains the dangers of befriending a homosexual. Jimmy meets Ralph as a result of hitchhiking home one day from baseball practice. They begin a friendship, but Lieutenant Williams quickly clarifies why this is a problem: “What Jimmy didn’t know was that Ralph was sick. A sickness that was not visible like small pox, but no less dangerous and contagious. A sickness of the mind. You see, Ralph was a homosexual.”<sup>67</sup>

Similar PSAs warned parents not to be fooled by how normal the homosexual man may appear, showing images of an older man preying on an innocent younger boy. In a 1960s version of “Scared Straight,” Detective John Sorenson of the Dade County (Florida) Morals and Juvenile Squad spoke to a local school, warning the children “one out of three of you will turn queer.”<sup>68</sup> Institutions performed electroshock therapy, lobotomy, and castration of gay men in an effort to stave off what they believed to be a contagious disease. Although most of these public service announcements warned against the advances of homosexual men, there were similar cautionary tales about lesbians. One example is the 1938 film *Sex Madness*. The film begins with a forword regarding the dangers of syphilis, proclaiming the disease has played a “deadly part in our lives preventing marriages...breaking up families...and resulting in innocent offspring born blind, diseased, and maimed...”<sup>69</sup> In the next scene, two female office workers are discussing a newspaper article about burlesque shows. Peggy, portrayed as a blazer-wearing lesbian, walks over to Becky, the innocent heterosexual, and begins rubbing her

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<sup>67</sup> “Beware Boys,” accessed May 23, 2016, 3:51-4:05, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17u01\\_sWjRE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17u01_sWjRE).

<sup>68</sup> John Sorenson, *American Experience: Stonewall Uprising*, (USA: PBS American Experience, 2010), YouTube, 14:03-14:38, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYIeJfllG2M>.

<sup>69</sup> *Sex Madness*, 1938, :01-:50. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPddJkBEwIQ>.

shoulders. This innocuous gesture is supposed to be read by the audience as seduction, and is underscored by Peggy's insistence that Becky has the body to be a burlesque dancer. The two women agree to see a performance that evening. At the show, Peggy initiates a sexual advance toward Becky, asking her to spend the night. Becky's body language suggests discomfort, as Peggy embodies the predatory lesbian.<sup>70</sup> In the context of the film's narrative, a lesbian relationship is unhealthy, immoral, and would certainly result in syphilis, or at the very least, the breakdown of the nuclear family unit.

### The Lavender Scare

With the social stigma created by the media, it is not surprising that in 1969 homosexual activity— and behaviors perceived as such— was illegal in every state except for Illinois. Such activities included dancing with someone of the same sex, cross-dressing, propositioning another gay adult, possessing homophile publications, writing favorably about homosexuality, operating a gay and lesbian bar, or having oral or anal sex with another adult. Any of these actions could result in arrest, and once a gay man or woman was arrested for homosexuality, their names and addresses would be listed in the local newspaper. With no rights afforded to them, homosexuals were often fired, evicted, or denied certain accommodations simply because of their sexual orientation.<sup>71</sup>

One of the worst mass firings of gay and lesbian employees came during the Lavender Scare. In February 1950, Deputy Undersecretary of the State of South Carolina John Peurifoy appeared before a congressional committee and revealed that 91 homosexuals had recently been forced out of federal employment. Fearing there were

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<sup>70</sup> *Sex Madness*, 1938, 2:06-4:30. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPddJkBEwIQ>.

<sup>71</sup> David Carter, "What Made Stonewall Different," *The Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide* (July/August 2009), <http://www.glreview.org/article/article-509/>.

more “sexual perverts” infiltrating the U.S. government, a massive witch-hunt began. Hailed by many politicians as the “purge of the perverts,” the internal investigation had resulted in the dismissal of nearly six hundred federal civil servants as of November 1950.<sup>72</sup> On April 27, 1953, President Eisenhower signed an executive order that demanded all gay and lesbian government employees be fired.

In the decades leading up to the Lavender Scare, the federal government had become a place of prosperity and new possibilities for many Americans, including members of the LGBT community. Like their colleagues, gay men and women had traveled to Washington D.C. in the 1930s and 1940s to start their careers in the myriad federal agencies established by President Roosevelt and his New Deal. During this period, the population of metropolitan D.C. doubled and the number of federal workers quadrupled. Washington D.C. became the nation’s ninth largest city by 1940, and most of those populating it were young, single men and women. Government jobs were particularly hospitable to women because they did not have a gendered screening process. The Pendleton Act of 1883 required that all positions classified within the civil service were to be filled strictly on merit. Historians have documented stories of gay men and women finding a community to which they belonged and never imagined possible. Washington D.C. benefited from the growing gay population as well, which created an urbanized social and economic center that developed into a gay subculture.<sup>73</sup>

As with the Red Scare, the notorious anti-communist campaign led by Senator Joseph McCarthy, the Lavender Scare was meant to rid the government of any supposed threats to national security. In the eyes of these politicians, homosexuals posed a greater

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<sup>72</sup> David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1-2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 42-44.

risk to the government than communists. McCarthy and other Washington leaders believed that gay men and lesbians were susceptible to blackmail by foreign enemies and could potentially put the U.S. government at risk by trading secrets in an effort to conceal their sexual orientation.<sup>74</sup> As Johnson describes in his book, *The Lavender Scare*,

...the official rationale wasn't that homosexuals *were* communists but that they could be *used* by communists. A Senate subcommittee spent months investigating this claim and came up empty-handed. They found no evidence that even a single gay or lesbian American civil servant had ever been blackmailed into revealing state secrets...Nevertheless, the subcommittee's final report stated emphatically that homosexuals posed a threat to national security and called for their removal from all federal agencies.<sup>75</sup>

In the spring of 1950, many members of Congress underscored the threat created by homosexuals infiltrating the government. They urged their colleagues to act and pushed for new policies to get rid of them. In 1947, while a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Kenneth Wherry had played a significant role in launching the first State Department purge of homosexuals.<sup>76</sup>

Thousands of men and women suspected of homosexual activity were subjected to intense interrogations. Questions included, "Who do you live with? Who are your friends? What bars do you frequent? Would you like us to call your family back home and ask these questions?" Rather than give up their friends or risk the truth being exposed to their families, many chose to resign.<sup>77</sup> Joan Cassidy remembers her own experience being interrogated by the Navy. As Cassidy recalls,

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<sup>74</sup> "9 Things to Know About 'The Lavender Scare'," *Out Magazine* (April 26, 2013), <http://www.out.com/entertainment/popnography/2013/04/26/9-things-to-know-about-lavender-scare>.

<sup>75</sup> "An Interview with David K. Johnson: Author of *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*," University of Chicago Press (2004), <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/404811in.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 84.

<sup>77</sup> "9 Things to Know About 'The Lavender Scare'."

They swooped in like death with his scythe, sweeping through the place and knocking everybody out. Every one of the women, pulled them out of bed in the middle of the night, and set them up with lights, brilliant lights in their faces, and started questioning them about their sex life, and whether they were gay... They said to them, "We have your friend in the next room. She's already told us you're gay, so you might as well give us the names of others. You give us the names of others and we'll go easier on you."<sup>78</sup>

Gay men's reaction to societal mistreatment and systemic homophobia was the Stonewall Riots. Lesbians chose to respond through their art. As chapters two and three will reveal, the women's music movement was almost exclusively comprised of lesbians. If not for the undoubtedly negative reaction such threatening terminology would have garnered, it is obvious that had this movement begun in the new millennium, it would have been called the lesbian music movement.

As with many of the social movements that defined the era before second-wave feminism, organizations within the civil rights movement did not grant women the same amount of dignity and honor as their male counterparts. Women who were in positions of power were often harassed and disrespected, although most women were simply ignored altogether. As writer and activist Gloria Steinem stated,

The civil rights movement was incredibly inspiring. But at the same time, the women in it were not recognized as leaders in the same way that the men were. It said to us, if these movements we love still are not equal, then there has to be an autonomous women's movement.<sup>79</sup>

Civil Rights groups, such as Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference were extremely patriarchal, and did not look to recruit a large number of women to their ranks. Activists such as Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, who

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<sup>78</sup> Josh Howard, "Interview: Joan Cassidy," *The Lavender Scare*, YouTube, 0:00-0:57. <http://www.thelavenderscare.com/video-gallery>.

<sup>79</sup> Tom Hanks, Gary Goetzman, and Mark Herzog, "The Times They Are A-Changin'," *CNN Original Series: The Sixties* Episode 9, Interview with Gloria Steinem (Herzog & Company, Playtone, June 2015), Netflix, 2:20-2:41.

was one of three women chosen to be a field director for the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, often felt discriminated against by the male students in the organization. Recollecting on her constant battle for gender equality, Simmons explained,

I often had to struggle around issues related to a woman being a project director. We had to fight for the resources, you know. We had to fight to get a good car because the guys would get first dibs on everything, and that wasn't fair...it was a struggle to be taken seriously by the leadership, as well as by your male colleagues.<sup>80</sup>

Another woman overshadowed by her male counterparts was Diane Nash. Nash was instrumental in bringing the Nashville branch of SNCC to a place of status and significance. She coordinated an activist campaign whose ranks were 25% female. Shortly after the bus carrying a group of Freedom Riders through Alabama was attacked, Nash set to work organizing the next group to take their place. However, when the organization sought to elect a representative from that branch, three men were appointed over Nash: James Bevel, Marion Barry, and John Lewis.

Mildred Bond Roxborough was a long-time secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. She commented on the importance of women in leadership roles of the NAACP. Although they were still significantly outnumbered, and grossly undervalued, Roxborough describes how the NAACP would not have achieved its greatest victories if not for these women. She notes, "Well actually when you think about women's contributions to the NAACP, without the women we wouldn't have an NAACP. The person who was responsible for generating the organizing meeting was a

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<sup>80</sup> "Women in the Civil Rights Movement," *Collection: Civil Rights History Project*, Interview with Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/women-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>.

woman.”<sup>81</sup> The women of the civil rights movement were not the only ones who saw the injustices taking place. Men such as Lonnie King and Ekwueme Michael Thewell recall the constant resistance displayed by other men toward the women of the movement. As Thewell later realized, “It is only in retrospect that I recognize the extraordinary price that our sisters paid for being as devoted to the struggle as they were.”<sup>82</sup> Women were viewed as fragile, unintelligent, and physically and/or emotionally incapable of participating in more demanding roles within civil rights organizations. Catherine Burks Brooks, an activist who had been integrating restaurants for more than a year in Nashville, was warned by her boyfriend not to study nonviolence training and go on a Freedom Ride.<sup>83</sup> Female activists such as Brooks, Nash, Roxborough, Simmons, and others continued to fight for equality in the burgeoning women’s movement. In 1964, Casey Hayden and Mary King, both white, female SNCC members, published an incendiary memo entitled, “Sex and Caste.” Considered by some historians to be a founding document for the women’s movement, the publication outlined their frustrations with women’s roles in the civil rights movement.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> “Women in the Civil Rights Movement,” *Collection: Civil Rights History Project*, Interview with Mildred Bond Roxborough, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/women-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>.

<sup>82</sup> “Women in the Civil Rights Movement,” Interview with Ekwueme Michael Thewell, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/civil-rights-history-project/articles-and-essays/women-in-the-civil-rights-movement/>.

<sup>83</sup> Anna Holmes, “Spotlighting the Work of Women in the Civil Rights Movement’s Freedom Rides,” *The Washington Post* (June 2, 2011), [https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/spotlighting-the-work-of-women-in-the-civil-rights-movements-freedom-rides/2011/06/01/AGPH1aHH\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/spotlighting-the-work-of-women-in-the-civil-rights-movements-freedom-rides/2011/06/01/AGPH1aHH_story.html).

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*



## Representation of Women in Mainstream Music

The decades leading up to the women's music movement were a time of social and political change. The feminist, civil rights, women's liberation, and gay liberation movements were in full swing and had made considerable progress as the women's music movement began. These women felt that their voices were not being heard in the mainstream feminist movement or the gay liberation movement. They also struggled to hear their stories being told in mainstream music, forcing them to create an industry that was for them, about them, and produced entirely by them.

By the 1960s, female musicians were breaking out of the stereotypical role of beautiful mouthpiece and making their impact on genres such as rock and folk at a much higher rate than in previous decades. The folk revival opened the door for artists such as Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, and Carole King, and psychedelic rock became the musical home for blues-inspired Janis Joplin. These female artists were greatly influenced by the social change that took place throughout the 1960s:

As feminism made its converts, their music rang with growing frustration, ill-concealed temper, and eventually, rage. The social movements of the sixties offered an inexhaustible supply of singing and song-making material—civil rights, antiwar, and feminist protests were virtual prerequisites for long sixties performers. They also expanded performance venues to include all the impedimenta of movements, such as rallies, marches, and fund-raising events. A dexterous and cynical musician could hone her skills for the commercial music industry exclusively on the protest circuit, by treading smoothly through variegated networks serving populist concerns.<sup>85</sup>

Although the women's music movement developed on a parallel trajectory to the mainstream music of the day, there were moments when the two paths crossed through artist collaboration. After the Almanac Singers' short-lived success ended in 1942, band

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<sup>85</sup> Leslie Berman, "Charmed Circle: Folksingers and Singer-Songwriters," in *Trouble Girls: The Rolling Stone Book of Women in Rock*, ed. Barbara O'Dair (New York: Random House, 1997), 126.

mates Pete Seeger and Lee Hays formed the urban folk quartet The Weavers. The band included contralto Ronnie Gilbert, whose engaging feminist quips influenced other women musicians of the time, including political singer-songwriter Holly Near. Near became a “founding mother” of the women’s music movement, and collaborated with Gilbert on two albums while also performing on the women’s music circuit throughout the 1970s.<sup>86</sup>

While female artists such as Doris Day, Patti Page, Aretha Franklin, Kitty Wells and dozens more had spent the 1950s and ’60s enjoying solo success, women were still viewed as the beautiful display piece in front of the band. As singer-songwriters Carole King, Joan Baez and others began composing and recording their own music, it seemed as though commercial genres such as folk and rock were opening their airwaves to a gender that had been disproportionately disregarded throughout American popular music history. However, there was still a limit to how much the record labels wanted to hear from these artists, and musicians such as Baez, Mitchell, and King did not speak for all women. King and Mitchell wrote songs drawing from their personal experiences in the 1960s and 1970s, but those experiences were not necessarily relevant to lesbians. One example is the song “Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?” which captures the concerns of a young woman wondering if her lover will still respect her the next day if they spend the night together. King encapsulated the fears of a generation of newly liberated women who were questioning what the cost of their sexual freedom would ultimately be.

Joni Mitchell, though unwilling to self-proclaim a feminist identity, undeniably impacted the feminist movement going on around her and was most certainly influenced by those women as well. After being dubbed the “Old Lady of the Year” by *Rolling Stone*

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<sup>86</sup> Berman, “Charmed Circle,” 128.

magazine, Mitchell did not speak to them for eight years.<sup>87</sup> She may not have considered herself a feminist, but she inspired a generation of women in the feminist movement.

When singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco interviewed Joni Mitchell in 1998, she noticed her unwillingness to claim a label that so perfectly fit her life's work. DiFranco summarized Mitchell's career-long fight for recognition this way:

Joni has been personally disturbed by her own second-class citizenship for many years, as well she should be. It is interesting to study her public treatment, especially in the context of, say, her buddy Bob Dylan. For 30 years, Bob has been surrounded by a wealth of media hyperbole ("voice of a generation," etc.) that was never lavished on Joni. Only now is she beginning to receive some of the public strokes befitting her contribution to popular music. After all this time, though, some of the praising "rings hollow," she confided. Why has Bob been so thoroughly canonized and Joni so condescended to over the years? Maybe, in part, because when Joni was uppity, she was considered a bitch, and the media retaliated. From day one, however, Bob could be as uppity as he wanted, and the great mammoth rock press lauded his behavior as rebellious, clever, renegade and punkishly cool. Maybe it's also because Bob's songs are inherently more masculine (go figure) and have therefore been viewed as more universal, while Joni's writing, which has a more feminine perspective, is put in a box labeled "girl stuff."<sup>88</sup>

Facing such misogyny, it is difficult to understand Mitchell's hesitation with the word feminist. However, her frustration with the male-dominated music industry and the constant belittling she received from her peers did not result in her immediate willingness to identify as a feminist. In fact, Mitchell's reaction has been quite the opposite. She has adamantly opposed the label on several occasions. It is perhaps her understanding of the term that leaves her resisting its allure. In recent interviews, Mitchell has often rebuked the title, explaining, "I'm not a feminist...I don't want to get a posse against men...I've

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<sup>87</sup> Lucy O'Brien, "Ladies of the Canyon: Female Singer/Songwriters of the Grand Hotel," in *She Bop II: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 184.

<sup>88</sup> Ani DiFranco, "Ani DiFranco Chats with the Iconic Joni Mitchell," *Los Angeles Times* (September 20, 1998), <http://jonimitchell.com/Library/view.cfm?id=150>.

got a lot of men friends.”<sup>89</sup> The long-standing image of feminists as man-hating lesbians is a difficult picture to erase after decades of indoctrination, but it is also a misrepresentation of the term. Perhaps she is confusing the lines of radical feminism and feminism, as these terms are only truly defined by the women who claim them, and therefore leave a great deal of uncertainty as to which label is most appropriate. It could also be that Mitchell simply does not want to label herself as anything, or she does not want to be associated with a negative stereotype.

One of the most inspiring artists of the 1960s was Janis Joplin. Joplin’s rock stardom encouraged her female contemporaries to achieve similar status in genres that had not welcomed women in the past. Joplin was often perceived as “one of the guys,” a perception that allowed men to see her as their equal, but also took away from Joplin’s gender identity.<sup>90</sup> Her brazen attitude, her rough exterior, and laissez-faire mentality regarding sex and drugs gave most people the impression that Joplin was not a conventional woman. Although her career was cut short tragically at the age of twenty-seven, the groundwork had already been laid for women in rock ‘n’ roll. As a female musician who broke through a male-dominated genre, Joplin became an icon to women in the industry. She was also one of the few mainstream artists whose gender and sexual identity were called into question through performance. Joplin, as with many blues musicians, often performed material that did not conform to traditional gender roles. In the song “San Francisco Bay Blues,” Joplin sings the lament of a lost love:

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<sup>89</sup> Meghan Murphy, “Why Joni Mitchell’s Rejection of Feminism Broke My Heart a Little (and Why I’m Tired of Talking About Beyoncé),” (June 14, 2013), <http://rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/feminist-current/2013/06/why-joni-mitchells-rejection-feminism-broke-my-heart-little->.

<sup>90</sup> Lucy O’Brien, “Can the Can: Whatever Happened to The Rock Chick?” in *She Bop II: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop, and Soul* (New York: Continuum, 2002), 99. Full quote by Paul Rothchild, found in Laura Joplin’s *Love, Janis*, “How can I say this without sounding sexist? Janis was one of the guys. When I was with her, there was no sense of she’s female, I’m male...Her male balance was as strong as my female balance. We both acknowledged that place, the other side of our sexual whole.”

Sittin' in my back door  
Wondering which way to go  
That woman I'm so crazy about  
She don't love me no more.  
Lord, I think I'll grab a freight train  
Because I'm feeling blue,  
Ride all the way to the end of the line  
Thinking only about you.<sup>91</sup>

Joplin took her cue from another great blues artist known for gender-bending performances, Bessie Smith. Smith cross-dressed onstage and performed works traditionally sung by men, such as “There’ll be a Hot Time in Old Town Tonight.”<sup>92</sup> Artists like Joplin and Smith were early inspirations for the women of the music movement.

In the summer of 1972, Helen Reddy released her feminist anthem “I Am Woman.” The song entered the *Billboard* Hot 100 at number 99, but quickly fell off the charts as radio stations refused to give it airtime. The lyrics portrayed a strong, independent woman, a perfect embodiment of the spirit of the era:

I am woman, hear me roar  
In numbers too big to ignore  
And I know too much to go back an' pretend  
'Cause I've heard it all before  
And I've been down there on the floor  
No one's ever gonna keep me down again

Oh yes, I am wise  
But it's wisdom born of pain  
Yes, I've paid the price  
But look how much I gained  
If I have to, I can do anything  
I am strong  
(Strong)

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<sup>91</sup> Janis Joplin, “San Francisco Bay Blues,” (Jesse Fuller), *Janis*. LP, Columbia Records PG 33345, 1975; CD (import), COL 467406-9.

<sup>92</sup> Jana Evans Braziel, “‘Bye Bye Baby’: Race, Bisexuality, and the Blues in the Music of Bessie Smith and Janis Joplin,” *Popular Music and Society*, 27, no. 1, (2004): 16-18.

I am invincible  
(Invincible)  
I am woman

You can bend but never break me  
'Cause it only serves to make me  
More determined to achieve my final goal  
And I come back even stronger  
Not a novice any longer  
'Cause you've deepened the conviction in my soul

Chorus

I am woman watch me grow  
See me standing toe to toe  
As I spread my lovin' arms across the land  
But I'm still an embryo  
With a long, long way to go  
Until I make my brother understand<sup>93</sup>

Many music critics dismissed the song as representative of “all that is silly in the women’s lib movement.”<sup>94</sup> Reddy continued to perform her single on variety shows, and women across the country vocalized their support by calling into their local radio shows to get the song played. It reached number one on the *Billboard* charts in December, and Reddy received the Grammy Award for Best Female Pop-Vocal Performance in 1973.<sup>95</sup> This is era in which the women’s music movement took place. These multiple movements— civil rights, feminist, women’s liberation, and gay liberation— are the social fabric of the 1960s and 1970s, and influenced the artists of the women’s music movement. The political and social climate of these two decades created ample material for the arts, and music became an important vehicle for many activists to channel their

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<sup>93</sup> Helen Reddy and Ray Burton, “I Am Woman,” *I Don’t Know How to Love Him*, Capitol Records ST-762, 1973, LP.

<sup>94</sup> Gillian Gear, *She’s a Rebel: The History of Women in Rock & Roll* (Seattle: Seal Press, 1992), 189.

<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth L. Wollman, “Women and the Music Industry in the 1970s,” *History Now: The Journal of the Gilder Lehrman Institute*, accessed June 21, 2016, [http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/seventies/essays/women-and-music-industry-1970s#\\_ftn3](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/seventies/essays/women-and-music-industry-1970s#_ftn3).

frustration and create social awareness. Examining the works of female musicians like Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, and Janis Joplin shows the range of material already available to the artists of the women's music movement and how it may have inspired their own creations. Ultimately, it was crucial for lesbian artists to forge their own path and record music that represented their stories.

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## **Chapter Two: Biography – Artists of the Women’s Music Movement**

People would always ask me, “why women only?” And my response over the next twenty years of starting Olivia, my response was always the same. It was, if you could name five women bass players, five women guitar players, five women drummers, five women producers, five women engineers, we will stop. And, you know, never did get anyone to do that for me.

-Judy Dlugacz, producer/founder, Olivia Records

On November 26, 1982, singer-songwriters Meg Christian and Cris Williamson took to the stage at Carnegie Hall and performed a concert in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the launch of Olivia Records. Christian co-founded the record label with Judy Dlugacz in 1972, and in the decade that followed Olivia and its all-female line-up became successful. Over two thousand women were in attendance that evening. They had come to witness the culmination of more than a decade of fighting for gender equality in music. This performance recognized Christian, Williamson, Olivia Records, and the thousands of women who participated in creating the women’s music movement. As *Boston Globe* writer Susan Wilson described the evening,

It might have been a fairly ordinary and relatively uneventful Friday night in uptown Manhattan. But something special was clearly in the air!...Dozens of curious Christmas shoppers began to stop and stare at the glittering façade of Carnegie Hall. The object of their attention? Women. Virtually thousands of women, converged on the legendary showplace...In singles, pairs, groups, women came from almost every continental state, plus Alaska, Brazil, Germany and Australia.<sup>1</sup>

The record produced from this historic performance, *Meg and Cris: Live at Carnegie Hall*, was released the following year. Cris Williamson wrote the album’s opening track, “Anniversary,” for the concert. The nearly twenty-five seconds of uproarious applause following that first song indicates the tremendous amount of joy and

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<sup>1</sup> Tes Slominski, “Doin’ Time with Meg and Cris, Thirty Years Later: The Queer Temporality of Pseudonostalgia,” *Women and Music: A Journal of Gender and Culture* 19 (University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 87-88.

enthusiasm the audience felt that evening as they marked a decade of women's music and anticipated the years ahead.

Carefully packaged as "women's music" in an effort for the overtly homosexual and politically charged material to appear less threatening, the songs of the women's music movement were like nothing else in the mainstream. These artists wrote songs that reflected their own experiences as lesbians. The challenge they faced was to find an audience without handing over their voices to the heteronormative, patriarchal media. Movies, music, poetry, and sculpture created by homosexual artists or with homosexual innuendo were not given the same support or audience as was afforded their heterosexual counterparts. Nina Simone sang "Mississippi Goddamn" in response to the Alabama church bombing in 1963 that claimed the lives of four young girls at Sunday school and Bob Dylan proclaimed, "The Times they are a-Changin,'" both in recognition of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and hope for achievements to come. Just as these artists wrote songs that reflected their personal and political beliefs, the women's music movement wanted songs that reflected their struggle. The feminist movement found allies in Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell, and the gay liberation movement was largely influenced by gay men. Lesbians were not well represented in either cause, and they certainly didn't feel as though their voices were being heard outside of their own intimate circle of friends. Songs like "Angry Atthis" and "We Shall Go Forth!" finally gave a voice to the oppressed, and artists like Maxine Feldman and Meg Christian were at the forefront.

The women's music movement was formed in reaction to the misrepresentation, or lack of representation, of women in mainstream music. It was also a response to the

need for more female control in all aspects of the music industry. As photographer Joan Biren explained,

We wanted to do everything. We learned how to be a complete alternative, because we had to. Because that's where the power and control was. If we just made the music, or the poems, or the pictures, they would be distorted in their context, or they would be censored, or they wouldn't get to the people who needed them. So we had to create all of it.<sup>2</sup>

By taking control of every part of the process, the participants in the women's music movement were able to ensure that their music was heard the way they wished it to be received. Another benefit to complete ownership of the process was the ability to openly incorporate their sexual identities into their creative work. Artists who did not fit the traditional female mold were given a platform to openly express themselves. Their personal stories were given a positive platform, and the movement became an organizing tool for the development of lesbian feminist culture.<sup>3</sup> While not every song performed was explicitly lesbian, a large majority of the women performing this music were lesbian feminists. The women who helped initiate this movement are known as the founding mothers, which include Maxine Feldman, Holly Near, Cris Williamson, Meg Christian, Mary Watkins, Kay Gardner, Margie Adam, Alix Dobkin, and Linda Tillery.

### **Maxine Feldman**

On May 13, 1969, just one month before the Stonewall Riots, Maxine Feldman sat in an L.A. bar and composed the first out lesbian anthem.<sup>4</sup> The title was "Angry

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<sup>2</sup> Joan E. Biren, interview by Mosbacher, *Radical Harmonies*, 33:35-34:02.

<sup>3</sup> Arlene Stein, "Women's Music," *Encyclopedia of Lesbian Gay Histories and Cultures*, ed. George Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman (New York: Garland Science, 2003), 519.

<sup>4</sup> J.D. Doyle, "Interview with Maxine Feldman," *Queer Music Heritage* (April 2002), <http://queermusicheritage.com/apr2002s.html>.

Atthis,” a play-on word that also referenced one of Sappho’s supposed female lovers.<sup>5</sup>

Feldman, an outspoken lesbian folksinger, was twenty-four at the time. She had spent six years performing throughout Boston, but was often refused bookings because she was “bringing around the wrong crowd.”<sup>6</sup> Frustrated with the treatment to which she and the gay community were constantly subjected, Feldman channeled her anger into music.

Released as a single in 1972, “Angry Atthis” was produced by Harrison and Tyler, a feminist comedy duo with whom Feldman toured from 1970-1971.<sup>7</sup> The song depicts Feldman’s longing for the freedom to express who she was openly:

I hate not being able to hold my lover’s hand  
Except under some dimly lit table  
Afraid of being who I am  
I hate to tell lies, live in the shadow of fear  
We’ve run half of our lives  
From that damn word queer  
It’s not your wife that I want  
It’s not your children I am after  
It’s not even my choice I want to flaunt  
Just want to hear my lover’s laughter  
Feel like we’re animals in cages  
And have you seen the lights in the gay bar?  
Not revealing wrinkles or rages  
God forbid we reveal who we are  
I hate not being able to hold my lover’s hand  
Except under some dimly lit table  
Afraid of being who I am  
No longer afraid of being a lesbian<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Sappho (615/30 B.C.-550/70 B.C.) was a Greek poet and teacher who lived on the Island of Lesbos. There is great controversy and speculation surrounding her life and poetry. This is due in part to what little survives. Although evidence suggests she married a wealthy man named Cercylas, her poetry possesses homoerotic themes that could stem from personal desire or experience. She is referenced in many contexts in the women’s music movement.

<sup>6</sup> Jamie Anderson, “Maxine Feldman: Folk Musician, Lesbian Activist,” *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine* 51/4 (Winter 2008), <https://jwa.org/weremember/feldman-maxine>.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Cullen, “Maxine Feldman,” *Vaudeville, Old & New: An Encyclopedia of Variety Performers in America* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 374.

<sup>8</sup> Maxine Feldman, “Angry Atthis,” Harrison & Tyler Productions H&T-100, 1972, LP.

The lines “It’s not your wife that I want/It’s not your children I am after...Just want to hear my lover’s laughter” speak to a common fear among heterosexuals that the LGBTQ community is recruiting their husbands, wives, daughters, and sons. It also exposes the simplicity of her own desires. “Angry Atthis” is the first openly lesbian song on record, and Feldman’s performance is considered the beginning of the women’s music movement. Although Feldman’s career was not a prolific one, she did write two of the movement’s most significant works: “Angry Atthis” and “Amazon,” written in 1976. It would become the opening song at every Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival for the next forty years. Feldman continued to perform throughout the 1970s and 1980s, but health problems eventually ended her entertainment career. Shortly before her passing, Feldman confided to close friends that s/he identified comfortably as either gender. The women’s music movement was not always a safe space for the transgender community, particularly at the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival. However, Feldman’s transition did not seem to alienate him/her from the community s/he had so greatly impacted.

### **Alix Dobkin**

While Maxine Feldman is credited with recording the first lesbian song, a group of young lesbian artists can claim credit for the first lesbian album. In 1973, Alix Dobkin, along with two other out lesbians, produced, engineered, wrote, and performed on the album *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. It was the first album by, for, and about lesbians. An international success, the record launched Dobkin’s career, which included six more albums, countless appearances at women’s music festivals, performances with other out lesbian artists such as Melissa Etheridge, and a multitude of interviews and articles by

and about her. Dobkin looks back on this monumental album as the “ticket” to her career.<sup>9</sup> As she explains,

I not only came out, I was a professional lesbian...It's not like that was a side thing, or it didn't have anything to do with my career. It had *everything* to do with my career. It had to do with my audience, the content of my work, my whole perspective, how I managed my career. It was all based on politics, really. My community life. That was the point of all that. It was totally calculated to put me together with the lesbians I loved.<sup>10</sup>

Long before she became an “International Lesbian Folk Singer,” Dobkin was a struggling singer-songwriter playing for small crowds at the Gaslight Café in Greenwich Village.<sup>11</sup> Her career trajectory changed significantly when she came out as a lesbian and began writing music that focused on relationships between women. Many of the seventeen tracks on *Lavender Jane Loves Women* were an expression of those relationships:

**Side 1**

The Woman in Your Life is You  
Caledonia  
Yells  
Eppie Morrie  
Jovanno  
I Only Want to Dance with You  
The Little House  
Her Precious Love

**Side 2**

Fantasy Girl  
Quartet  
Jo’s B-Day Song  
Charlie  
Beware, Young Ladies  
Talking Lesbian  
A Woman’s Love  
View From Gay Head  
Hug-Ee-Boo<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Chrissie Dickinson, “Dobkin a light for lesbians,” *Chicago Tribune*, accessed May 17, 2015, [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-17/entertainment/ct-ott-0518-alix-dobkin-2-20120517\\_1\\_lesbian-alix-dobkin-lavender-jane](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-17/entertainment/ct-ott-0518-alix-dobkin-2-20120517_1_lesbian-alix-dobkin-lavender-jane).

<sup>10</sup> Dickinson, “Dobkin a light for lesbians,” [http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-17/entertainment/ct-ott-0518-alix-dobkin-2-20120517\\_1\\_lesbian-alix-dobkin-lavender-jane](http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-05-17/entertainment/ct-ott-0518-alix-dobkin-2-20120517_1_lesbian-alix-dobkin-lavender-jane).

<sup>11</sup> Rob Fitzpatrick, “The 101 Strangest Records on Spotify: Alix Dobkin-‘Living with Lavender Jane/Living with Lesbians,’” *The Guardian*, accessed March 14, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/feb/04/the-101-strangest-records-on-spotify-alix-dobkin-living-with-lavender-janeliving-with-lesbians>.

<sup>12</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Patches Attom, *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Women’s Wax Works A001, 1974, LP.

Dobkin was born on August 16, 1940. Her uncle was an organizer for the National Maritime Union (NMU). Much like Marlon Brando's character in *On the Waterfront*, Dobkin's uncle challenged the mafia controlling the International Longshoremen's Union. Her uncle's namesake, Dobkin was destined to live a life of activism. Her parents were Jewish communists who joined the party as it began to grow in New York. As a child, Dobkin was introduced to prominent party members at intimate political gatherings that her parents hosted in their tiny New York apartment. As an infant, her parents carried her in their arms to the Waterfront as they handed out NMU leaflets. They claimed it was a great way to ensure they would not be harmed. Dobkin's dad explained, "Those hard-boiled guys were sentimental about children and families."<sup>13</sup> In a speech she gave at the 1997 Gulf Coast Festival in Mississippi, Dobkin recounted how timing played a huge part in the opportunities afforded to her. She noted,

I have been in the right place at the right time all my life, starting with my parents wheeling me to the waterfront in New York to organize for the NMU (National Maritime Union)... That's how I started—at the right place... There was all this energy in that kind of progressive movement for social change... I was in Kansas City listening to rhythm and blues when rock and roll was first invented... I was in Greenwich Village in the early sixties, when folk music was just beginning to change popular culture as we know it. I was in New York City in the early seventies, in a consciousness-raising group, 1971.<sup>14</sup>

Dobkin's childhood is best represented by two constants: music and a family dedicated to social justice. In fact, on the day of her birth, the nurse said she dreamed that Dobkin would grow up to become an opera singer, predicting she would one day perform at the Met. Dobkin remembers her grandmother's enthusiasm over that vision:

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<sup>13</sup> Alix Dobkin, *My Red Blood* (New York: Alyson Books, 2009), 8.

<sup>14</sup> Bonnie J. Morris, "In Their Own Voices: Oral Histories of Festival Artists," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 19, no. 2 (1998): 53-71.

Grandma crowed about that prediction for a long time, never imagining that in twenty-five years, rather than appearing at the Met, I'd appear at Carnegie Hall in a program with Chuck Berry and the legendary guitarist and singer Dave Van Ronk at the peak of the folk boom.<sup>15</sup>

Music was always present in the Dobkin home. In her memoir, *My Red Blood*, the folk singer recounts one of her earliest childhood memories, in which Broadway and film star Paul Robeson sat in their Manhattan kitchen, discussing politics with her parents.<sup>16</sup> Other significant musical influences included Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, as well as the Broadway shows *Oklahoma!*, *Showboat*, *Kiss Me Kate*, and *Guys and Dolls*. Folk music became a staple of Dobkin's musical upbringing and she spent her adolescence engaged in the local folk scene, jamming with other aspiring young musicians. Although she was born in New York, finances and the promise of job security fueled several moves in Dobkin's childhood. Her family moved to Philadelphia in 1952, but by 1954, they were headed to Kansas City. It was at this time when Dobkin began to form her musical tastes. Broadway hits, classical, blues, jazz, folk, and, thanks to a one-hour radio special each week, rhythm and blues. Rock 'n' roll and R&B were becoming popular genres as cheap record players and affordable 45s gave young teenyboppers unlimited access to their favorite tunes. The new musical trends did not go unnoticed by Dobkin. As she remembers,

The magnetism of R&B reeled in my generation of white kids with money burning holes in our dungaree pockets. Dissatisfied with the stale succession of lifeless tunes and anemic lyrics of mainstream culture, we were hooked by the energy and directness of rock 'n' roll and cracked the code in no time, realizing that words as commonplace as "work," "dance," and certainly "rock 'n' roll" itself, meant sex, the way "to die" meant sex in the Middle Ages and "gives the business" or "had to marry" meant sex in the Broadway version of "I Hate Men."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 85.



Growing up in major cultural hubs, Dobkin was exposed to musical styles and artists with which she may not have otherwise come into contact. While New York gave her Tin Pan Alley and Broadway, Kansas City was the ideal location for jazz, blues, and R&B. Dobkin was inspired by her acquired musical education, but frustrated with the industry itself. Even at a young age, Dobkin could see the injustice within the music industry, particularly toward African-Americans and women. White covers of her favorite artists, such as Hank Ballard and the Midnighters and Etta James, were a reminder that the prejudice in the country had no limitations. Another disappointment for Dobkin was the regulated airtime afforded female artists in rock 'n' roll. As she recalls,

Rock 'n' roll wasn't all positive: the message for women in many of these originals was unambiguous and made me nervous, although at the time I couldn't have said why. Beneath consciousness, rock 'n' roll troubled me, and now I know it was a hyper-male coziness with violence, and an absence of the strong female voices I'd grown used to hearing in the blues tradition.<sup>18</sup>

In 1955, Tennessee Ernie Ford recorded "Sixteen Tons," in which he lamented, "I owe my soul to the company store." The lyrics gave Dobkin hope that social consciousness in popular music was just around the corner, but the dream was short-lived. Although she could not articulate her concerns at the time, it is clear that she was already developing a desire for music to reflect social change, as well as a vision to hear more minorities represented in mainstream music.

One of the most influential musical trends of the 1950s was the folk revival. Dobkin quickly found herself in the local folk network when her family returned to Philadelphia. She and a friend would jam together, learning songs off of their favorite albums. As they worked on new material, Dobkin perfected her guitar playing:

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<sup>18</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 86.

For two weeks I felt as if broken glass had been ground into the tips of my left fingers, but daily I picked up my guitar and practiced. In a matter of weeks, blisters became tough calluses and finger picks stayed in place for the strum. After that, the standard chord progressions of most songs were easy.<sup>19</sup>

As the popularity of the folk scene grew, the music of Woody Guthrie, the Weavers, the Almanac Singers, John Jacob Niles, Leadbelly, Josh White, Jean Ritchie, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, Reverend Gary Davis, Cynthia Gooding, Oscar Brand, and Pete Seeger became staples of their repertoire. Seeger was especially influential for Dobkin's early musical development. His songs promoted broad themes of peace and social justice, revitalizing and unifying an entire generation of aspiring artists and activists. In her memoir, Dobkin writes,

My generation learned to champion civil rights, social justice, and peace through singing together, and in less than a decade after rock 'n' roll fractured the music industry, an even more accessible subculture of do-it-yourself musicians began to emerge.<sup>20</sup>

Dobkin came of age during a key moment of Seeger's output, creating an imprint that would follow throughout her career. As always, timing played a crucial part in Dobkin's musical education. With the folk revival in full swing, it was easy to find opportunities to perfect her new craft:

Folkies from all over Philadelphia flocked to the Gilded Cage in Center City where Ed and Esther Halpern arranged quaint, feeble soda-fountain chairs in a circle for Sunday afternoon song fests. During the first years we didn't even fill the room and everyone got a chance to sing at least one song, but by the end of the fifties, two rooms would be crammed and you'd be lucky to get a single turn.<sup>21</sup>

Parties, post-concert gatherings, and meetings of the Philadelphia Folk Song Society allowed Dobkin to strengthen her skills as a guitarist while adding to her

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<sup>19</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 98.

<sup>20</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 151.

<sup>21</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 111.

repertoire as a folk singer-songwriter. During these jam sessions she was also exposed to international music, which became a staple of her output throughout her career. In the fall of 1958, Dobkin enrolled in the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. Although she enjoyed her classes and the friendships she made, school could not end soon enough for her. A chance encounter in the spring of her junior year with a booking agent named Herb led to steady gigs as she finished her degree. The introduction segued into a full time career following graduation.

As Dobkin began making a name for herself in Greenwich Village, a young club owner named Sam Hood was creating local buzz. Hood ran the Gaslight Café, a club in Greenwich Village once owned by his father. When Hood took over, regulars like Bob Dylan and Bill Cosby gave the club a reputation as a place for young artists to get their start. As Dobkin's performances at the bar became more frequent, she and Hood began dating. As a result of their budding romance and her performance schedule at the Gaslight, Dobkin gained access to all of the new celebrities of the Village. She and Dylan quickly became friends, enjoying the same circle of artists and recognizing each other's talent and vision. Dobkin found inspiration in the visionary folk singer, following his early albums before he became a star. She fixated on his first album, the self-titled *Bob Dylan*, with covers of "Fixin' to Die" and "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean," which Dobkin believed were perfect representations of the traditional tunes.

As the two grew closer, Dylan began to show mutual adoration for Dobkin's talents, even bestowing upon her the praise of being his "favorite female singer."<sup>22</sup> One evening at the Gaslight, as the two killed time between sets, he sat down with Dobkin and showed her a song on which he had been working:

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<sup>22</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 169.

Sliding into a chair at the round table by the back curtain, he said, “Here, listen. I just wrote this song and I want you to sing it. It’s perfect for you!” He handed me a book of matches, and one at a time, I held a small flame over a spiral notepad while he scribbled down the words to “Don’t Think Twice, It’s All Right.” Tearing them out, he handed me four pieces of paper guaranteed to be worth a fortune. “You gotta sing it, it’s perfect.”<sup>23</sup>

Dobkin was flattered by the gesture, and attempted to add “Don’t Think Twice” into her repertoire. Unfortunately, the lyrics did not fit her style and she ultimately determined it was not the right song for her. When she told this to Dylan, he was deeply offended.

While introducing the song in performance, he would comment, “It’s a hard song to sing. I can sing it sometimes, but I ain’t that good yet. Course, *some* singers don’t want to *sing* this song. *Some* singers say it ain’t *right* for them.”<sup>24</sup> Over the years, Dobkin inserted various Dylan songs into her set list, and eventually, “Don’t Think Twice” made its way back on the list.

During this period in Dobkin’s career she was introduced to two separate record companies. She and Judy Collins had become acquaintances through the bar scene in the Village, so Collins offered to introduce Dobkin to her producer at Elektra. Legendary record producer John Hammond was also a fan, and arranged a meeting at Columbia. In both consultations, Dobkin remembers admitting, “You know, I’m not sure I want to play for men.”<sup>25</sup> This comment is an early example of Dobkin’s separatist mentality, which became a controversial component of her career for the next three decades. Executives were quick to show her the door after this statement, but for Dobkin, it solidified her path as an artist.

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<sup>23</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 169.

<sup>24</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 170.

<sup>25</sup> Achy Obejas, “The Cult of Alix Dobkin: The Last of the Die-hard Dykes looks back at a Lifetime of Controversy,” *The Advocate* (August 25, 1992): 76.

In the fall of 1973, Dobkin teamed up with flutist Kay Gardner and bassist Pat Moschetta to form the band Lavender Jane. Along with their producer/engineer Marilyn Ries, the group recorded the seventeen tracks that would become *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. The title honored two women whom Dobkin idolized: actress Jane Powell and journalist Jane Alpert. Powell had been significant to Dobkin from a young age, and Alpert wrote an article for *Ms. Magazine* exposing male chauvinism.<sup>26</sup> The color lavender has been associated with the gay community since the 1950s and 1960s, replacing the color mauve, which symbolized homosexuality in the 1890s.<sup>27</sup> The album's collaborators were all out lesbians. Both Gardner and Dobkin had recently ended marriages with men, making this album particularly empowering for them. Gardner was an accomplished classical flutist, having recently finished her master's degree in performance.<sup>28</sup> Shortly after forming their duo, Dobkin and Gardner decided they were missing a lower timbre to fill out their sound. As they searched for a cellist or bassist, many women declined to participate due to the duo's political agenda. Patches Attom joined their ensemble just months before recording the album. At the time, Attom was a conga player, but learned eleven songs on bass guitar for *Lavender Jane Loves Women* in a matter of weeks.<sup>29</sup> In an interview for *Off Our Backs* magazine in 1974, Gardner recalled,

Lavender Jane was born August 17, 1973, at a coming out concert at the New York women's center. Alix and I had been playing together since we met in March at the gay firehouse arts, crafts and skills festival. She had been playing her guitar, and I took my flute—and it worked. When we played in August we asked for a bass player to join us, and Patty came up

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<sup>26</sup> Dobkin, *My Red Blood*, 267.

<sup>27</sup> Bruce Rodgers, *Gay Talk: The Queen's Vernacular—A Dictionary of Gay Slang* (New York: Parragon Books, 1972), 124.

<sup>28</sup> Martha Mockus, "Women's Music," in *Encyclopedia of Lesbian and Gay Histories and Cultures*, ed. George Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 2000), 198.

<sup>29</sup> Alix Dobkin, *Alix Dobkin's Adventure in Women's Music* (New York: Tomato Publications, Ltd., 1979), 11.

and introduced herself. We all got together and started rehearsing for the record in September.<sup>30</sup>

The making of *Lavender Jane Loves Women* can be seen as a small-scale representation of the women's music movement, starting with the album's producer and engineer, Marilyn Ries. Dobkin and Gardner found Ries through connections at WBAI-FM in New York City. Ries was working as an engineer at a spoken word studio. With her help, Lavender Jane recorded the entire album in one of the studios. Ries is recognized as one of the first female audio engineers in the recording industry. Since producing the groundbreaking *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Ries has continued to work in the entertainment industry, engineering hundreds of programs for American public radio and television, audio books, and recordings. She and partner Sorrel Hays have done a number of joint projects together, which were featured on Westdeutscher Rundfunk Cologne, and in the Whitney Museum Acoustic Festival, the Chicago Women in the Director's Chair Film Festival, and the 1996 Copenhagen Festival.<sup>31</sup>

To finance the album, Dobkin raised more than three thousand dollars by performing on a cruise with a band called Lesbian Life Space. They also created the Women's Music Network, a short-lived collective that funded the printing and distribution of the first thousand albums.<sup>32</sup> Dobkin explains, "We printed a cover and pasted it on with rubber cement, a thousand albums. And had an insert printed with the

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<sup>30</sup> Fran Moira and Anne Williams, "Lavender Jane Loves," *Off Our Backs* 4, no. 5 (April 1974): 6-7.

<sup>31</sup> Sorrel Hayes, liner notes to *Dreaming The World*, New World Records B0000030K4, 1996, CD.

<sup>32</sup> The Women's Music Network was created by Kay Gardner and Alix Dobkin to promote women's music within the women's community. The organization became a collection of four women's businesses, which included: Hearts and Struggles Music, a women's publishing company; Lavender Jane Productions, the name of Dobkin and Gardner's live show; Women's Wax Works, the production company that pressed the first thousand copies of *Lavender Jane Loves Women*; and Feminists Artists Management, a promotional company for women in theater, music, dance and spoken word. See Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, "Women's Music Network," *Paid My Dues* 1, no. 1 (1974), cover page.

information that would normally go on the liner notes."<sup>33</sup> Every step of the process was a joint effort among the band members. As they began a promotional tour for the album, the group established a production company, Lavender Jane Productions, and a record label, Women's Wax Works.

Shortly after their debut album, Lavender Jane disbanded. Dobkin embarked on a solo career, beginning in 1976 with the album *Living with Lesbians*. Being a solo artist allowed Dobkin to dictate certain demands. As a lesbian separatist, Dobkin firmly believed in women-only spaces. Many of her concert posters from 1976 until the early 1990s specifically requested attendees be "women only."<sup>34</sup> She also offered workshops and presentations about the representation of women in the media, along with her concert events. One of these presentations was entitled "Woman-hating, Racism, and Violence in the Top 40." This two-hour multimedia program was co-written by Dobkin's girlfriend Denslow (Denny) Brown. The piece analyzed the racist, sexist, and violent nature of commercial music in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>35</sup>

Dobkin discussed this presentation in another workshop on women-only spaces. She explained,

It's material for a program, which I developed for colleges when women who want to book me for a concert, and of course they couldn't have women-only concerts or anything as colleges, so I developed a lecture on why we need women-only spaces that I would do for mixed audiences.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Alix Dobkin, interview by J.D. Doyle, *Queer Music Heritage*, KPFT, May 2002, <http://www.queermusicheritage.com/may2002s.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Concert Posters, 1981, box 1, folder 24, Alix Dobkin Special Collection, Lesbian Herstory Archive, Brooklyn, NY.

<sup>35</sup> The Women's Center at The University of California-Santa Barbara Calendar of Events (January-March 1986), folder 3, Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

<sup>36</sup> "Recording of Women's-Only Workshop with Alix Dobkin," by Sydney Spencer, 217a, 3:01-3:17, Spoken Word Collection, Lesbian Herstory Archive, Brooklyn, NY.

Dobkin argued that women-only spaces had existed for thousands of years, as women would quilt together, cook together, and do other activities inside the home that generally did not include men. However, the difference in these acts, as opposed to a women-only concert, is a matter of intent. While homemaking is an act of service to the man and family in a woman's life, attending a women-only concert is a selfish act. Dobkin rationalizes the discrimination of excluding men in women-only spaces by explaining that we discriminate everyday we make a choice not to befriend everyone on the planet. We are choosing with whom we associate, and therefore taking part in discrimination. She also touches on the idea of equal rights among men and women:

Polarization is a fact of life. The women do their things; the men do their things. Nobody questions it. Everybody knows women and men are different and that we have so little in common in so many ways. This is a relatively new, liberal idea everybody's equal, everybody needs to be in the same place.<sup>37</sup>

As the session ends, the conversation shifts to topics of transsexuals and gay men.<sup>38</sup> An attendee comments she does not feel comfortable with "men coming as women" to Michigan.<sup>39</sup> Dobkin chimes in with an unusual argument about men procreating.

There is no way that two men can have a transaction and create a woman. No way in the world that this can happen. Goes against everything we know is true. No way a doctor and a man can create a woman.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> "Recording of Women's-Only Workshop with Alix Dobkin," by Sydney Spencer, 217a, 21:45-22:12, Spoken Word Collection, Lesbian Herstory Archive, Brooklyn, NY.

<sup>38</sup> The term transsexual, rather than transgender, was first introduced in the medical and psychological communities in the 1960s. According to the GLAAD media reference guide's glossary of terms, it was used to describe any individual seeking to permanently change their bodies through medical interventions, including but not limited to hormones and/or surgeries.

<sup>39</sup> "Recording of Women's-Only Workshop with Alix Dobkin," by Sydney Spencer, 217b, 0:41-1:32, Spoken Word Collection, Lesbian Herstory Archive, Brooklyn, NY. Michigan refers to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, which in 1978 began promoting a policy known as "womyn-born womyn" for their festival attendees.

<sup>40</sup> "Recording of Women's-Only Workshop with Alix Dobkin," by Sydney Spencer, 217b, 1:55-2:10, Spoken Word Collection, Lesbian Herstory Archive, Brooklyn, NY.



While similar to her argument regarding discrimination and equal rights between men and women, this explanation can also be read as narrow-minded and transphobic. The argument that two men cannot create a woman and therefore they are somehow inferior is the exact argument made by the heterosexual community against homosexuality. The session concludes with a call to action for the women to speak out against transsexuals in attendance and to create more women-only spaces at women's festivals and concerts. Dobkin's workshop is one example of a much larger debate that continued to permeate the women's music movement. As new generations of women's music fans flocked to MichFest, the number of lesbian separatists who were adamantly opposed to transwomen included in the festivities started to dwindle. The debate over womyn-born womyn vs. transwomen became more divisive. In an episode of the YouTube docu-series *We've Been Around*, narrator Julia Serano observes,

Transphobia had a history in the queer community. Transwomen had long been barred from feminist and lesbian spaces. They were called "gender imposters," and told they couldn't possibly understand the female experience.<sup>41</sup>

Following an incident in 1991 in which trans woman Nancy Burkholder was thrown out of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, trans activists decided to take a stand against transphobia, creating Camp Trans. The camp members protested each subsequent music festival until the demise of MichFest in 2015.

Over the course of her forty-year career, Dobkin released an additional four albums and one compilation. Dobkin's contribution to the women's music movement

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<sup>41</sup> Rhys Ernst, "Camp Trans," *We've Been Around* Episode 6, YouTube (June 2016), 1:20-1:34, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ca3erlRoGg8>.

included countless women's festival appearances, freelance publications, and a legacy of music to be discussed in the next chapter.

### **Kay Gardner**

The compositions of Kay Louise Gardner, a pioneer in women's music, were a rare blend of classical elegance and coffeehouse folk. Classically trained on the flute, Gardner was just four years old when she performed her first composition. By the age of nine Gardner realized she wanted to become a conductor. Her dream became a reality when she co-founded the New England Women's Symphony in 1977. In the early 1960s she began performing in coffeehouses across California. Around the same time, Gardner attended the University of Michigan, working toward a bachelor's degree in music education. Unfortunately, an unsupportive department and early marriage caused her to drop out halfway through her junior year. A little over a decade later, the couple divorced, causing Gardner to reevaluate her career. Prior to finishing her degree at SUNY, Stony Brook, Gardner taught flute at Norfolk State College, and led the Norfolk Chamber Consort Young Audiences Ensemble. Gardner also founded the Norfolk Chamber Consort in 1969, and acted as their music director until 1972.<sup>42</sup>

In 1973, Gardner joined Near, Dobkin, Christian, and others in the women's music movement, dedicating her talent to celebrating women's spiritual empowerment through music, including as co-founder of Lavender Jane. Like Dobkin, Gardner began work on a solo career after the trio disbanded. It was at this time that she was introduced

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<sup>42</sup> Kay Gardner Resume, 1973, box 1, folders 13-14, Alix Dobkin Special Collection, Lesbian Herstory Archive, Brooklyn, NY.

to guitarist Laurel Wise. Wise was entirely self-taught, rather than classically trained, which fascinated Gardner. As Gardner recalled,

We were introduced by a mutual friend who thought we might make interesting music together. At the time I was with Alix Dobkin in a lesbian band—Lavender Jane—and had just finished my Master of Music degree in flute performance. Laurel had never had a music lesson, was a completely self-taught guitar player, and intimidated the hell out of me. Why? Because she did everything “wrong” (according to the rules I’d learned in music school), but everything sounded right, and she played with a freedom I couldn’t even begin to identify with.<sup>43</sup>

Wise had spent time in Morocco studying women’s drumming and dancing circles, and lived for five years in a women’s commune in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas. Inspired by Wise’s “romantic life-style,” Gardner composed the piece *Wise Woman* in honor of her new muse. Throughout her career, Gardner named Laurel Wise among her musical inspirations, which also included composers Jeriann Hilderley and Pauline Oliveros.<sup>44</sup>

Although Gardner had been studying music for much of her life by the time she met Hilderley, she credits Hilderley and Dobkin with opening her eyes and allowing her to explore other styles and improvisation. In the summer of 1974, Gardner and Hilderley spent several months in the Northeast as traveling musicians. Documented in her two-part article for *Hotwire* entitled, “Minstrel Memories Part One and Two,” Gardner described this excursion as a time when she discovered herself as a woman, musician, and spiritual being. She was also embracing her identity as a lesbian. As Gardner looked back on the summer in her article, she recognized,

Now when I think of all this I realize that my hippie days were delayed by marriage, children, and life in the classical music world. I never even

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<sup>43</sup> Kay Gardner, “Freestyle: Minstrel Memories, Part One,” *Hotwire: The Journal of Women’s Music and Culture* 4, no. 2 (March 1988): 56.

<sup>44</sup> Casper Sunn, “In Memoriam: Kay Gardner Memorial,” *IAWM Journal* (2003).

heard a Beatles album until *Sergeant Pepper*...and only then because it had symphonic arrangements. My '60s were happening in the mid '70s. No longer dressed in wifely and motherly polyester, I was a baby butch dressed in patched jeans or overalls, a feathered and beaded leather hat on my head, a pipe in my mouth. I was writing poems and singing my own songs and making love and growing into the me I was meant to be.<sup>45</sup>

When the summer ended, Gardner returned to her life in New York with her two daughters and a feeling of uncertainty as she considered her future in music. She wrote in her journal,

Is it the moon, full, sending partial light through clouds that makes me confused? Artists are moving to the country. Who the hell is it that wants to live in New York City? My daughter is a cynic at 12. My 10-year-old-daughter, a budding street fighter. Is this what I want for them? Why do I stay? I must have space for all of my projects. I must have an atmosphere in which I can create. And air...and sweet country air to take into my lungs, already weakened by the city sewage, spewage, filth. Why do I stay?<sup>46</sup>

In 1975, Gardner produced her first album, entitled *Mooncircles*. Listed as one of Spotify's "101 Strangest Records," Rob Fitzpatrick proclaims,

This remarkable and wonderful record arrived in 1975 on Urana Records and no one will ever be able to make something as clear-eyed and unashamedly openhearted as this ever again.<sup>47</sup>

Gardner's record was the first in a series on the healing power of music. Her fascination with the medicinal benefits of music led Gardner to produce multiple albums, lectures, and a book on the subject, *Sounding the Inner Landscape: Music as Medicine*. Gardner believed that certain sounds could change the cellular makeup of the body, effectively curing disease through a combination of musical elements such as rhythm, drone,

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<sup>45</sup> Kay Gardner, "Freestyle: Minstrel Memories, Part Two," *Hotwire: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 5, no. 1 (January 1989): 54.

<sup>46</sup> Gardner, "Freestyle: Minstrel Memories, Part Two," 54.

<sup>47</sup> Rob Fitzpatrick, "101 Strangest Records on Spotify-Kay Gardner, *Mooncircles*," *The Guardian* (May 29, 2013), accessed September 17, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/musicblog/2013/may/29/101-strangest-spotify-kay-gardner>.

repetition, harmony, melody, instrumental color, harmonics, form, and “composer’s intent.”<sup>48</sup> She also studied music theory as it pertained to gender and sexual orientation. In an interview with the *Gay Community News*, writer Scott Brookie asked Gardner to elaborate upon comments she had made at a recent concert regarding forms of music being “explicitly lesbian.” In the interview, Gardner explains,

In all music there’s a system of octaves and in between those octaves fall many different sounds. A certain sound will sound like this culture or that culture because different cultures use different scales. In South India, they have 3,000 different scales because they use quarter tones not just the half tones and quarter tones that we use. I’ve been researching particular ones which fell with certain matriarchal cultures of ancient Greece. The Dorian mode is a very androgynous kind of mode that we all relate to. Donovan sang a lot in the Dorian mode, if you remember how gentle and delightful his music was.<sup>49</sup>

Jeriann Hilderley first introduced Gardner to these modes in the context of women’s music. While attending a people’s fair in Greenwich Village with Laurel Wise one evening, the two stumbled upon a performance by Hilderley. Prior to Hilderley’s set, a women’s chorus called the Pennywhistlers performed, mostly singing what Gardner described as, “Balkan music...the music was unusual, the words were about women’s lives, and the tunes were in these odd scales (which I later learned were modal scales unique to women). This was women’s music.”<sup>50</sup> Hilderley followed the Pennywhistlers, and Gardner immediately fell in love with her style and uninhibited nature on stage. The first piece she performed that evening introduced Gardner to the Phrygian mode. Gardner began to study this, and other modes, in relation to women’s music.

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<sup>48</sup> Fitzpatrick, “101 Strangest Records on Spotify-Kay Gardner, *Mooncircles*.”

<sup>49</sup> Scott Brookie, “Music and Politics: Interview with Kay Gardner,” *Gay Community News* 9, no. 24 (January 9, 1982): 8.

<sup>50</sup> Kay Gardner, “Freestyle: Minstrel Memories, Part One,” *Hotwire: The Journal of Women’s Music and Culture* 4, no. 2 (March 1988): 56.

In 1984, Gardner published her musical masterpiece, *A Rainbow Path*. The multi-movement chamber work is designed for meditation, based on the eight energy centers (chakras) within one's body.<sup>51</sup> The composition took Gardner eight years to realize, which often left her frustrated with the process. Writing about the piece in her article, "Making A Rainbow Path," Gardner explained,

Then I had to wait for each piece to come to me as inspiration. If I "tried" to write a piece, it didn't work...If I've learned anything from this project, it has been to be patient and to allow the creative process to take its own time.<sup>52</sup>

While working on *A Rainbow Path*, Gardner also wrote smaller works, such as her *Moods & Rituals: Meditations for Solo Flutes*. Her fascination with meditation, healing, and music only strengthened with the completion of this project. Throughout her career, Gardner published seventeen chamber works, sixteen choral works, seven orchestral works, ten solo instrumental works, ten solo vocal works, an opera and an oratorio. Some are devoted to the subject of music as medicine, while others focus on further aspects of women and music.

In addition to her work as a composer, Gardner became a regular contributor to women's music publications, such as *Ms. Magazine* and *Hotwire*. Gardner's "Freestyle" column featured in each issue of *Hotwire* allowed her to contribute information on creating press kits, being your own agent, contracts, and personal accounts of her own journey in women's music. Gardner's publications have since been featured in other collections, such as the anthology of women's music articles, *Lesbian Culture: An Anthology*. Her article, "Early East Coast Women's Music and The Squirrel," highlighted

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<sup>51</sup> Kay Gardner, "Making a Rainbow Path," *Hotwire: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 1, no. 1 (November 1984): 56.

<sup>52</sup> Gardner, "Making a Rainbow Path," 56.

the misperception that the women's music movement was largely a west coast phenomenon. Gardner explained the beginnings of women's music, rooted in New York and Washington, D.C., and of course, the albums that came out of that period, such as *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. Gardner continued to publish articles, compose, conduct, and lead workshops on the healing power of music until her death in 2002.

### **Holly Near**

One of the few founding mothers of women's music who was able to briefly obtain mainstream success was Holly Near, born on June 6, 1949 in Ukiah, California. From an early age she showed an amazing talent for music. Her first public performance was at the age of seven, singing "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" in a talent competition for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Near soon became active in theater in hopes of one day performing on Broadway. In high school, she began performing with a folk group called the Freedom Singers. They often covered songs that had been arranged by The Weavers. In the decades to come, Near would have the honor of working side by side with one of the original Weavers, Ronnie Gilbert, collaborating with her on a number of albums and tours.

Like Alix Dobkin, Near was born into a family of activists. She often heard her parents discussing world events in the morning over coffee. Near was always allowed to participate in these conversations, and she and her siblings were able to voice their opinions and ask questions that were received with respect. In addition to her extracurricular activities in music, Near also participated in a number of social change groups in high school. One group fought to remove the military draft board from their campus, while another worked to change the dress code policy to allow girls to wear

pants at school. Although they were unable to rid their campus of the military draft board, by her senior year, girls were allowed to wear pants on Fridays if there was a football game. In 1967, Near graduated high school and enrolled at UCLA to study musical theater and political science. The two majors foreshadowed her future career as a singer-songwriter and activist. She quickly earned recognition from talent agents in performances of *Guys and Dolls* and scenes from *110 in The Shade*, and by 1968 she was working full-time as an actress. Near was cast in several films before landing a role in the Broadway musical *Hair* in 1969, which premiered at the Biltmore Theater on April 29, 1968 and ran for a total of 1,742 performances.<sup>53</sup> The show's political themes and anti-war agenda resonated with Near.<sup>54</sup> Shortly after leaving the cast of *Hair*, she joined Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland in an anti-war tour entitled *Free The Army*. In between bit parts in movies, anti-war tours, and Broadway shows, Near searched for a musical outlet. Besides her brief stint in *Hair*, Near did not receive as much attention for her singing as her acting. In 1972, she began writing songs and reaching out to record labels to get signed. Her outspoken lyrics in direct opposition to the wars against Indochina and Vietnam were not well received by industry labels. Record executives told Near her songs were not "pop" enough and that her voice needed to be more "submissive."<sup>55</sup>

Wanting to document the political songs she had already written, Near founded her own

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<sup>53</sup> Scott Warfield, "From *Hair* to *Rent*: is 'rock' a four-letter word on Broadway?" *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, 2nd edition, Eds. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 237.

<sup>54</sup> Subtitled, "An American Tribal Love-Rock Musical," *Hair* tells the story of Claude, a young man drafted to fight in Vietnam, and the uncertainty he faces over whether or not to dodge the draft. Claude is in staunch contrast to the character Berger, a high school dropout who leads a hippy commune. The show, which does not follow a logical narrative, is a two-act criticism of all authority figures and glorification of drugs, free love, racial tolerance, respect for the individual and environmentalism. In the end, Claude accepts his fate and joins the military, but is killed in action.

<sup>55</sup> Cynthia Marion Lont, "Between Rock and a Hard Place: A Model of Subcultural Persistence and Women's Music (Cultural Studies, Political Economy)," (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1984), 108.



record label, Redwood Records, in 1972. Redwood became one of the first female artist-owned companies in the music industry, and a home for artists like Near to write politically conscious material without fear of rejection or misrepresentation. Her debut album, *Hang In There*, was released in 1973, followed by *A Live Album* in 1974. These albums reflect Near's concern with global issues and established her as a strong new artist with a political bent. Later albums such as *Imagine My Surprise* (1978) and *Fire in the Rain* (1981) directly reflect her transition into women's music and her identity as an out lesbian.

When Near began writing women's music in the mid-1970s, the movement had been on a steady rise since Maxine Feldman's first performance of "Angry Atthis" in 1969. Near's desire for social change, passion for feminist issues, and concern for lesbian rights were a perfect marriage for women's music. Near was not an out lesbian when she joined the women's music movement. In fact, she did not consider herself gay. She had always identified as a heterosexual woman, but wanted to write music that would discuss political issues from the perspective of a woman. In 1976, while on tour with another women's music artist, Meg Christian, Near realized her feelings were deeper than mere friendship. Near and Christian began a three-and-a-half-year relationship and Near came out to the movement. She recalls, "I thought, 'Gosh, can I really deal with what society hands out to a lesbian?' Then I decided that wasn't a fair choice— to deny myself a happy and healthy part of life because of social criticism."<sup>56</sup> Near's unique story offered a bridge between gay and straight women in and out of the movement. While most of the

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<sup>56</sup> Nancy Faber, "Never in the Closet or on the Charts (yet), Holly Near Sings Uncompromisingly of Gay Love," *People Magazine* 16, no. 2 (July 13, 1981): 1.

women's music artists had identified as lesbian their entire lives, Near's audience witnessed her coming out story unfold.

In 1978, she released her fourth album, *Imagine My Surprise*. Although the record does contain songs dedicated to her personal coming out story, the title track was not a reference to her journey. Always devoted to the greater injustice of equality, "Imagine My Surprise" refers to Near's complete shock in discovering that there were women poets and pirates who had been left out of history books.<sup>57</sup> The album's complete track list includes:

Side A

Imagine My Surprise!

Put Away

Nina

Lady At The Piano

Fight Back

Riverboat

Side B

Mountain Song/Kentucky Woman

You Bet

Rock Me In Your Arms

Hay Una Mujer Desaparecida

Something About The Women<sup>58</sup>

Although most women's music artists had a difficult time relating to straight audience members, Near's concerts were comprised of gay and straight women alike. As she explained, "I want to do songs about lesbians in such a way that both gay and straight teenagers will ask their parents to come to concerts."<sup>59</sup> Not only was Near able to create a space that welcomed straight allies, she also opened her concerts to men. She was not a lesbian separatist; therefore, twenty-five percent of her audiences, band members, and co-workers at the record label were men. Near also allowed male artists to be recorded on

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<sup>57</sup> Michael Goldberg, "Holly Near: The Cultural Worker Who Sings about Rape," *San Francisco Sunday Examiner & Chronicle* (November 11, 1979): 40.

<sup>58</sup> Holly Near, *Imagine My Surprise!*, Redwood Records RR 401, LP, 1978.

<sup>59</sup> Faber, "Never in the Closet or on the Charts (yet), Holly Near Sings Uncompromisingly of Gay Love," 1.

Redwood; her only requirement was that they “all have a worldly commitment to humanity.”<sup>60</sup>

Near struggled with the label “lesbian” and disagreed with some of the principles set forth by lesbian separatists and extremists in the movement. Having dated men in the past, some members of the women’s music community objected to her unwillingness to separate from men entirely. In Near’s autobiography, she describes her personal definition of lesbianism:

My lesbianism is not linked to sexual preference. For me, it is part of my worldview, part of my passion for women and central in my objection to male domination.<sup>61</sup>

Despite the scrutiny of some in the women’s music movement, Near continued her commitment to lesbian issues through the use of lesbian themes in her work, an undeniable focus on feminist issues, and a continual promotion of gay and lesbian rights and culture.<sup>62</sup>

While Near often wrote songs using genderless lyrics to appeal across sexual and gender barriers, she also wrote many that specifically celebrated lesbian love. Songs such as “Nina” celebrate her personal take on coming out and the struggle that many women face when grappling with the reality of their sexual orientation. In an interview with JD Doyle, she acknowledges,

When I began writing outspoken lesbian songs, I tried, because of my global work, because I was a global peace activist, my take on lesbian songs was slightly different than people who had come to their politics through their sexuality. And “Nina” was identifying one, that not all

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<sup>60</sup> Holly Near, “Redwood Records: Biography,” box 1, Schlesinger Library: Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University.

<sup>61</sup> Holly Near and Derk Richardson, *Singer in the Storm...Fire in the Rain* (New York: William Morrow, 1990).

<sup>62</sup> Teresa Theophano, “Near, Holly,” *GLBTQ Encyclopedia* (2002), 2, [http://www.glbqtarchive.com/arts/near\\_h\\_A.pdf](http://www.glbqtarchive.com/arts/near_h_A.pdf).

lesbians were white and middle class, and second that there were a group of women who had really struggled early on in the transitioning from totally being in the closet to being out. And women who had done that journey, it had been very painful, very painful to maybe being married, of maybe being in relationships but knowing you were in love with the woman next door, going to the bars, which were oftentimes owned by the mafia, being in the military and being hounded, all these different things...that transitional generation really had taken some hits. But I wanted to give a nod to that and also allow this mother to feel so much joy that because of the work she did, and her generation did, her daughter was going to be able to love freely. And I actually think that song was very successful in that regard. It's a very sweet song.<sup>63</sup>

In 1981, Near released her fifth album, *Fire In The Rain*. The album was considered her most commercial project to date. When asked about its popular nature, Near explained,

I wanted to see if my music was recorded in a way that's contemporary and popular, whether people would listen to it and like it and whether DJs would play it. I wanted it to fit a musical style and formula people are accustomed to. Of course, this is without changing the ideas and content of the songs.<sup>64</sup>

In 1993, Near teamed up with her sister Timothy to write, produce, and direct a one-woman show entitled *Fire in the Rain, Singer in the Storm*. The show took her audience on a musical journey from her childhood in rural California to the present, combining her own compositions with a few covers to tell the story. The show debuted in the summer of 1993 in San Francisco to rave reviews. Critics commented on Near's powerful voice, often comparing her to contemporaries Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell. With the success they enjoyed on the west coast, the Near sisters decided to take their show to New York. In the fall of 1993, *Fire in the Rain...* opened at the Union Square Theater. Unfortunately, Near's soaring soprano was not enough to impress the critics on the east coast. One review by critic Clive Barnes proved little had changed since Near

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<sup>63</sup> Holly Near, interview by JD Doyle, *Queer Music Heritage*, KPFT, January 2010, <http://www.queermusicheritage.com/jan2010.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Dennis Hunt, "Holly Near: Not Over The Rainbow," *Los Angeles Times* (May 14, 1986): 6.

was told her sound was not submissive enough for a record contract. Barnes seems unimpressed by the genre of one-man shows in general, commenting that only a figure such as George Washington deserves to have a show in this format dedicated to his life's story. Barnes' only kind words regarding Near's vocal talent are undercut by his misogynistic qualification:

Near does have a lovely voice, sweet, cool yet passionate, and allied to her dusty redhead look of fervent enthusiasm and unquenchable radiance, this by itself could have been worth a country music bundle.<sup>65</sup>

After the show's run ended in New York, Near returned to California and resumed her work as a touring musician and activist. Over the past two decades, she has consistently performed around the country at women's festivals, college campuses, and national conferences. She performed benefit concerts for Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign and was featured in the documentary *Think Peace: Portrait of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Movement* the same year. The documentary explores the concept of peace in the midst of the Iraq war, and draws on the 2003 march to Vancouver as an example of the failed attempt by millions to end violence through peace. In the documentary, Near discussed her role as a cultural worker:

Cultural workers are an interesting breed because we are— let's say in the context of artists, whether we're dancers, instrumentalists, or graphic artists, whatever—we actually influence people's hearts. And I'm very careful about who I let in to my emotions. I don't want to listen to music that's, "I can't live without you baby." I think it's a bad message. It doesn't lead anywhere. I want to listen to love songs that promote a kind of passion that's based around equality.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Clive Barnes, "A Near Miss, Correctly," *New York Post* (October 15, 1993): 26.

<sup>66</sup> Holly Near, interview by Corey Ogilvie, *Think Peace: Portrait of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Movement*, 18:47-19:23.

## Meg Christian

Another important founding mother of the women's music movement was Near's longtime girlfriend, Meg Christian. Born in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1946, Christian gravitated toward music from an early age:

When I was about five I saw a ukulele with four different color strings in a drugstore window and decided I had to have it. I worked my way through twenty plastic ukuleles, breaking them in some way or other. I was an only child, and my mother worked. I had a lot of time alone, and that's how I spent most of it – playing music.<sup>67</sup>

Prior to college, Christian was entirely self-taught on the guitar, picking up informal lessons from babysitters and mimicking artists such as Joan Baez: "I really learned to play the guitar by listening to Joan Baez. I'd sit in front of the record player and try to copy what she was doing."<sup>68</sup> In an interview with Mary Pollock, Christian discussed the musical influences she grew up listening to and imitating:

I used to love soundtracks and show tunes; I used to act out Broadway plays in my living room with my friends. And then I got crazy about folk music. I really feel I blossomed as a musician. I listened to people like the Limelighters and Joan Baez, Buffy Sainte Marie, Carolyn Hester.<sup>69</sup>

Christian's formal education on the guitar began at St. Mary's Junior College in Raleigh, North Carolina. She then transferred to the University of North Carolina, where she double majored in music and English. Christian became the first guitar major in the university's history. She studied classical guitar, folk, and Appalachian music. Although classical music provided her with the formal technique she had been lacking, Christian's proclivity for folk music continued to grow, especially as she continued to study the singer-songwriters of the day. Joni Mitchell, James Taylor, Carole King, and Laura Nyro

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<sup>67</sup> Carol Edelson and Fran Pollner, "Interview with Meg Christian," *Off Our Backs* 3, no. 7 (April 1973): 2.

<sup>68</sup> Edelson and Pollner, "Interview with Meg Christian," 2.

<sup>69</sup> Mary Pollock, "Recovery and Integrity: The Music of Meg Christian," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 19, no. 2 (1987): 30.

were important influences in her early performances.<sup>70</sup> Throughout high school and college Christian performed at parties and other small venues. After graduation, she moved to Washington, D.C. to find a steady gig at a local nightclub. It was the summer of 1969, and Christian struggled to land a job. Without a “man to carry around with...to promote me, give the hard sell...,” it was difficult for her to get a second look from most nightclub owners.<sup>71</sup> In order to get work, Christian crafted a stereotypically feminine persona for her act. She grew her hair long and catered to the expectations of bar owners and drunken corporate audiences. As Christian remembers, “I used to feel like a musical prostitute.”<sup>72</sup>

In the winter of 1969, Christian found the women’s movement. She immediately began reevaluating the image she had created and music she was writing and performing. Instead, her focus shifted to music about women. In the early 1970s she involved herself in radical feminism and performed extensively at women’s music festivals. In 1974, she recorded her debut album, *I Know You Know*, which included both original material and songs by other artists.<sup>73</sup> This album marked the first LP release by Olivia Records, which had previously produced the single “Lady” as covered by Meg Christian, and “If it Weren’t for the Music” by Cris Williamson. The recording of *I Know You Know* was completed in October of 1974, but as an all-women recording company, Olivia struggled to get their final product on vinyl. The women of Olivia explained their plight in an open letter published in the feminist newspaper *Plexus*. They wrote,

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<sup>70</sup> Pollock, “Recovery and Integrity: The Music of Meg Christian,” 30.

<sup>71</sup> Carol Edelson and Fran Pollner, “Interview with Meg Christian,” *Off Our Backs* 3, no. 7 (April 1973): 2.

<sup>72</sup> Edelson and Pollner, “Interview with Meg Christian,” 2.

<sup>73</sup> Martha Mockus, “Music, Women’s,” *Encyclopedia of Lesbian and Gay Histories and Cultures*, ed. George Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman (New York: Garland Science, 2003), 522-23.

We finished our work on the album in October and then turned it over to mastering labs and pressing plants to turn the tape we produced into a disc. We had to reject their work seven times. They refused to take us seriously and insisted on giving us products which were noisy, scratched, and in general detracted from the high quality of the music. We have learned that a small women's record company must replace clout with persistence—that is, until women can control the entire process of making a record.<sup>74</sup>

This record featured one of her best-known songs, “Ode to a Gym Teacher.” Christian’s song about a young girl lusting after her favorite teacher became an instant hit. Other original material on the album included Christian’s “Valentine Song,” “Scars,” “Song to My Mama,” and “Morning Song.” Cris Williamson, another first generation women’s music artist and a personal inspiration for Christian, lent her voice to the album, along with one of her early compositions, “Joanna.” The song had special meaning to Christian, who was influenced by Williamson and her early work in women’s music to start writing her own woman-centric material. As Christian explained,

She was the first woman that I ever heard sing, as I recall, that I ever heard sing a song about another woman except for Laura Nyro, “Emmie”...“Joanna.” It was on her first album that was put out by Ampex, and I took that record home. There were a lot of women artists that I had listened to and really loved a lot...when I heard Cris’ album it was somethin’ different.<sup>75</sup>

It was her work in the women’s music movement that pushed Christian to write her own material. While she had always composed music throughout her adolescence, it wasn’t until Christian was invested in marketing her personal experiences that the need for new material became clear. Continuing her discussion with Pollock, Christian explained,

I didn’t feel a need to write my own songs until I started getting involved in the women’s movement and wanting to use my music to say things about women’s lives, to create a body of music about our life experiences

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<sup>74</sup> Marlene Schmitz, “Product of Persistence,” *Off Our Backs* 5, no. 5 (May-June 1975): 17.

<sup>75</sup> Katherine Davenport, “Interview: Meg Talks,” *Off Our Backs* 11, no. 3 (March 1981): 22.



that we haven't had before. And, of course, when I started looking at the body of popular music in that light, I realized that there was very little popular music that talked about my life experience.<sup>76</sup>

Her next album, *Face the Music*, was released in 1977 and featured eight original songs. This was a significant year for Christian, both personally and professionally. The success of Christian's second album came with the realization of her alcohol addiction, and she began treatment in 1977. In an interview with Katherine Davenport three years later, Christian described her road to recovery:

I realized in a very deep, essential way that I was dying of alcoholism, and that I had to turn my life around. There was something real wrong somewhere; and my recovery process which has gone on for the three years that I've been sober is a daily thing and I have worked with several recovery programs, and the point of them all is that the alcoholic has to change her belief system and her basic way of living and relating to the world in order that she will not go back and take another drink which is the physical start of the road back to death.<sup>77</sup>

Christian was the backbone of the record company she helped to create. As their best-selling artist, Meg Christian sustained Olivia Records. It was a burden Christian did not consciously recognize, but fueled her drinking habit and unhappiness. Reflecting on Christian's decision to break from touring, Olivia's President Judy Dlugacz remembered,

Not only did Meg devote herself to Olivia night and day...but she was really the person we depended on to bring home the money for the first three or four years, if not for all the years she was here. Meg was in the position of having been very responsible for the well-being of Olivia, which was a lot of responsibility on an ongoing basis. Also, she had been out on the road for 15 years, and that can get very weary. For Meg, it was a very positive decision – she wanted to make some changes in her life, which included not being on the road in that way anymore.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Mary Pollock, "Recovery and Integrity: The Music of Meg Christian," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 19, no. 2 (1987): 30.

<sup>77</sup> Katherine Davenport, "Interview: Meg Talks," *Off Our Backs* 11, no. 3 (March 1981): 19.

<sup>78</sup> Toni Armstrong, Jr. and Harper Jorjet, "Meg Departs," *Hotwire: The Journal for Women's Music and Culture* 5, no. 1 (January 1989): 21.

While in treatment, Christian decided to explore her spirituality and began studying Siddha Yoga. She studied meditation techniques with Gurumayi Chidvilasananda, which caused her to re-evaluate her work in the women's music movement. In 1984, Christian told Jorjet Harper,

Gurumayi Chidvilasananda is one of two heads of this lineage of meditation teachers who teach Syda Yoga, a very simple technique of meditation which I've found to be incredibly powerful. It's very exciting to me that one of the heads of this whole path is this amazing woman... You know when you're around someone who's in a good mood, and their good state rubs off on you, and you sort of absorb their vibes? Well, if you take that idea and magnify it a few thousand times, that's what it's like to be around someone who is in a state of absolute harmony all the time.<sup>79</sup>

Through the guidance of meditation and her Guru Chidvilasananda, Christian made the difficult decision to take a sabbatical from her music career and devote her life to spirituality. After traveling to ashrams throughout the world, Christian settled in a religious community in upstate New York. She also adopted the first name Shambhavi, a name under which she would record multiple albums in subsequent years. Her devotion to Siddha Yoga led her to Indian music and instruments, resulting in the albums *Fire of My Love* (1986) and *Songs of Ecstasy* (1995). The collections include both traditional religious songs and compositions by Christian.<sup>80</sup>

In 2002, Christian briefly resurfaced to lend her musical talent to a reunion tour with Cris Williamson aboard Olivia Cruise Lines. The two were well received by adoring fans who had long-awaited another tour from the dynamic duo. Although her career was much shorter than many of her colleagues in the women's music movement, Christian

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<sup>79</sup> Armstrong and Jorjet, "Meg Departs," 21.

<sup>80</sup> Linda Rapp, "Christian, Meg," accessed August 27, 2016, [http://www.glbtqarchive.com/arts/christian\\_m\\_A.pdf](http://www.glbtqarchive.com/arts/christian_m_A.pdf).

has an extensive discography, which includes ten original albums, four more as Shambhavi Christian, and twelve albums in collaboration with other women's music artists.

### **Cris Williamson**

Although Christian was coming off an indefinite hiatus from professional music when she agreed to reunite with Cris Williamson in 2002, Williamson had been working steadily since the 1960s. Her career has spanned nearly forty years, thirty albums, and countless tours. In "Song of the Soul," one of the songs off of her iconic album, *The Changer and the Changed*, Williamson sings about finding happiness through honesty and openness. Set to the tune of Clara H. Scott's hymn "Open My Eyes, That I May See," Williamson did not realize the revolutionary statement she was making when she sang, "Come to your life like a warrior/Nothing will bore yer, you can be happy."

At the time to tell lesbians that they could be happy was revolutionary. I didn't know it. I just thought it's a simple thing. You can be happy or unhappy. It's not about who you love, it's about our nature. It's about your soul. This is a song of the soul, and that was the song of my soul at the time. It just came pouring out of me in the most beautiful way.<sup>81</sup>

Born in Deadwood, South Dakota in 1947, Williamson was the daughter of a forest ranger who moved the family to Colorado and Wyoming during her childhood. Her father's career and their humble circumstances (she grew up without electricity) were an early influence on Williamson's songwriting, which often reflected her concern for environmental issues. In an interview with *Off Our Backs* magazine, Williamson reflected on her upbringing:

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<sup>81</sup> Cris Williamson, "Raise Your Voice!" accessed December 20, 2016, <https://sites.google.com/a/knox.edu/raise-your-voice-in-song/transcripts/cris-williamson>.

My political consciousness began developing at a young age. We lived deep in the Rockies, a very spartan life. I was enriched by my childhood and I want to give some of that back through my music.<sup>82</sup>

While living in Sheridan, Wyoming, Williamson began performing on a local radio station. She caught the attention of several listeners, and together they raised \$300 to found Avanti Records, the label on which she would cut her first three albums.<sup>83</sup>

Although Williamson is best known for her record-breaking album *The Changer and the Changed*, she started off as many of the women's music artists did. A singer-songwriter of the 1960s, Williamson gravitated toward the hippie culture and sang in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. Judy Collins and the folk music scene of the 1960s influenced Williamson's style. Her first album, *The Artistry of Cris Williamson*, released in 1964 when she was sixteen, is a reflection of those musical inspirations. The album is in large part a cover album of folk tunes:

**Side A**

Lily of the West  
White Dove  
Hangman  
Suliram  
Rider  
Oh Waly Waly

**Side B**

Manha De Carnival  
All My Trials  
500 Miles  
West Wind  
The House of the Rising Sun  
Delia's Gone  
What Have They Done to the Rain?<sup>84</sup>

"White Dove" and "West Wind" were Williamson's first compositions, and the only two original songs on her first three albums.<sup>85</sup>

Her next two albums, *A Step in Time* and *The World Around Cris Williamson* were released in 1965 and 1966, but she soon put music to the side in order to focus on

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<sup>82</sup> Terri Dark, "Interview with Cris Williamson," *Off Our Backs* 10, no. 5 (May 1980): 15.

<sup>83</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Cris Williamson," AllMusic, accessed July 31, 2016, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/cris-williamson-mn0000133456/biography>.

<sup>84</sup> Cris Williamson, *The Artistry of Cris Williamson*, Avanti AVL-14001, LP, 1964.

<sup>85</sup> Cris Williamson, interview with JD Doyle, *Queer Music Heritage*, KPFT, January 2011, <http://www.queermusicheritage.com/jan2011.html>.

her education. After graduating from the University of Denver, Williamson took a job as an English teacher at a local high school. She recorded her fourth album, *Cris Williamson*, on Ampex Records in 1971, which was her best-selling record to date, with a reported 11,000 copies sold.<sup>86</sup> By the mid-1970s, Williamson had quit her teaching job to devote herself to a full time performance career. Initially, Williamson was not aware of the women's music movement forming concurrently with her career. While playing a concert in Washington, D.C., she began singing one of her original songs, "Joanna." The audience immediately recognized the tune and exploded in applause. Startled, Williamson forgot the lines of her song, and from the audience came a voice, singing the lyrics back to her. Meg Christian introduced herself to Williamson after the show, and the two began discussing women's music. As Williamson recalls,

Meg Christian had an idea that if women did something, got together and did anything something would change. We didn't know what. This was way back, I mean, she basically went around to every woman artist, Bonnie Raitt, and she came to me, after a show. Asked me what I thought of women's music. And I said, "What are you talking about? What do *you* mean by that?" I said, "Do you mean women singing music?" She goes, "Yes, but I think more."<sup>87</sup>

After her conversation with Christian, Williamson and a few other women got together to discuss what women's music was, what it could be, and what needed to be done in order to create this network of musicians. Christian casually suggested the need for an all-female record label. Olivia Records was founded the next day. Although she ultimately did not participate in the label's founding, Williamson became one of its best-selling artists. In 1975, when *The Changer and the Changed* was released, it sold over 100,000 copies. That number eventually soared to 500,000, making it one of the

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<sup>86</sup> William Ruhlmann, "Cris Williamson," AllMusic, accessed July 31, 2016, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/cris-williamson-mn0000133456/biography>.

<sup>87</sup> Helen Hooke, interview by Mosbacher, *Radical Harmonies*, 23:32-24:04.

bestselling independent records of all time.<sup>88</sup> Based on its success, Williamson embarked on a concert tour entitled, “Women on Wheels.” Fellow artists Margie Adam, Meg Christian, and Holly Near joined her. They performed eight concerts on their seven-city tour of California to a crowd of over ten thousand, culminating in a performance at the women’s prison in San Bernardino County.<sup>89</sup> Their performances received critical acclaim, even from the most unlikely sources. A review by John Wasserman for the *San Francisco Chronicle* praised the production in Oakland, raving, “‘An Evening of Women’s Music’ was no less than a first-class show.”<sup>90</sup> The tour also led to a thirty-minute television special on KCET in Los Angeles. “Come Out Singing” was the first television program about women’s music. Produced by Lynne Littman, the production was nominated for a local Emmy.<sup>91</sup>

Throughout Williamson’s career in women’s music she was often criticized for her unwillingness to toe the party line. As with instrumental artists Gardner and Margie Adam, Williamson did not always write overtly feminist music. As she explained in an article in *The Mercury News*,

It seemed so funny—feminists were affirming the personal is political. I remember one woman saying, “Waterfall? What does water have to do with feminism?” I’ve been an environmentalist from the beginning. My dad was in the Forest Service, and we knew about being stewards of the land. Who cares what your politics are if we don’t have water to drink?<sup>92</sup>

Like Holly Near, Williamson’s political interests were not limited to women’s liberation and the feminist agenda. Williamson grew up near native land and began advocating for

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<sup>88</sup> Barbara J. Love, “Williamson, Cris,” *Feminists Who Changed America: 1963-1975* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 494-95.

<sup>89</sup> N.A., “Concert Tour Draws 10,000,” *Lesbian Tide* (March/April 1976), n.p.

<sup>90</sup> John L. Wasserman, “A Unique Musical Event,” *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 18, 1976): 40.

<sup>91</sup> “August Women’s Trivia,” *No Name (Yet): Women’s Information Network* 1, no. 3 (September 1984): 2. [http://glbthistorymuseum.com/joomla25/images/PDF/LCN%2084%20September%201.3\\_OCR.pdf](http://glbthistorymuseum.com/joomla25/images/PDF/LCN%2084%20September%201.3_OCR.pdf)

<sup>92</sup> Andrew Gilbert, “Feminist icon Cris Williamson celebrates anniversary of landmark album,” *The Mercury News* (January 2, 2015), n.p.

Native Americans. She performed with musician/activists Jackson Brown, Bonnie Raitt, and Joan Baez. Williamson also joined Native American poet John Trudell on the “Water for Life” tour.<sup>93</sup>

The women’s music movement was a community of individuals working toward a common goal. Many of the singers doubled as studio musicians, producers, stage managers, and distributors. With such a close-knit group of musicians, it is no surprise that collaboration was a significant component of this movement. Beginning with *Strange Paradise*, Williamson released seven consecutive albums featuring Bonnie Raitt, June Millington, Meg Christian, Holly Near, and Teresa Trull. Her most productive partnership was also her strongest personal one. She met Tret Fure in 1978, when Fure engineered Williamson’s children’s album, *Lumiere*, and the two quickly became an item. Fure continued to produce Williamson’s albums, and in 1993 they released their first duet album, *Postcards From Paradise*. The couple performed on two additional records, *Between The Covers* (1993) and *Radio Quiet* (1998), before ending their twenty-year relationship in 2000.<sup>94</sup>

Williamson, like other musicians, took on additional roles in the movement as she developed as an artist. An educator at heart, Williamson began teaching classes on songwriting at women’s festivals. Barbara Schuyler Tucker, a contributor for *Paid My Dues* magazine, attended one of Williamson’s workshops in 1974. The festival was Womansphere: A Festival of the Arts, and Williamson paired with Margie Adam for the session. Tucker summarized the workshop as a “flowing four-hour combination of

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<sup>93</sup> Gilbert, *The Mercury News*, n.p.

<sup>94</sup> Cris Williamson, “Music,” accessed July 7, 2017, <https://criswilliamson.com/index.php/music>.

practicality, poetry and song.”<sup>95</sup> On her website, Williamson explains why she started teaching songwriting:

I saw that many people who genuinely love music, do not believe this is anything they could do personally. The same holds true of singing or playing an instrument or many other forms of artistic expression. I want to remind you again that art is a “made thing,” and as such, can be accomplished.<sup>96</sup>

Williamson has continued teaching workshops on songwriting; she offers a three-day songwriting weekend on the Washington Coast, held at the Tokeland Hotel. Her discography includes twenty-eight albums, with the most recent, *Motherland*, released in 2017.<sup>97</sup> Her collaborations with artists Meg Christian, Teresa Trull and Holly Near are memorable contributions to the music movement and speak to the powerful connection these women created while inspiring a generation of women around them.

### **Margie Adam**

One of the women Cris Williamson performed with during the “Women on Wheels” tour was Margie Adam. Born in Lompoc, CA in 1947, Adam shared a similar upbringing to her counterparts Holly Near and Alix Dobkin. Adam grew up in a household that was rich in political and cultural education. Adam’s father worked as a newspaper publisher and songwriter, and her mother was a piano teacher and church organist. Adam began studying piano as soon as she could climb onto the bench, but her performance career did not come to fruition until the early 1970s. In 1971, Adam graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in English Literature.

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<sup>95</sup> Barbara Schuyler Tucker, “Womansphere,” *Paid My Dues: A Journal of Women and Music* 1, no. 4 (March 1975): 34.

<sup>96</sup> Cris Williamson, “Teaching,” accessed December 14, 2016, [http://criswilliamson.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&layout=edit&id=130](http://criswilliamson.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&layout=edit&id=130).

<sup>97</sup> This was the most recent album released by Williamson as of publication of this dissertation in June 2019.



After a short career as an English teacher, Adam decided to take a brief sabbatical in order to pursue her first passion, music. In 1973, she made her debut as a solo artist when she performed at a women-only music festival organized by the author, lecturer, and activist Kate Millett. Millett was a member of NYC NOW, and had published her bestselling book, *Sexual Politics*, just three years before earlier. When it was announced that a National Women's Music Festival would be held on the campus of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, Adam became one of the featured artists, along with Cris Williamson and Meg Christian.<sup>98</sup> In 1975, Adam teamed up with Barbara "Boo" Price to found Pleiades Records. In explanation of the label's distinctive name, Adam remarked, "the Pleiades are a constellation in the sky otherwise known as the seven sisters and I think that explains itself. Plus it's a beautiful name."<sup>99</sup> Price, a graduate of the University of California, Davis law school, was already making a name for herself in lesbian circles. In 1973, Price created a lesbian caucus on the UC campus. She became an expert witness and national speaker for lesbian custody cases. In 1974, Price produced her first concert of women's music in Davis, CA, with Cris Williamson, Margie Adam, and Vicki Randle. Adam produced her first four albums with Price on the Pleiades label.

Her debut album, *Margie Adam. Songwriter*, was released in 1976. Considered one of the "classic recordings in Women's Music," the album represented her whimsical style through songs like "Best Friend (The Unicorn Song)," but also revealed her incredible gift as a pianist.<sup>100</sup>

## Side A

## Side B

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<sup>98</sup> Barbara J. Love, "Adam, Margie," *Feminists Who Changed America: 1963-1975* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 2006), 5.

<sup>99</sup> Donna Glickman, "Interview with Margaret Adam," *Paid My Dues* 1, no.6 (1976): 34.

<sup>100</sup> "Discography, Margie Adam. Songwriter," accessed August 23, 2016, <http://www.margieadam.com/dscgrphy/songwriter.htm>.

Best Friend (The Unicorn Song)  
Images  
Lost in Inner Space  
Rag Bag  
Sweet Friend of Mine

Beautiful Soul  
I've Got a Fury  
After the Drought  
Sleazy  
Would You Like to Tapdance  
on the Moon?<sup>101</sup>

“Best Friend—The Unicorn Song” became one of Adam’s signature songs, and achieved commercial success in 1978 when Peter, Paul and Mary covered the piece on their album *Reunion*. The piano solo “Rag Bag” maintains the same light-hearted character as “Best Friend (The Unicorn Song),” while Adam’s other instrumental piece, “After the Drought,” shows her diversity as a pianist through seventh-chord progressions and syncopated rhythms. To promote the record, Adam performed a fifty-city tour, which culminated at the National Women’s Conference in Houston. There, Adam performed “We Shall Go Forth!,” a song that would eventually be released on her third album, to a crowd of ten thousand women singing in three-part harmony.<sup>102</sup> “We Shall Go Forth!” which became an anthem for the conference, speaks to the triumphs of the decade, as well as the progress that was yet to be made. Gaining momentum from this occasion, Adam continued to use her music as activism. From 1978 to 1980, she performed a number of benefit concerts for the Equal Rights Amendment.<sup>103</sup>

After the success of her first record, Adam continued to tour and release albums over the next eight years. She followed *Margie Adam. Songwriter* with *Naked Keys* in 1980, and *We Shall Go Forth!* in 1982. When her fourth album, *Here Is A Love Song*, was released in 1983, Adam decided to take a break from songwriting. Coupled with a

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<sup>101</sup> Margie Adam, *Margie Adam. Songwriter*, Pleiades Records HB2747, LP, 1976.

<sup>102</sup> “We Shall Go Forth!” now resides in the archives of the Political History Division of the Smithsonian Museum.

<sup>103</sup> Clara Kern, “An Interview with Margie Adam,” *American Women Making History and Culture: 1963-1982*, accessed September 13, 2016, [https://archive.org/details/pacifica\\_radio\\_archives-TZ0021](https://archive.org/details/pacifica_radio_archives-TZ0021).

lack of material and her absolute exhaustion from being on the road and in the studio for nearly a decade, Adam walked away from the spotlight. In an interview with Toni Armstrong Jr., the editor of *Hotwire Magazine*, Adam explained the reasons behind her eight-year absence from the women's music scene:

With the release of *Here Is A Love Song* in 1983, I had recorded practically all my existing body of work. That was one part. Also, I was either on the road or in the studio from 1980 through 1984. I remember coming home after the fall tour in 1983 realizing I was done. It wasn't that I felt burned out – I was just done. All the music I had was on vinyl, and I felt complete about it. But Love Song needed to have another tour to support it, so I went out in the spring of '84.<sup>104</sup>

As her tour was coming to a close, Adam felt as though her performances were more and more mechanical. She could no longer make the distinction between her everyday demeanor and the stage persona that drove her concerts and gave her the fuel to perform night after night. Adam also realized that the force of the women's music movement, which had influenced her career up to that point, was starting to disintegrate. By the mid-1980s, the movement no longer commanded the same reaction from the women's communities that had been a powerful source of organization and branding in the 1970s. Other musicians also began to notice this change, and as Adam described,

I never would have been a performer if not for that audience's intense reactions to me and my music...As women began to step away from "women's music" as a term and as an artistic and political principle, the possibility for radical change with our music was proportionately lessened. The power of this woman-loving organizing tool began to dissipate. I don't think it was possible to maintain a powerful force like women's music while denying that the term itself had any meaning.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Toni Armstrong Jr., "Welcome Back: Margie Adam," *Hotwire: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 8, no. 1 (January 1992): 2. *Hotwire: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture* was an important publication for the women's music movement. The magazine ran for thirty issues from the fall of 1984 until the fall of 1994. Toni Armstrong, Jr. was a long-time editor/publisher/photographer/writer for the magazine. She continues to archive the women's music movement, which includes a website dedicated to the entire *Hotwire* collection.

<sup>105</sup> Armstrong Jr., "Welcome Back: Margie Adam," 2.

Adam realized the tremendous sacrifice she had been making as a women's music artist. Performing, for her, had always been about connection; the connection she made with audiences, and the connection she often saw audience members make with each other was significant to organizing radical change within the women's liberation movement. Adam explained,

As an organizer, you know, way beyond being a conscious woman's artist, as an organizer, I'm interested that this energy, and this hopefulness, go beyond an hour and a half where we all sit together, so that we can get stuff done...you know, try to make the kind of connections and coalitions that we need to be making right now to make a difference, to get going.<sup>106</sup>

As artists began to move away from the label "women's music," and the movements of the previous decades were dwindling, Adam began to reevaluate her career. Although she told friends that she would only take a year to recuperate before getting back in the studio, Adam spent eight years away from women's music. During her hiatus, Adam began working with women in recovery for alcoholism and drug addiction. Realizing a passion for her work, she received her certification in chemical dependency studies and began working as the Information Center Coordinator with the National Council on Alcoholism in San Francisco.<sup>107</sup>

In 1989, Adam returned to her former piano teacher, Dolores Borgir, and began taking lessons. In 1990, the devastation of Adam's break-up with her long-time girlfriend ended a seven-year writer's block. She composed "Time and Time Again" as a reflection on that relationship and the heartbreak of losing her love. Although this piece did not end up on her next album, it did spark a desire to write again. In October of 1990, Adam rented a cabin along the Russian River in Northern California and spent the month

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<sup>106</sup> Kern, "An Interview with Margie Adam."

<sup>107</sup> See Toni Armstrong Jr., "Welcome Back: Margie Adam," *Hotwire: The Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 8, no. 1 (January 1992): 2-3.

writing. The result was her fifth record, *Another Place*, which was released in 1992. Adam continued to write and record until 2007, when her personal life's work as a counselor became her career. She enrolled in a PhD program through the University of Integrative Learning, earning her doctorate in 2010. Adam owns a private practice for integrative counseling, specializing in alcohol and chemical dependency, codependency, and women in transition.<sup>108</sup> She has continued to speak at women's conferences and workshops, including giving the keynote at the 40<sup>th</sup> National Women's Music Festival in 2015.

While women's music was comprised of no single genre, many of the artists were products of the folk revival and singer-songwriters of the 1960s. However, Adam was a classically trained pianist. Her albums often featured several solo piano compositions, and the records *Naked Keys* (1980), *Soon and Again* (1995), and *Portal* (2005) are entirely instrumental. Adam's classical education was reflected in her style and technique. She did not write classical music, as women's music artist Kay Gardner did. However, many of her compositions feature intricate counterpoint and complex harmonic progressions that demonstrate her formal training.

### **Women's Music – Record Labels**

As their stories suggest, most women's music artists were double or triple-booked as producers, record label owners, journal editors, sound engineers, and more. The dominant record labels of women's music were Alix Dobkin's Women's Wax Works, Holly Near's Redwood Records, Margie Adam's label, Pleiades Records, and Olivia

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<sup>108</sup> Margie Adam, "Journal: Margie's Latest Endeavor," (May 1, 2015), accessed July 7, 2017, <http://www.margieadam.com/2015/05/01/margies-latest-endeavor/>.

Records, the powerhouse founded by Meg Christian and Judy Dlugacz. Olivia's achievements were widely recognized amongst women's music artists and fans; however, the reputations of its artists were not limited to the niche market. In 1983, *The New York Times* published an article praising Olivia's success. Stephen Holden boasted,

One of the record industry's most solid success stories of the last decade has been the flourishing of Olivia Records, the small independent label based in Oakland, California. Last year, Olivia, which is owned and operated entirely by women for women artists, celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary at Carnegie Hall...Olivia is the largest and most successful among the several small record companies that make and market what has been labeled "women's music," a highly romantic extension of the confessional singer-songwriter genre whose pioneers included Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Joni Mitchell and Laura Nyro.<sup>109</sup>

In 1971, the separatist collective known as The Furies began publishing a newspaper of the same name. Its monthly issues articulated the need for women-identified arts, religions, communities, and economic institutions. In their May 1973 issue, members Helaine Harris and Lee Schwing published "Building Feminist Institutions," advocating for feminist entrepreneurship, which they believed would ultimately lead to structural economic and social changes. Together with Furies members Ginny Berson and Jennifer Woodul, Meg Christian and several members of the Radical Lesbians of Ann Arbor founded Olivia Records in January of 1973.<sup>110</sup> None were trained engineers or record producers, and except for Christian, Olivia's nine founders had little experience with music, let alone the music industry. Co-Founder and President Judy Dlugacz remembers its humble beginnings: "Olivia originated as a feminist collective in

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<sup>109</sup> Stephen Holden, "Pop/Jazz: Olivia Records is a Success in 'Women's Music,'" *The New York Times* (November 4, 1983): 1.

<sup>110</sup> Marc Stein, "Olivia Records," *Encyclopedia of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender History in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons/Tomson/Gale, 2004), <http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3403600372/olivia-records.html>.

Washington. We started with virtually no experience and only \$4,000 in donations. We had to learn on the job how to make records.”<sup>111</sup>

That \$4,000 was used to produce their first single. The record featured Meg Christian’s rendition of the Carole King and Gerry Goffin hit, “Lady,” and Cris Williamson’s “If it Weren’t for the Music.” The initial plan was to send copies of the disc to wealthy women in the industry, requesting donations. According to Judy Duglacz, “These women would of course think the idea of an all-woman recording industry was great, and we’d get scads of money to finance it. Well, needless to say, we got \$50 from Meg’s uncle and a few other contributions of that ilk.”<sup>112</sup> Eventually they raised nearly \$12,000, which was immediately poured into their first album, Christian’s *I Know You Know*. Within five years of its creation, Olivia Records moved from its tiny headquarters in Washington to a Victorian house in Oakland, California. Their staff nearly doubled to fifteen employees, and the label produced two to three albums per year.

In addition to the Oakland staff, there were over one hundred women who distributed the records nationally. Olivia found distributors through a grassroots method: Meg Christian and Ginny Berson would travel to a town to play a gig for a small audience of women’s music enthusiasts. Berson would step onto the stage at the end of Christian’s performance and give the audience information about Olivia Records, requesting distributors at the end of the speech. The woman who raised her hand first became their distributor for that town.<sup>113</sup> Olivia’s all-female staff quickly learned the process of engineering and producing an album. Relegated to jobs as receptionists and clerks at major labels, the employees of Olivia often found themselves unaware of the

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<sup>111</sup> Holden, “Pop/Jazz: Olivia Records is a Success in ‘Women’s Music,’” 1.

<sup>112</sup> Michele Kort, “Sisterhood is Profitable,” *Mother Jones* 8 (July 1983): 39.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

demands of their new industry. Ginny Berson recalls, “We made everything up. We had no idea how to figure out what things should cost, what people should be paid, how to make money.”<sup>114</sup> Although most staff members were new to the music business, one of the few exceptions was Liza Williams.

Williams was a seasoned professional in the music industry by the time she joined the Olivia team. Starting as a freelance writer for the L.A. Free Press, Williams eventually landed a job as a publicist for Capitol Records. Her job largely involved writing press kits for their artists. Speaking with Evan Hosie about the experience, Williams recalls, “I didn’t know what they were, so I just wrote any old damn thing. I didn’t know anything about corporate strategy. I was naïve, I thought it was wonderful – paper clips, watts lines, carbon paper – big stuff!”<sup>115</sup> Williams continued to climb the corporate ladder, but was never truly accepted into the record industry’s boys club. In 1968, she was informed by one of her colleagues at Capitol that they did not “approve of women executives.”<sup>116</sup> Soon after, Williams left to take a job at Island Records, and in 1973 she became the president of the company. Although her success was extremely uncommon for women in any industry in the 1960s and 1970s, Williams’ reasons for leaving the company were not:

I quit partially because of problems of being an older woman working in a very sexist, youth oriented business. People didn’t take me seriously and it was frustrating. There was so much hostility and resentment... For instance, I couldn’t go in and say, “Listen, why the hell didn’t you ship out... blah, blah.” I’d have to go in and say, “How’s the wife? The kids? Do you think you could ship out, please...” because that’s the only way they could relate to a woman. It wasn’t worth it for me so I quit and ran off to Mexico for a while.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Evan Hosie, “Women On Record,” *The Market Place* (1978): 43-44.

<sup>116</sup> Hosie, “Women On Record,” 44.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.



Having seen the other side of the music industry, Williams found comfort in Olivia's communal style and treatment of its artists. Besides the obvious difference between Olivia Records and mainstream record labels, Olivia stood apart through its business practices. Artists were given complete freedom over their albums, which translated into more creative endeavors. There was also no hierarchy in the production process. Everyone had equal say, so everyone felt equally invested in producing quality work and getting it marketed and distributed to the public. There was no standard contract; rather, each album was agreed upon through terms arranged between the artist and Olivia on a case-by-case basis.<sup>118</sup>

Despite their unorthodox approach, Olivia continued to grow steadily throughout the '70s and into the mid-1980s. Within four years of their founding, the company had produced eight albums and sold over 150,000 records. Among their best sellers was Meg Christian's *I Know You Know*, Cris Williamson's *The Changer and the Changed*, and the anthology of selections by various Olivia artists, *Lesbian Concentrate*.<sup>119</sup> The album, produced in 1977, was a rush-release in reaction to Anita Bryant's Save the Children campaign. Bryant, a former Oklahoma beauty queen turned orange juice spokeswoman, resurfaced in the mid-1970s as a right-wing activist with a strong anti-homosexual agenda. Ostensibly concerned for the well being of America's children, she wanted to ensure that homosexuals were not allowed to teach in public schools. In January of 1977, the Commission of Dade County, Florida passed Ordinance 77-4, prohibiting the unequal treatment of homosexuals in housing, employment, credit, finance, and public

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>119</sup> Williamson's *The Changer and the Changed* would remain Olivia Records' best-selling album, and is considered the best-selling album in women's music history.

accommodations. Bryant, a born-again Christian, was alarmed by the decision and began a crusade to repeal the ordinance.<sup>120</sup> The thirteen tracks of *Lesbian Concentrate* became a rallying cry for lesbians everywhere to come together against Bryant and voice their opposition to her oppressive ideology. The liner notes of the album embodied the humor, and horror, of what was happening:

Along with many of you (we suspect), we were amused when a part-time orange juice pusher began to rant against homosexuals. Later we were horrified at the intensity of the attack and the support it generated. We now have to match that force— flip-flop it back onto itself. We think the proper response is to recognize our bonds and support each other as strongly as we can. This is more than just time to come out. We think it's time for energetic affirmation of lesbian identity and culture.<sup>121</sup>

Ultimately, the ordinance was repealed, but the efforts of Olivia Records did not go unheard.<sup>122</sup>

Record companies such as Olivia promoted social responsibility in their artists. As with the women's music movement as a whole, Olivia did not choose based on performance genre, but rather on strong musicianship and the desire to create social change. Describing their philosophy to Leslie Goldberg, Linda Tillery explained,

We won't record music which is offensive because it is sexist, racist, classist or ageist. We want our lyrics to be woman identified. We're not interested in music that says nothing except, "I love you baby." We're into putting out music by women that has something to say to other women.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Mireya Navarro, "2 Decades – On, Miami Endorses Gay Rights," *The New York Times* (December 2, 1998), <https://www.nytimes.com/1998/12/02/us/2-decades-on-miami-endorses-gay-rights.html>.

<sup>121</sup> *Lesbian Concentrate: A Lesbian Anthology of Songs and Poems*, liner notes, Olivia Records LF915, 1977, LP.

<sup>122</sup> Ordinance 77-4 was repealed in June of 1977. In December of 1998, it was reinstated by a 7-6 vote. Although a conservative Christian organization attempted to repeal the ordinance in 2002, it remains in force.

<sup>123</sup> Leslie Goldberg, "Sappho Loved the Touch We Love So Much," *Berkeley Barb* 26, no. 22 (December 1977): 24.

Tillery, a singer and percussionist who became a staff musician and producer at Olivia, had similar experiences to Williams when attempting to work in the mainstream industry.

As Tillery lamented,

I was tired of dealing with the big record company crunch. I get a lot of personal satisfaction working with Olivia. I'm never hampered artistically, plus I am getting to experience working with other women in a supportive environment. I might never have made another record if it hadn't been for their support.<sup>124</sup>

With the success of Olivia, more women's music labels began popping up from coast to coast. Holly Near founded Redwood Records in 1973. She initially created the small label to support the production of her first album, *Hang In There*. By 1977, Near's career was expanding, along with Redwood. Near initially designed her label with feminist intent, allowing employees equal say in company decisions. As of 1984, this method was abandoned for a more traditional hierarchy, in which Near and two other top-level employees were given control of the decisions while still welcoming staff input. In 1982, record sales soared to an unprecedented 75,000 albums, producing the necessary revenue for Near to move the label into a two-family home in Oakland, California. Each side was broken into office space, with one half converted into a warehouse filled with Redwood products and paperwork.<sup>125</sup> Near's artistic relevance outside of women's music was key to the label's success. She also had no problem accepting male artists, a deal breaker for most women's music labels. In 1993, Near released *Musical Highlights*, her final album on Redwood Records. Less than four years after closing the doors to Redwood, Near teamed up with activist and attorney Jim Musselman to found Appleseed

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<sup>124</sup> Goldberg, "Sappho Loved the Touch We Love So Much," 24.

<sup>125</sup> Cynthia Marion Lont, "Between Rock and a Hard Place: A Model of Subcultural Persistence and Women's Music" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1984), 136-140.

Recordings. The label has produced more than one hundred albums to date, including a number of tracks recorded by Bruce Springsteen.<sup>126</sup>

Additionally, smaller labels were created for individual artists, such as Margie Adam's Pleiades Records and Kay Gardner's Urana, both founded in 1975. Pleiades, founded by Adam and lawyer/activist Barbara "Boo" Price, records and distributes music by Adam exclusively. In addition to her own music, Gardner's label recorded works by Willie Tyson, Casse Culver, and Alive! Ladyslipper, named after a wild orchid native to North America, became one of the first distribution companies for the movement.

Ladyslipper began as a four-page resource guide devoted to publishing the musical accomplishments of women artists. In their own words,

Ladyslipper is a North Carolina non-profit, tax-exempt organization which has been involved in many facets of women's music since 1976. Our basic purpose has consistently been to heighten public awareness of the achievements of women artists and musicians, and to expand the scope and availability of musical and literary recordings by women.<sup>127</sup>

Initially, their hope was to create a comprehensive guide of women on record. Expecting thousands to be discovered, founder Laurie Fuchs and others were shocked when they discovered virtually none at all. What began as a resource service in 1976 quickly blossomed into an independent record label. Musicians such as Kay Gardner, Lisa Theil, Ruth Barrett, Casselberry-DuPree, Ubaka Hill, and other innovative artists were distributed through the Ladyslipper label. Although the label no longer produces

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<sup>126</sup> Lori Frazer, "About Appleseed Recordings," accessed July 13, 2017, <http://www.appleseedmusic.com/about/index.html>.

<sup>127</sup> "About Ladyslipper," accessed December 27, 2016, [https://ladyslipper.org/rel/v2\\_home.php?storenr=53&deptnr=277](https://ladyslipper.org/rel/v2_home.php?storenr=53&deptnr=277).

new works, Ladyslipper continues as an online and catalogue resource for women's music albums.<sup>128</sup>

### **Women's Music – Publications**

One of the greatest challenges with any movement at this time was disseminating information to a wide audience. As more musicians, festivals, record labels, and distribution companies began to surface, it was necessary to find adequate space for advertisements to get the word out about their collective cause. Several women's magazines and newsletters were created for the purpose of distributing festival details, song lyrics, and advertisements for upcoming gigs. Record labels relied on these magazines to list their albums and contact information for women to order the latest releases.

The first issue of *Musica* was published in March of 1974. The three-page newsletter gave details on current women's record companies, new releases, upcoming concerts and events, and a brief music "herstory" that consisted of a paragraph on the topic of prominent all-women bands in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>129</sup> By the time the fifth issue was published in 1976, the magazine had expanded to thirteen pages, and covered everything from the First National Women's Music Festival in Champaign, Illinois to advertisements for the "New Women's Survival Catalog and Sourcebook," a catalog for feminist alternative projects, institutions, and resources.<sup>130</sup> *Musica* also advertised other women's music magazines. When *Paid My Dues*, a magazine for women's music

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<sup>128</sup> "About Ladyslipper," [https://ladyslipper.org/rel/v2\\_home.php?storenr=53&deptnr=277](https://ladyslipper.org/rel/v2_home.php?storenr=53&deptnr=277).

<sup>129</sup> Indy Allen, *Musica* 1 (March 1974): 1-3, accessed October 29, 2016, <http://queermusicheritage.com/musica.html>.

<sup>130</sup> Indy Allen, *Musica* 5 (Spring 1976): 1-5, accessed October 29, 2016, <http://queermusicheritage.com/musica5.html>.

information, reviews, and interviews, published its second issue in the summer of 1974, the editors of *Musica* included details about the issue and how to order a copy.

Although no more than six pages long, the third issue of *Musica* is representative of a typical issue. It opens with information on a new women's music songbook that was in the works; the brief paragraph is also a request for any materials that readers may have to contribute. At the bottom of the first page are details about the new feminist radio show in D.C., Sophie's Parlor, which aired on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. Page two discusses a new women's record label and a bookstore that carries women's records, both based out of the D.C. area. A brief synopsis of the First National Women's Music Festival lists the artists who performed, as well as the workshops in which attendees were able to participate. These workshops included subjects on audio equipment, "womangers," setting up a women's record company, women and marketplace culture, songwriting, and arranging.<sup>131</sup> Towards the bottom of page five, a "musician's wanted ad" reads, "Naomi Wiesstein plays keyboards, writes lyrics, will not play male rock, might play 1 or 2 Top 40's under extreme pressure— if not offensive— looking for a group that is into developing feminist rock culture."<sup>132</sup>

One of the best examples of the communal spirit of the women's music movement is found on pages three and four. The magazine provides a schedule of Casse Culver's U.S. tour, listing tentative dates set from July to September of that year. On the next page there is a request from Culver, asking for assistance in booking shows throughout the tour:

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<sup>131</sup> Indy Allen, *Musica* 3 (July 1974): 1-6, accessed November 1, 2016, <http://queermusicheritage.com/musica3.html>.

<sup>132</sup> Allen, *Musica* 3, 5. Weisstein's name was misprinted in the original ad.

I will be travelling with my “womanger” Spotswood in our self-made camper and will be fully equipped for any situation, small or large. If you have any type of space (from living room to concert halls) and can get together a group of friends, I would welcome playing for you. I am also interested in meeting and playing with other musicians. My only source of income this summer will be from the gigs I do— so the only thing I ask is that a collection be taken up to help pay expenses. In the case of a concert at which 50 or more are expected, if it can be arranged, a donation of a suggested amount (\$2 is usually agreeable to all) would be good. If your center or a feminist project in your city needs financial support we would like to return 20% of the proceeds.<sup>133</sup>

Culver finishes by listing contact information, both phone and address, for anyone who is interested in booking her, gigging with her, or just offering some feedback. Several lines of Culver’s statement seem to embody the attitude of musicians and other participants in the women’s music movement. When she explains that her income will be solely based on funds from this tour, it is not an expectation on her part that people will pay large sums to hear her sing or even that a cover charge will be demanded. Instead, she merely asks for a donation or collection to be taken at these events. Additionally, a portion of what little money might be gained would be donated at various stops along the tour in order to support other women’s organizations. In the spring of 1976, the fifth issue of *Musica* featured Casse Culver’s new release on the front page. In commenting on the new album, the editors explain that the tape features eight songs that have become very popular as a result of her concert tour around the U.S.

Although short-lived, the interaction of *Musica* with other periodicals of the time benefited its readers, and introduced them to other women’s music magazines. One was *Paid My Dues*, first published in the summer of 1973 under the name *My Sisters’ Song*. It was originally a discography and directory of women’s music and musicians in North

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 4.

America, but in 1974 it was transformed into a magazine.<sup>134</sup> The first issue of *Paid My Dues* was published in the winter of 1974, and its thirty-eight pages provided similar information to *Musica*, but in a more traditional magazine layout. Page one opens with an editor's note discussing the intentions of the magazine. Dorothy Dean wrote:

Our purpose is to provide a place where we all can share our music, our knowledge about music, and, most of all, our experiences being women and being musicians. So much of our musical herstory has been lost already. We need to encourage women to write down on paper the songs they have in their heads and in their souls... Things have definitely changed in the last five years. There is a conscious women's community scattered around the globe. We are a community that needs our musicians and needs music created by women... We need new Wise Women's Words. We need some Women's songs. Celebrate women's culture!<sup>135</sup>

Contributor Cheryl Helm, a freelance writer and musician based in Columbus, Ohio, wrote one of the featured articles. "No One Cries for the Losers" discussed the rise of rock 'n' roll in America, and uses the band Pride of Women as a case study of the struggle many female solo artists and all-girl groups faced when entering the music business during the 1970s. Helm worked as a road manager for the group, which allowed her to see the harassment and "impersonal brutality of the rock business" up close.<sup>136</sup> During one particularly violent encounter, Helm recalls,

Despite the triumphs—standing ovations, encores, rave reviews—there was always the threat of violence. That threat became reality in a Louisville, KY bar when an irate owner attacked POW's road crew, riddled their truck with bullets, and had the women framed and arrested on drug charges. His reason? The women failed to conform to his concept of "an all-girl band."<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Dorothy K. Dean, *Paid My Dues* 1 (Winter 1974): 1, accessed November 6, 2016, <http://queermusicheritage.com/pmd1-1.html>.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 1

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.



Despite this and other violent episodes, Pride of Women continued their tour. Shortly thereafter, they hired Barry Kraemer to act as their manager. In 1971, Kraemer negotiated a record deal with RCA, but by then the band had decided to pursue solo careers. At the close of her article, Helm laments,

It is hardly consoling to realize that POW's story is not unique: that hundreds of women have suffered the same harassment, humiliation and disillusionment. The only miracle is that groups like Fanny and Birta have somehow endured. We cannot afford to sustain such heavy losses indefinitely. Our only alternative is to build our own culture. Groups like the New Haven Women's Liberation Rock Band have begun, by withdrawing from the rock industry. But feminists playing for feminists is only a partial solution. To reach women outside the feminist movement, women whose lives are still governed by the rock patriarchy, we must also work within the industry. And even that is not enough.<sup>138</sup>

Helm's final thoughts are particularly striking, as they point to the ultimate triumph of the movement. Female artists in subsequent generations of the women's music movement were able to break through to the mainstream, as will be discussed in later chapters. Of course, this eventually led to a decline in the underground market, as more artists were able to obtain mainstream record deals.

As *Paid My Dues* continued its run, articles ranged from how-to guides on buying the right guitar or copyrighting songs, to interviews with trailblazing artists such as Margie Adam, Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Holly Near. In March 1976, founder Dorothy Dean was forced to present the magazine's loyal readers with choices regarding future publications. Options one and two meant suspending the magazine indefinitely or reducing it to a newsletter. Option three required the most effort from both the staff and subscribers. This included pledging money to ensure a guaranteed budget, along with volunteering to solicit

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<sup>138</sup> Dean, *Paid My Dues*, 15.

subscriptions at local libraries, or gifting subscriptions several times a year. Dean asked that readers respond with their preference and a decision would be made by the first of May. When the next issue was published in the fall of 1977, several changes had been made, including its location, staff, and format. The 32-page journal still contained featured articles, sheet music, and interviews of new artists, but fewer photographs, graphics, and pages helped reduce costs and allowed the staff to publish four issues per year. *Paid My Dues* was published in this format from fall 1977 to fall 1980.

Another invaluable resource to the women's music movement was the music journal *Hotwire*. The brainchild of founder Toni Armstrong Jr., *Hotwire* began as a women's music directory in 1977. Armstrong partnered with Michele Gautreaux and Ann Morris in 1983, and by the winter of 1984 they had their fourth partner, Yvonne Zipter. When its first issue came out in November of 1984, the four women carefully laid out their intentions. They explained,

Hotwire intends to: provide a wide range of articles that focus on women's creativity, especially women's music, the performing arts, and writing, including: essays, festival coverage, "how-to" articles, interviews, announcements of significant events (past and future), technical articles, and personal experiences; circulate information, resources, energy, and inspiration to women everywhere; provide access to print for women writers, graphic artists, and photographers; work within the woman-identified women-in-print movement, choosing women to do the work every step of the way: writing, editing, production, printing, advertising, and promotion.<sup>139</sup>

One of the featured articles of the first issue was entitled "Tour Booking and Promotion." The article was produced through a collaborative effort by authors Penny Rosenwasser, Jill Davey, Susie Gaynes, and Trudy Wood. Together they created an

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<sup>139</sup> Toni Armstrong, Michele Gautreaux, Ann Morris, and Yvonne Zipter, "From the Editors," *Hotwire: A Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 1, no. 1 (November 1984): 1.

instructional guide for new women's music artists looking to book and promote their upcoming tours. Included in this guide is information on what time of year to book their gigs ("everyone and her sister tours in spring and fall"), who will produce their shows ("The first thing to remember when booking a tour is that anyone can be a producer, and that any situation can be turned into a potential gig"), and where to perform ("Usually coffeehouses tend to be more willing to take a chance on new artists").<sup>140</sup> Such resources proved invaluable to women just starting out in the movement.

Each issue of *Hotwire* featured an artist in women's music. In the second issue, *Hotwire* editor Michele Gautreaux chose to highlight the prospering career of Linda Tillery. Tillery was an unconventional artist in the movement, in that she had not intended to become involved with women's music at all. As she explained in the article,

When I first started singing I wanted to be rich and famous. That was it. It never dawned on me that maybe people have a purpose to their work. And one can have a purpose to one's work without proselytizing or being a political activist or coming out for a cause.<sup>141</sup>

Tillery discusses her early career with the group The Loading Zone, a San Francisco-based rock group looking for a female vocalist for their upcoming album. She recorded and toured with them for two years before recording a solo album with CBS Records. The album flopped, and Tillery's meteoric rise came to a screeching halt. In 1975, she decided she wanted to become a drummer. She pieced together her first set by calling other seasoned drummers and asking for parts, and shortly thereafter, was called by another female musician to jam with her. Peggy Stern, a classically trained pianist, was looking to get into jazz and wanted Tillery to work with her. It was the first time she

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<sup>140</sup> Penny Rosenwasser, Jill Davey, Susie Gaynes, and Trudy Wood, "Tour Booking and Promotion," *Hotwire: A Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 1, no. 1 (November 1984): 43-44.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

had been contacted by another woman musician, and it dawned on her what an upsetting reality that was. In 1976, she began working with other artists associated with Olivia Records, and even produced an album for BeBe K-Roche, an established all-female band affiliated with the label. Tillery's biggest concern as she began working with Olivia Records and women's music was the lack of diversity represented by the label and their artists. As she stated in her interview, "When, in the United States of America, someone starts a record company and there's no black music there, to me that is the strangest thing on earth. So I had those questions and I put them out."<sup>142</sup> She goes on to list a limited number of black artists that had recorded women's music, including Sweet Honey in the Rock and Mary Watkins. Tillery not only voiced her concern about the need for more black women to be represented in the women's music movement, she also called into question the term itself:

I think the attitude which most disturbed me before and might possibly still cause my feathers to get ruffled is this term "women's music." What does that mean? I've asked people, what does "women's music" mean to you? Do you think of specific performers? Do you think of a certain style of music? Are you aware that there is not only a message to be given but a tradition to be passed on, and that tradition for each of us might be completely different?<sup>143</sup>

Tillery's observations are crucial to the story of women's music, as they demonstrate an awareness of the various causes being championed. The women's music movement became a safe space for straight women, lesbians, women of color, and other minorities as their network expanded and more women joined the cause, adding to the voices that desperately needed to be heard.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 4.

## Women-Only Spaces

On June 2, 2017, *Wonder Woman* opened in theaters nationwide. The origin story of the DC comics character was poised to be Warner Bros. Studio's reigning superhero film, outshining their most recent box office disasters: *Man of Steel* (2013), *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice* (2016), and *Suicide Squad* (2016). *Wonder Woman* tells the story of a matriarchal society in which Diana, princess of the Amazons, trains to be one of their greatest warriors. The film was directed by Patty Jenkins and starred Gal Gadot, a former model who served in the Israeli army before starting her film career. The clear feminist statement of the film's story coupled with the female-driven cast and crew led the Austin-based movie theater Alamo Drafthouse to offer a women's-only screening of the film. The private screening took place on June 4 at their Brooklyn, New York location. In an article posted by *The New York Times* on June 5, writer Cara Buckley described the event:

One woman said she came to feel a sisterhood. Another said she was there because in her years as a comic book geek, she had only ever watched superhero movies surrounded by guys. Yet another came because she didn't want to overhear fanboys cracking wise about Gal Gadot's physique, or, for that matter, that of any other woman onscreen.<sup>144</sup>

Alamo invited only those who identified as women to the screening, and donated all of the proceeds to Planned Parenthood. Although many people applauded Alamo's exclusive event, the screening also prompted a firestorm of negative feedback from male theatergoers who felt they were being discriminated against. As one woman so aptly explained,

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<sup>144</sup> Cara Buckley, "Solidarity at an All-Female Screening of 'Wonder Woman'," *The New York Times* (June 5, 2017), n.p.

When you exclude men from one space, they all say it's not fair... And when women point out the structural problems of patriarchy and the lack of opportunities for women, they say, "Grow a thicker skin."<sup>145</sup>

The women's-only showing at Alamo Drafthouse follows in the footsteps of the thousands of women's-only events produced during the women's music movement. Women who identified as lesbian separatists sought a refuge from the patriarchal system they were surrounded by in their daily lives. As artists and producers, many of the women involved in the women's music movement felt an obligation to create safe spaces for women. One of those safe spaces was the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. MichFest, as it came to be known, was held annually on a 650-acre festival ground simply described by all who attended as "the land." The first festival took place in 1976 on a mere 120 acres. It lasted three days, and was attended by over two thousand women. Over the years, the festival grew in size and reputation, requiring an entire week to host the forty performances, workshops, and countless vendors that came to represent this monumental womyn-only space. MichFest founder and producer Lisa Vogel was nineteen when she had the brilliant, and perhaps naive, idea to create a festival that she and her friends could attend locally. Tired of travelling hundreds of miles to see women's music, Vogel and her friends formed the We Want the Music Collective, an organization founded for the purpose of creating and sustaining a music festival. To raise money, they hosted garage sales and organized car washes. The women scraped together enough money for the first festival, which ran on a generator for three days straight due to a lack of electricity.<sup>146</sup> For the next forty years, Vogel continued to produce the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival. Although other women's music festivals died out as the

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<sup>145</sup> Buckley, "Solidarity at an All-Female Screening of 'Wonder Woman,'" n.p.

<sup>146</sup> Amy Clarissa Barber, "Woods of Their Own: Feminism, Community, Music and Politics at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2011), 3-4.

passion of second wave feminism began to fade, the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival continued to thrive until 2015.

Another unique quality of MichFest was that it remained a women's-only festival throughout all four decades. While this had inspired controversy over the years, especially regarding their anti-transgender policies, women who attended the festival argued the necessity of a safe space for women to express themselves openly and in an environment that was completely free of men. Many of the first generation of women's music artists were particularly transphobic. Transgender women, in their minds, had once had access to male privilege, and therefore would never truly understand what it meant to be a woman. As the workshop led by Alix Dobkin demonstrates, the artists and attendees of MichFest who strongly opposed men or trans-women in attendance were adamant in their opinions and extremely vocal. The controversial policy ultimately led the next generation of women's music artists to make a difficult decision about their willingness to comply with Vogel's discriminatory stance. Artists such as Andrea Gibson and the Indigo Girls performed for the last time in 2013, while others continued to support MichFest despite disagreement on this issue. In 2014, the LGBTQ advocacy group Equality Michigan released a petition to boycott the festival. Throughout its forty-year run, Vogel never admitted to the festival openly discriminating against transwomen. In a statement following the petition, Vogel claimed,

We have said that this space, for this week, is intended to be for womyn who were born female, raised as girls and who continue to identify as womyn. This is an intention for the spirit of our gathering, rather than the focus of the festival. It is not a policy, or a ban on anyone... We do not and will not question anyone's gender. Rather, we trust the greater queer community to respect this intention, leaving the onus on each individual to choose whether or how to respect it. Ours is a fundamental and respectful feminist statement about who this gathering is intended for, and if some

cannot hear this without translating that into a “policy,” “ban,” or a “prohibition,” this speaks to a deep-seated failure to think outside of structures of control that inform and guide the patriarchal world.<sup>147</sup>

The Executive Director of Equality Michigan, Emily Dievendorf, rejected this explanation, viewing it as another version of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”<sup>148</sup> Vogel’s claim also fails to acknowledge documented incidents of transgender individuals being asked to leave, as was the case in 1991 when a transwoman, Nancy Burkholder, was escorted off the premises after it was revealed she was transgender. The incident has been documented in dissertations, newspaper articles, documentaries, and is even the basis of an episode of the show *Transparent*.<sup>149</sup>

While MichFest was unable to escape its controversial past, other women’s music festivals have continued to honor the legacy of the women’s music movement. Daughters of Diana, the Northern California Women’s Music Festival, Oregaiia, the Savanna Moon Music Celebration, SisterSpace, Stargayzer, and the Women’s Redrock Music Festival all put on annual events. Many individual states host their own smaller festivals, such as the Iowa Women’s Music Festival, Ohio Lesbian Festival, and the Virginia Women’s Music Festival. The National Women’s Music Festival celebrated its 43rd annual gathering in the summer of 2018. In 2017, the Michigan Framily Reunion was held for the first time in Wayland, Michigan. Paying homage to MichFest, MFR took place from August 4-7

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<sup>147</sup> Kate Abbey-Lambertz, “Protests Mount Against Michfest Music Festival That Excludes Trans Women,” *Huffpost: Queer Voices* (July 29, 2014), n.p.

<sup>148</sup> “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” was the military policy set forth by the Clinton Administration. The policy permitted homosexuals to serve in the military so long as they were not open about their sexual orientation. Under the terms of the policy, military personnel were not allowed to inquire about a person’s sexual orientation, but sexual conduct with someone of the same sex was still grounds for discharge. The policy remained in effect until 2011.

<sup>149</sup> Episode nine of season two is entitled “Man on the Land.” The episode follows Jeffrey Tambor’s character, Maura Pfefferman, as she and her two daughters, Ali and Sarah, head to the 42<sup>nd</sup> Idyllwild Wimmin’s Music Festival, a gathering that bears a striking resemblance to MichFest. While standing in line at the restroom, Maura is met with a cascade of taunts, including the chant “man on the land.” Eventually, Maura decides to leave rather than face further scrutiny.



and incorporated many of the elements of the previous festival. Even with a change in name and scenery, the festival website suggests the producers are cautiously optimistic as they move forward. A dedicated section of the “About” page on their website indicates a desire to get in front of any future complaints:

Michigan Family Reunion (MFR) is a women’s music festival. MFR is created by females for females. The producers assume that each female attending will act with kindness, compassion, and respect. It is the hope of our committee that you will come to our festival and feel safe, uplifted, and supported. If you are unable to behave with courtesy and respect for yourself and others, you will be asked to leave. MFR is not policing anyone. MFR is not questioning anyone. All opinions are welcome and radical honesty is respected if it is delivered with an open heart and mind. Please listen more than you speak. This event is focused on adult females. We hope that each adult woman will act like an adult. MFR does not provide personal bodyguards. MFR is not going to engage with ridiculous statements. MFR respects that people attending the festival are an adult or accompanied by an adult and is responsible for their own actions... This is a peaceful gathering for females. This is not for people that choose to engage in childish behavior or choose to create drama.<sup>150</sup>

The women’s music movement began with Maxine Feldman’s innocent desire to hold her lover’s hand in public, and quickly transformed into an underground industry. As other artists gained notoriety within the community it became clear they would need more than enthusiasm to keep the business running. Record labels were founded, female sound engineers and producers were trained, and concert tours were realized. The birth of MichFest and other music festivals allowed the artists and audience of women’s music to gather annually and celebrate together, sharing a renewed energy for the next year’s challenges. It also gave aspiring artists and non-musicians a place to meet and begin their journey in the budding industry. The founding mothers brought eclectic backgrounds and

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<sup>150</sup> N.a., “About,” *Frequently Asked Questions*, accessed August 7, 2017, <http://www.michiganfamilyreunion.com/festival-info.html>.

musical styles to the movement, sharing a common goal in their ideas and passion for the future of women's music. As Margie Adam stated,

There is magic. All four of us knew Joan Baez... We all grew up in the same age and we all had listened to her. And I did not come from the folk tradition, as Meg did and as Cris did. And Holly came from... she came from the Broadway musical tradition. At the same time, although Meg was singing Joan Baez, she was also very interested in the madrigals sound that took one very quickly off into Alfred Deller.<sup>151</sup>

Adam went on to discuss the various influences among the three artists, including their rich knowledge of composers Gershwin, Porter, Rodgers and Hart, Vaughan Williams, and Thomas Tallis. She concludes,

I'm not sure that women's music, early women's music, would have taken hold in the way that it did if we'd all been playing the same three chords. If we'd all been singing some version of folk melodies. If we'd all been singing what I would call "strum, strum, three, three."<sup>152</sup>

As discussed in the next chapter, the music of the movement was complex, intricate, extensive, and universal. There were no limitations because there were no expectations. The conventional constraints placed on commercial music did not have a place in women's music. Without boundaries, women's music artists were free to explore various styles and genres.

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<sup>151</sup> Margie Adam, "Interview with Margie Adam," Interviewed by the author, August 17, 2017.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 22:09-22:40.

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### **Chapter Three: Music Analysis – “Women On Wheels”**

We have to start evaluating musicians more on the basis of their music, and not just on their lyrics. A musician is a musician, otherwise she'd be a poet or a speaker. But, she's a musician, and it's time we started listening to her music and evaluating her on that basis as well.

-Ginny Berson, “Keeping Our Art Alive”

The women's music movement has been analyzed and openly discussed in countless sources. Through dissertations on the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, artists of women's music have been brought to life and given a voice regarding the social construct of these festivals and the movement as a whole. Linguistic analyses of song lyrics have been performed in an effort to define the movement through the poetic prose of the musicians involved. However, despite several dissertations, books, articles, and documentaries covering this subject, the music itself has been overlooked. As Berson points out, the music is what makes the poet a musician. While Meg Christian and Cris Williamson admit ignorance of the women's movement when they began their artistic journeys, some, like Margie Adam and Kay Gardner knew their musical intention from the beginning. Others, such as Holly Near, were politically motivated beyond the women's movement, and confronted environmental issues, nuclear war, and racism in their music. It is important to study each of these artists and their music in order to have a complete picture of the women's music movement. Analysis of several pieces by each of the significant figures in the movement roughly between the years 1970 to 1985 will reveal the diverse and distinctive musical approaches of women's music.

## Meg Christian

Released in 1974 on Olivia Records, *I Know You Know* was a debut album for both the artist and the record label. Women's magazines such as *Hotwire*, *Paid My Dues*, *Lesbian Connection* and *Musica* advertised the album, impressing upon its readers the significance of both the record and the studio. In the February 1975 issue of *Lesbian Connection*, the publisher encourages readers to purchase the album to support Olivia and women's music:

Olivia Records Inc., a national women's recording company, proudly offers its first album, Meg Christian: *I Know You Know*. Olivia is a lesbian group and will be for a long time to come, if not forever. Meg Christian is a lesbian, and their next album will be by Cris Williamson, who is also a lesbian...Profits from the record sales will go toward building a recording studio for women. Sisters, let's support each other in efforts such as these.<sup>1</sup>

Although very few reviews were written for the album after its release, Stephen Holden mentioned the album in his article on Olivia Records and women's music. He described Christian and Williamson as a "romantic extension of the confessional singer-songwriter genre whose pioneers included Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Joni Mitchell and Laura Nyro."<sup>2</sup> Holden goes on to discuss the success of Christian's album, which sold than 60,000 copies after its release in 1975. A more recent review written by popular music critic William Ruhlmann acknowledges that, "Christian's musical sensibility grows out of 1960s folk and pop, a fact reinforced by the opening song, a cover of Rolf Kempf's 'Hello Hooray,' which Judy Collins sang on her 1968 album *Who Knows Where the Time*

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<sup>1</sup> Ambitious Amazons, "Ads," *Lesbian Connection* 1, no. 3 (February 1975): 21.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Holden, "Pop/Jazz; Olivia Records is a Success in 'Women's Music,'" *The New York Times* (November 4, 1983), accessed February 23, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/1983/11/04/arts/pop-jazz-olivia-records-is-a-success-in-women-s-music.html>.

Goes.”<sup>3</sup> He goes on to describe Christian’s original songs as essential to the album, recognizing that:

The album’s core is found in its romantic woman-to-woman folk-pop ballads, such as Christian’s own “Valentine Song” and co-producer Cris Williamson’s “Joanna.” The arrangements, generally keyed to Christian’s classical or steel-string guitar, are very much in the singer/songwriter style of James Taylor and Joni Mitchell. Christian reflects on the difficulties of the struggle in “Scars,” and in “Song to My Mama” she finds reason to acknowledge her mother’s love while trying to incorporate it into her lifestyle.<sup>4</sup>

Women’s magazines *Musica* and *Paid My Dues* advertised the album but did not publish a review. One of the few reviews from a contemporary source is in the May-June 1975 issue of *Off Our Backs*. Writer Marlene Schmitz begins her article by admitting that she has heard all of these songs a number of times, at least enough to be familiar with them. Therefore, her fear as she began to listen was a sense of anti-climactic redundancy, resulting in the feeling that the album was “not special anymore.”<sup>5</sup> She then asks the reader, “Why should Meg’s album be different? Could ten songs from her standard repertoire make the heart a-flutter once again? The answer is unquestionably yes.”<sup>6</sup> Schmitz goes on to highlight a number of songs from the album, including the opening piece, “Hello Hooray” (“could not be more ideally Meg’s greeting to this world and her call to the next if she had written it herself”) and “Goodbye Joanna” (“a fun song and the only typically ‘soulful’ tune here”).<sup>7</sup> When discussing Christian’s original songs, Schmitz’s tone shifts from approval to disappointment, particularly when referring to her

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<sup>3</sup> William Ruhlmann, “Meg Christian: ‘I Know You Know,’” accessed February 22, 2017, <http://www.allmusic.com/album/release/i-know-you-know-mr0000902968>.

<sup>4</sup> Ruhlmann, “Meg Christian: ‘I Know You Know,’” <http://www.allmusic.com/album/release/i-know-you-know-mr0000902968>.

<sup>5</sup> Marlene Schmitz, “Product of Persistence,” *Off Our Backs* 5, no. 5 (May-June 1975): 17.

<sup>6</sup> Schmitz, “Product of Persistence, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Schmitz, “Product of Persistence, 17.

love songs. In “Valentine Song,” Christian describes the reality of a relationship for which she has longed for some time. In the first verse, Christian sings,

It was once only dining and dancing  
Evening kisses, morning smiles  
And then you said “Let’s go off together  
Alone, for awhile.”  
And I loved you at first for your wicked eyes  
And the laughter that loosens your bones  
And your soft curls  
And the passions that I’ve never known.  
My love was a love of the moment  
Of the strangeness, the thrill  
But moments deny a tomorrow  
And yet, I love you still.<sup>8</sup>

Schmitz’s frustration with the piece is a lack of clear messaging. She remarks, “The message is simple as is the arrangement, yet the achievement of her being able to mean it as a lesbian is not.” Schmitz is also unimpressed with “Morning Song,” another original love song. Schmitz’s lack of critique is worth noting. Her only praise for “Morning Song” is the instrumentation, particularly the soprano saxophone, which is ultimately what makes the song “exceptional.”<sup>9</sup>

In an article published during the making of *I Know You Know*, Christian was asked if she believed songs from her first album would be accessible to women who did not identify as feminists. She explained,

The first album is going to have a very pointed focus. I’ve thought about it more in terms of what are the good songs I’ve done rather than who do I want to reach. What I hope it will be is a feminist album that any feminist, no matter where her head is, can really enjoy. And that’s really important to me because I don’t think it’s going to do Olivia any good to put out a

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<sup>8</sup> Meg Christian, “Morning Song,” in *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (California: Olivia Records, 1974), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Marlene Schmitz, “Product of Persistence,” *Off Our Backs* 5, no. 5 (May-June 1975): 17.

heavily lesbian-feminist first album. We are lesbian-feminist but we want to reach a lot of women.<sup>10</sup>

While some of her songs allude to lesbian relationships, Christian's "Song to My Mama" and "Ode to a Gym Teacher" are clear representations of lesbian-themed issues and heartache. In "Song to My Mama," Christian addresses her strained relationship with her mother. Her anguish in hiding such an integral part of herself from her mother is made clear through her forcefully rhythmic guitar accompaniment. This piece, along with "Hello Hooray" and "Ode to a Gym Teacher" are the only songs on the album with strumming patterns as opposed to picking.

Written in C minor, "Song to My Mama" is the only piece composed for the album in a minor key. According to Christian Schubart, the key of C minor represents the declaration of love, while at the same time also revealing the lament of unhappy love.<sup>11</sup> Christian portrays this juxtaposition through her intense, dynamic strumming underneath an emotional and painful subject matter. Each verse is written as a series of questions. In verse one, Christian asks her mother, "What do you see/When you look at my life/When you look at me?/Can you hear what I'm trying to say/Or can you just gaze in that blind loving way?"<sup>12</sup> The uncertainty in Christian's voice is met with rhythmic instability, as

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<sup>10</sup> Ginny Berson, Meg Christian, Judy Dlugacz, Cyndi Gair, and Helaine Harris, "The Muses of Olivia: Our Own Economy, Our Own Song," *Off Our Backs* 4, no. 9 (August-September 1974): 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ted Alan DuBois, "Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst: An Annotated Translation" (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 1983), 434. Christian Schubart was an eighteenth-century German composer, organist, poet, and journalist. He wrote *Ideen zu einer Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Ideas Towards an Aesthetic of Music, 1784/85), which discussed the characteristics of each key signature in accordance with the late Baroque theory of musical aesthetics. The belief was that composers could create a piece of music capable of producing an involuntary emotional response by employing certain musical procedures or devices. One belief was a piece could evoke different reactions depending on the key signatures.

<sup>12</sup> Meg Christian, "Morning Song," in *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (California: Olivia Records, 1974), 26.



the meter shifts between 6/4 and 4/4, with additional movement to 9/8 in verses one, two, and four, and 8/8 in verse three.<sup>13</sup>



**Example 3-1, Meter shifts in “Song to My Mama,” mm. 1-4**

As each verse continues, the aggressive chordal texture transforms into a softer, arpeggiated accompaniment. The pattern mirrors Christian’s voice, which takes on a more defensive tone initially. The more questions she asks, the gentler her accompaniment becomes. In verse one, the piano enters on the words “Can you hear what I’m tryin’ to say?” To match Christian’s guitar, Adam plays an arpeggiated arrangement. She continues to play through the end of the verse, but drops out at the interlude between verses. Adam repeats this with each new verse, and after the final verse she continues to play a heavy, percussive chordal pattern with the guitar until the end. Christian begins the song with an a capella cry to her mother, and each subsequent verse begins and ends with this same emotional plea. As she implores her mother to understand and accept who she is, the cry becomes increasingly desperate and more drawn out. There is no chorus in “Song to My Mama.” Each verse is slightly different melodically, creating a modified strophic formal design. Christian’s “mama, mama,” phrase links the verses together, with a short instrumental interlude to help break up the repetition from verse to verse. The absence of a chorus is similar to the Bob Dylan song “The Times They Are a-Changin,’” written in 1964. Unlike Dylan, Christian adds a coda to her final verse:

But maybe once a year/When I’m a little tight/I’ll feel fresh regrets and  
write/Some cryptic thank-yous for giving me the space to find/Such safely  
unspecific things/As my strength, my freedom, and my life.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Meg Christian, “Song to My Mama,” in *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (Manuscript, California: Olivia Records, 1974), 20. As presented in example 3-1.

In the third verse, Christian asks her mother, “Is something buried in your old widow’s mind/That blesses my choice of our own kind?”<sup>15</sup> The word “choice” is used to describe her lifestyle. While many people who oppose LGBTQ rights still consider sexual orientation a choice, most members of the LGBTQ community and its allies believe it is a genetic predisposition. Christian’s decision to call her same-sex attraction a choice refers to the lesbian and radical feminist movements, in which women argued that political lesbianism was a “logical choice for women whose sense of identity was grounded in their existence as women and in an antagonistic relationship with heterosexuality.”<sup>16</sup> Lesbian separatists redefined the term “lesbian” to denote any woman living outside of a heterosexual relationship. The sexual and emotional relationship between two women became irrelevant to the definition. A political lesbian was making a statement that she did not require a man to take care of her or assist in reproduction. While Christian was not a political lesbian, her lyrics invite that faction into the conversation and give them a sense of acceptance within women’s music.

“Ode to a Gym Teacher” became a crowd favorite while Christian was playing coffee shops in Washington, D.C., before Olivia Records made the move to California. The song depicts a young girl lusting after her favorite teacher. Christian admits the autobiographical nature of this piece, explaining in the program notes of her songbook that, “I don’t think anything more needs to be said about this one, except: Miss Berger, if

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<sup>14</sup> Christian, “Song to My Mama,” in *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album*, 19.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> David Macey, “Lesbian Feminism,” in *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (England: Penguin Books, 2001), 226.

my ode ever finds its way to you, please write and say it was all mutual.”<sup>17</sup> The album recording is from a live concert at the Full Moon Coffeehouse in San Francisco and demonstrates the playful rapport Christian fostered with her audience. When introducing the song, Christian jests,

I think it is high time that somebody wrote a song about this woman, because this woman has had I think one of the most important roles in the molding of young women’s minds of any group of women, except maybe the camp counselor.<sup>18</sup>

The lesbian cliché described in Christian’s song became a topic of mainstream taboo through the 1961 film *The Children’s Hour*, in which two schoolmistresses were accused of having an affair by one of their pupils. In “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” Christian’s use of humor draws the narrative back to the innocence of an adolescent crush as opposed to the image of predatory sexual deviancy.<sup>19</sup> The song begins with a musical quote from “Take Me Out to the Ballgame,” a whimsical introduction that illuminates the subject matter about to unfold. The quote is from the final line of the refrain, “for its one, two, three strikes you’re out at the old ball game.”<sup>20</sup> Musically, the phrase seamlessly introduces the tonic chord of Christian’s song as it moves through the IV-V-I progression under the words “old ball game.” However, the lyrics suggest something more ominous, referring to striking out in love, as the object of her desire does not return her affection.

At the end of each chorus Christian sings, “and though graduation meant that we had to part,” which is set to the “Funeral March” of Chopin’s Sonata No. 2. Christian fills the final phrase of every verse with harmonic and rhythmic instability, jumping back and

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<sup>17</sup> Meg Christian, “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (California: Olivia Records, 1974), 28.

<sup>18</sup> Meg Christian, “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” *I Know You Know*, Olivia Records LF902, 1974, LP.

<sup>19</sup> Sarah Dougher, “Sex and Laughter in Women’s Music, 1970-77,” *Current Musicology* 90 (Fall 2010): 45.

<sup>20</sup> Jack Norworth, “Take Me Out to the Ball Game” (New York: York Music Company, 1908).

forth between the chords D, G/D, and D7. She speeds up the harmonic rhythm over a two bar phrase by changing chords on every beat, as opposed to the single chord per measure in the previous lines. This harmonic uncertainty is played out lyrically, particularly in verses one and two. In verse one, Christian ponders, “And I never knew ‘til later why I got those funny looks.”<sup>21</sup>

ny books And I nev-er knew'til lat-er why I got those fun-ny lookS.—

Example 3-2, “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” mm. 20-22

In a similar state of innocence, Christian proclaims in verse two that, “when other girls went to the prom/I languished by the phone/Calling up and hanging up if I found out she was home.”<sup>22</sup> In her final verse, Christian sings,

So you just go to any gym class  
 And you’ll be sure to see  
 One girl who sticks to teacher  
 Like a leaf sticks to a tree  
 One girl who runs the errands  
 And who chases all the balls  
 One girl who may grow up to be the gayest of all.<sup>23</sup>

Christian takes a comical approach to the difficult subject of same-sex love, appropriating the traditionally heteronormative narrative of teacher-student affection to a homosexual storyline.

A list of *Billboard*’s Hot 100 songs of 1974 reveals that out of the top one hundred hits of that year, seventeen were performed by women. The list includes: “The Way We Were,” performed by Barbra Streisand; “Until You Come Back to Me,”

<sup>21</sup> Meg Christian, “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (Manuscript, California: Olivia Records, 1974), 29. As presented in example 3-2.  
<sup>22</sup> Christian, “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album*, 28-29.  
<sup>23</sup> Christian, “Ode to a Gym Teacher,” 28.

performed by Aretha Franklin; “Then Came You,” performed by Dionne Warwick; “Let Me Be There,” and “I Honestly Love You,” performed by Olivia Newton-John.<sup>24</sup> Out of the seventeen songs on the chart, only five were written or co-written by women. Most of the pieces place the female protagonist in a passive role. Barbra Streisand sings of a love lost, while Olivia Newton-John kindly requests, “let me be there in your morning/let me be there in your night.”<sup>25</sup> Although men composed most of the songs on this list, several of the pieces composed by women place the singer in similar roles. In Joni Mitchell’s “Help Me,” Mitchell begs the object of her affection to, “help me/I think I’m falling in love again.” She fears her love will not be reciprocated because he is a, “rambler and a gambler/And a sweet-talking-ladies man.”<sup>26</sup> Even in her own piece, Mitchell gives the power to the man she desires rather than taking control of the situation. These pieces represent the musical landscape in which Christian wrote her love song, “Morning Song.”

In “Morning Song,” Christian describes the development of her relationship with another woman. Moments that would be considered relatively mundane in a heterosexual couple are celebrated, such as when Christian sings, “And when morning comes I’ll wake you/And we’ll start another day.” Christian does not overtly characterize her significant other as female. The realization of a same-sex coupling comes from subtle statements and carefully chosen words. In the opening verse she sings, “And I think about how hard its been/To let myself love you/Oh, to let myself love you.”<sup>27</sup> In the final verse, Christian admits she is, “Growing into love and somehow/Learning it’s okay/We’re somehow learning it’s okay.” The hesitation to accept her feelings for another woman is reinforced

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<sup>24</sup> “Hot 100 – 1974 Archive,” *Billboard Charts Archive*. Accessed June 9, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Olivia Newton-John, “Let Me Be There,” *Let Me Be There*, MCA Records MCA 389, 1973, LP.

<sup>26</sup> Joni Mitchell, “Help Me,” *Court and Spark*, Asylum Records 7E-1001, 1974, LP.

<sup>27</sup> Meg Christian, “Morning Song,” *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (Manuscript, California: Olivia Records, 1974), 27. As presented in example 3-3.

with harmonic resistance. The chord progression of the final phrase begins on a I7 chord, quickly moving to the iv7, iii7, ii7 and back to the iii7, before landing on vi7, creating a deceptive cadence prior to the final line of each verse.<sup>28</sup>

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the song "Morning Song". It features a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The lyrics are written above and below the staff. Above the staff, the lyrics are: "fil-lin' up the night. And the vines of ros-es dy-ing cause we dont know what to do - And I". Below the staff, the lyrics are: "think a-bout how hard it is to let my-self love you. oh, to let my-self love you." The guitar chords are written above the staff and include: Bbm7, am7, gm7, am7, dm7, gm7, gm7, and F. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Example 3-3, “Morning Song,” mm. 7-10

A solo, performed by soprano saxophonist Marian Kaul, connects each verse. The solo helps to break up the homophonic texture of the verses and provides a melodic line that seems to be an extension of Christian’s voice. In the final verse, the soprano sax joins Christian to create a melodic counterpoint to her vocal line.

The counterpart to “Morning Song” is Christian’s tribute to her lover, “Valentine Song.” Written as a Valentine’s present to her partner at the time, Christian explains,

I wanted to celebrate the reality of a relationship I’d been wanting for a long time: one that was freely and joyfully chosen, in which strengths and weaknesses are fairly balanced, and with love that thrives in an atmosphere of mutual respect, support and growth.<sup>29</sup>

Christian’s guitar part is a perfect compliment to her vocal line. As it is the only instrument in this piece, Christian plays a more intricate accompaniment than in songs like “Ode to a Gym Teacher” or “Morning Song.” Her finger picking pattern changes between verses, using added chord tones and various passing or neighbor tones to create a rich accompanimental texture. The range of Christian’s melody is E3 to A4, which she contrasts by emphasizing the treble register in her accompaniment. The melody is mostly

<sup>28</sup> Christian, “Morning Song,” *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album*, 27.

<sup>29</sup> Meg Christian, “Valentine Song,” in *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (California: Olivia Records, 1974), 13.

stepwise, with the final phrase of each verse providing the majority of leaps. Christian's melodic simplicity could be attributed to her narrow vocal range or her roots in Appalachian folk music. However, another factor to consider is the complex accompaniment. A more complicated melody would ultimately be too busy for this song. Verses one and two follow the same AABA pattern, although structurally it is not a 32-bar song form. The first two phrases are seven measures in length, each beginning and ending with pickup measures. The B section is fifteen measures, ending with a transitional measure back to the final A section.

The piece was originally written in A major, but Christian decided to record it in Ab Major at the last minute. She briefly tonicizes the relative minor of F in section B before moving back to tonic for the final A section. The final verse starts at the B section, with the lyrics, "Yes we bargained for doubtful tomorrows/But our past grows richer each day." This fits harmonically, as the verse is significantly shorter than the previous two, and still allows Christian to end in the tonic key. Christian composed this piece in 3/4, giving it a dance-like quality. It is no surprise that Christian uses this meter for her love song, as in American popular culture, triple meter is associated with musical theater love songs and Tin Pan Alley romantic tunes. As with "Morning Song," Christian's "Valentine Song" never reveals the gender of her lover. The narrator discusses her initial expectation that the relationship would be fleeting, referring to it as a "love of the moment."<sup>30</sup> She later admits, "more and more, I cannot see me going away."<sup>31</sup>

Arguably the most powerful song from *I Know You Know* is Christian's "Scars." Aptly titled, it was written shortly after Christian discovered the women's movement. At

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

first, she was ecstatic to have found a home in feminism. As time passed, she realized there were still former wounds that had to be acknowledged. Christian explains,

I started realizing that when women have been very efficiently programmed to self-destruct all our lives, it takes more than learning the truth to change us deep down. Because just when you think you've really pulled yourself together, up pops the old guilt, the old self-hatred. As we help ourselves and our sisters to strengthen and grow, we must always respect the scars.<sup>32</sup>

The formal design of “Scars” sets it apart from the other works on the album. There are only two verses, but each is followed with a refrain, which is unusual in Christian’s oeuvre. The song is structurally dependent on the refrain, as it comprises almost two thirds of the first section of the song. The piece can be divided into two sections, with an instrumental break connecting the first section to the second. The refrain modulates to G minor. The instrumental section modulates to E minor, the relative minor of G major. Christian returns to tonic as she enters the second verse, using an arpeggiated CM7 chord to pivot back to Eb major. As with “Valentine Song,” the melody of this piece remains below C5. Unlike her love songs, the melody of “Scars” is built on more leaps than stepwise motion. In rare cases, Christian fills these leaps through a descending line that follows the initial jump. This theoretical practice is known as gap-fill, which was first introduced by the theorist Leonard Meyer. Meyer explains that when a leap occurs in a piece, one expects the succeeding material to fill in the gap previously created.<sup>33</sup> One can see this gap-fill technique in mm. 5-6, 10-11, and 15-16.<sup>34</sup>

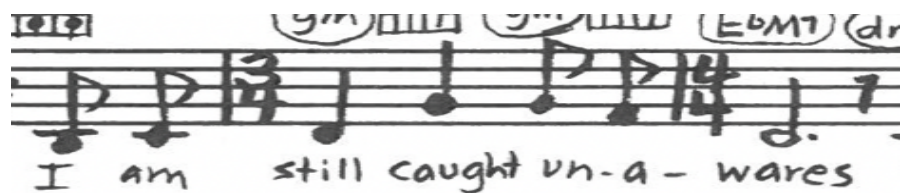
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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas Cook, “Psychological approaches to analysis,” in *A Guide to Musical Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 70-89.

<sup>34</sup> Meg Christian, “Scars,” in *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (Manuscript, California: Olivia Records, 1974), 16. As presented in example 3-4.





Example 3-4, “Scars,” mm. 10-11

There are several instances of word painting in this song. The first takes place at the beginning of the refrain on the words “ghosts lurking in my nightmares.” The melody over this phrase begins on D4 and leaps a fourth to G4, then moves stepwise to F4 and G4 before leaping to Bb4, followed by a minor sixth to D4 and C4 on the word “nightmares.” The rhythm over the words “lurking in my” is a series of eighth notes. The rhythm, coupled with the disjunct melody line, gives the impression of something prowling in the shadows. Christian then sings, “with ancient loneliness/and ancient pain/and the old scars/and the old scars ache again.”<sup>35</sup> The succeeding material is the ritornello. Christian uses several musical techniques to give this piece a more “ancient” or medieval quality. For one thing, it is recorded on classical guitar, which was derived from the sixteenth-century Spanish vihuela, and has often been cast aside for its poor dynamic range. Its recognition as a concert instrument occurred in the early nineteenth century, and composers such as Berlioz, Beethoven, Brahms, and Schubert were all admirers and players.<sup>36</sup> The performance practice of classical guitar evokes antiquity, as it is typically plucked rather than picked or strummed. Christian plays a series of parallel octaves as the introduction of “Scars,” and again as she begins the ritornello. Moreover, the melody of the ritornello is in E Dorian mode. Women’s music composer Kay Gardner believes certain modes were matriarchal or androgynous, and classifies Dorian as the latter.

<sup>35</sup> Christian, “Scars” in *Meg Christian I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album*, 15.

<sup>36</sup> Caroline Traube, “An Interdisciplinary Study of the Timbre of the Classical Guitar” (PhD diss., McGill University, 2004), 2-3.

Christian's use of the Dorian mode here could simply be a form of word painting, or she could be channeling Gardner's theories. At the close of the ritornello, a string trio joins Christian for the second verse. The additional instrumentation creates a thicker texture that is juxtaposed when the cello, violin, and viola cease performance on the words, "I am still caught unawares..." only to reenter at the final chorus section.

As discussed in chapter two, Christian began studying Siddha Yoga in 1984, which led to the albums *Fire of My Love* (1986) and *Songs of Ecstasy* (1995). Prior to her spiritual and musical transformation, Christian produced the albums *Turning it Over* (1981) and *From The Heart* (1984). These albums demonstrate her musical, vocal, and compositional transformation, as well as the maturation of Olivia Records. *Turning it Over* was the twelfth album produced by Olivia, and *From The Heart* became their seventeenth. Both albums display noticeable growth in production quality from *I Know You Know*. Christian's first album was engineered by Joan Lowe in collaboration with the founders of Olivia and additional musicians on the album. With the exception of Lowe, a well-known and respected recording engineer, no one had any production experience going into this first album. By the time Christian was ready to record *Turning it Over*, Olivia had a team of experts to produce the album. Betty Rowland was asked to lend her expertise, as well as engineers Leslie Ann Jones and Susan Gottlieb. In a review of the album, Deborah Weiner observes,

Betty Rowland, producer, and Leslie Ann Jones and Susan Gottlieb, engineers, have succeeded in their task to make a clean, balanced recording from the range of sound combinations that include solo a cappella voice, instrumental solo, and the heavily produced strains of "Gym II."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Deborah Weiner, "Turning it Over," *Off Our Backs* 11, no. 11 (1981): 26, <http://www.jstor.org.www2.lib.ku.edu/stable/25774158>.

“Restless” is the second track from *Turning it Over*. A repeated strumming pattern on the guitar and prominent bass line introduce the song. The hi-hat keeps a steady pulse as Christian enters with the first line, “I’m restless with memories/restless with dreams.”<sup>38</sup> She has much more control over her voice in this piece than on her first album, and is able to incorporate playful effects more freely. She uses vocal growls to convey her restless frustrations; vocal bends on the words “songs” and “alarm;” and trills to emphasize the words “slow,” “losing,” and “hour.” Christian’s songwriting also matured over the course of seven years and three albums. As Weiner points out,

The intricate craft of songwriting is revealed in both the title cut and in “Restless,” where the lyrical development is extensive and fully explored...Meg bespeaks her critical boredom and self-pity in “Restless.” As in “Turning it Over,” the lyrics are clever, the message clear, but the magic is made through her pronunciation and vocal timbre.<sup>39</sup>

While many of the songs on *I Know You Know* did not overtly discuss lesbian issues, the seven original compositions of this album are even more covert. In “Restless,” Christian uses lesbian clichés to convey her message. Verse five of the song reads, “Fie on religion, feh on romance/feel like a wallflower but I don’t want to dance/too butch to accept, but too femme to decline/and bored, bored/on the borderline.” The terms “butch” and “femme” are used in lesbian culture to describe roles within the community and romantic relationships. Rather than the traditional masculine/feminine distinctions, Christian relates to her audience through these descriptors.

The formal design of “Restless” is a typical verse-chorus structure. The piece is broken into six verses, each in pairs, with a chorus after verses two and four. The formal design creates a palindrome, as the first section is in AABA, followed by the same form

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<sup>38</sup> Meg Christian, “Restless,” *Turning It Over*, Olivia Records LF925, 1981, LP.

<sup>39</sup> Weiner, “Turning it Over,” 26, <http://www.jstor.org.www2.lib.ku.edu/stable/25774158>.

in retrograde, ABAA. The structure of Christian's pieces is often defined by her lyrics. In this particular piece, the lyrics also inform the harmonic progression. The idea of feeling restless is captured by Christian's harmonic choices, in which she often briefly tonicizes keys outside of the tonic of C major. Following the third verse, Christian modulates to D major on the phrase, "I'm too mentally healthy," and remains in the new key until modulating back to C major in the final verse of the song.<sup>40</sup>

In an interview with Mary Pollock, Christian described her compositional style. She explained to Pollock that artists such as herself, Margie Adam, and Cris Williamson all had similar backgrounds and musical influences. Her style was informed by pop and folk music traditions, and often the structure of her pieces reflects those early inspirations. Christian also admitted to having little awareness of her compositional style, stating,

I didn't even know I had a composing style until about two years ago—because I don't think technically when I write. I mostly think, "Oh, that's a nice chord." And all of a sudden I realize that something rhymes with something else. The structure is fairly subconscious for me. A real marriage of the lyrics and the music is largely unconscious.<sup>41</sup>

The instrumentation of "Restless" is quite extensive in comparison to her early work. As a singer-songwriter, Christian's early music reflected the influence of folk artists like Joan Baez, Buffy Sainte Marie, and Carolyn Hester, who self-accompanied on guitar. On this third album, she begins to explore new sounds through instrumentation that resembles a traditional rock or pop group. In "Restless," Christian combines guitar, electric bass, drums, and synthesizer to create multiple layers of sound. The bass plays a significant role in this and other songs from the album.

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<sup>40</sup> Meg Christian, "Restless," *Turning it Over*, Olivia Records LF925, 1981, LP.

<sup>41</sup> Mary Pollock, "Recovery and Integrity: The Music of Meg Christian," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 9, no. 2 (1987): 31.

There is an evolution of sound in the women's music movement leading into Christian's *Turning it Over*. Beginning with Linda Tillery's self-titled album in 1977, women's music artists began exploring new genres and composing more instrumental tracks. In 1978, Mary Watkins released her first album, *Something Moving*. The album's seven tracks cover a diverse group of genres and styles, including jazz, funk, hard bop, and soul. Margie Adam recorded her instrumental album *Naked Keys* in 1980, the same year as Cris Williamson's soft rock album *Strange Paradise* was released.

One major distinction between Christian's first and third albums is her incorporation of instrumental tracks. *Turning it Over* is the first to feature two instrumental pieces, "Moving Right Along" and "Window Paynes." As with many of the women's music artists, Christian grappled with the idea of including instrumental songs on her albums. One of the goals of the women's music movement was to create a soundtrack to the political issues of the day. For most of the women involved, that meant writing songs with lyrics to express their feelings and relate to their audiences. Several artists—Margie Adam, Kay Gardner, Mary Watkins, and Meg Christian—challenged this idea. It was particularly difficult for Christian to make this transition. As she explained to Pollock,

I think that one thing that any woman who has been a creative artist in a political context has experienced is a lot of pressure from outside and inside to write about certain issues. Many, many, many times women have come up to me and said, "We need a song about battered women." "We need a song about class, race." "We need a song about older women." "We *need* a song" about all these things. "We need..." "We need..." And I used to fall into a less constructive attitude for me as an artist. If a love song drifted up into my consciousness, I would say, "Oh, no, no. You just wrote one of those six months ago. We need a song about X." So I would squash the love song.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

Christian admitted that she operated under a double standard as a writer. She could listen to instrumental composers such as Gardner, Adam, or Mary Watkins and understand the messages they were trying to convey. According to Christian,

I know that their music comes absolutely as much from their consciousness, from their experiences, from their worldview as women, as anything that words could say, and listening to their music empowers me. We *all* experience things that we can't begin to put into words. So I am delighted that now I can start thinking in instrumental terms, and yet even on the last album I died a thousand deaths over whether or not to put two instrumentals on that album.<sup>43</sup>

The first instrumental track on *Turning it Over* is entitled "Moving Right Along." The piece is in D major and opens with Christian outlining I and V chords on the guitar. Following the pseudo-ground bass introduction, Christian presents the melody over a clearly defined harmonic progression in the bass. The bass initially plays quarter notes to support the constantly flowing melody line, and eventually joins the melody in the guitar in measure 6. The form of "Moving Right Along" is AABCBA'. There are three themes played throughout the piece, and each introduces new instrumentation. Beginning in m. 8, the opening melody is played once more, with the addition of drums. At the conclusion of this eight-measure phrase the second melody is introduced, with Christian vocalizing along with the guitar on the syllable "doo." The melody extends to G5 and demonstrates the expansion of Christian's range since her first album.

Section C introduces the third theme of "Moving Right Along." Its constant motion maintains the steady momentum of each theme. The harmonic support is reminiscent of mm. 11-18 in the A section. Christian also extends this section by three measures, making it the longest of the three themes. She does this by playing a deceptive progression in mm. 31-32, along with the repeated V-I progression in mm. 35-36 before

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 32.

landing on the tonic. The second theme enters again at m. 38. This time Christian harmonizes a third above her original melody in both the guitar and vocal line. The A section returns once more at m. 46 with a countermelody, finishing out the song.

“Window Paynes,” a solo guitar piece, showcases Christian’s precision and technique. In the liner notes, Christian dedicated this piece to “Miss Mary Spotswood Payne and Miss Louise Payne of Lynchburg, Virginia— my lifelong friends and family.”<sup>44</sup> The piece begins in A minor on an arpeggiated tonic chord before moving to the dominant in first inversion. The melody continues over a D minor chord in stepwise motion, eventually leaping to G4. Christian once again employs a gap-fill pattern as she descends from G4 to E4-F4-G4-E4-D4. The form of this piece is AABA’BA with a brief introduction and final coda. There is a shift in character, tempo, and key when Christian enters the B section. The melody is grounded in the B major scale with a flattened seventh, and mostly moves in stepwise motion.<sup>45</sup> In the second ascending phrase, Christian breaks up the monotony with a trill on A4 and G#4. The rubato tempo coupled with the major key gives this section a more playful character. Christian stretches the original melody when returning to the A section, leaping to E5 before descending to B3 and leading into the B section once again. As with “Moving Right Along,” this piece demonstrates Christian’s mastery of classical guitar and her ability to create the impression of an ensemble on a single instrument. Although these pieces do not include lyrics, the very act of composing an instrumental piece is a feminist statement. In her interview with Christian, Pollock states, “Your instrumentals and Margie Adam’s *Naked*

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<sup>44</sup> Meg Christian, “Window Paynes,” *Turning It Over*, Olivia Records LF925, 1981, LP.

<sup>45</sup> This melody could also be analyzed as rooted in the B mixolydian mode. While Kay Gardner believed the mixolydian mode to be a “woman’s mode,” it is unknown as to whether Christian believed the same. Therefore, the author has chosen to analyze the melody as it relates to the scale rather than mode.

*Keys* are political statements: historically women haven't been perceived as instrumentalists or, really, as musicians."<sup>46</sup> Along with Margie Adam, Kay Gardner, and Mary Watkins, these pieces helped to change that conversation.

### **Cris Williamson**

The most versatile and prolific women's music artist, Cris Williamson has been recording consistently since her first album in 1964. Five decades and 31 albums later, Williamson has continued to dedicate her music to the political, cultural, and social message of the movement. As with many of the founding mothers, Williamson's music cannot be limited to a single category. Her albums represent a range of commercial music styles, including rock 'n' roll, country, and folk. Williamson's versatility also lends itself to experimentation. This is especially apparent with the 1978 concept album *Lumiere*. The science-fiction concept album tells the story of a young boy named Ted and his dog as they are transported from his bedroom to a fantasy world. Williamson provides the music and narration for the album.

In 1971, *Cris Williamson* was released on Ampex Records. Williamson did not discover women's music until her encounter with Meg Christian several years after this recording. However, it was this album, and particularly the song "Joanna," which drew Christian to Williamson. In 1974, Christian included "Joanna" on her debut album, with Williamson acting as producer and back-up singer on the piece. The song begins with a plea to Joanna:

Get down off the ceiling, Joanna  
Let's sit and talk for a while

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<sup>46</sup> Mary Pollock, "Recovery and Integrity: The Music of Meg Christian," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 9, no. 2 (1987): 32.



It's been so long since I've seen you  
And I really need to see you smile.<sup>47</sup>

Williamson opens with a descending progression on the piano, cascading from the sixth octave to the second. The strings immediately follow with a series of dissonant chords with an unresolved ending. The piano returns in the final four measures of the introduction, this time accompanied by bass guitar, leading to the first verse.

Williamson's melody in each verse is graceful and fluid, spanning a little over an octave from G3 to A4. As she heads into the B sections, the melody changes to a speech-like recitative with repeated notes and simple stepwise motion. There is a slight *accelerando* on the phrase, "I'm standin' on my feet and it's so hard to talk."<sup>48</sup> Williamson juxtaposes the actions of the phrase "Either I go up or you come down" by leaping down a third on the word "up" and up a third on the word "down."<sup>49</sup>

The instrumentation of "Joanna" creates a thick, full texture. In the first verse, the bass guitar establishes a harmonic center, while the piano comps and the guitar provides counterpoint to the melody. The entrance of the guitar and drums connects the lines "Let's sit and talk for awhile/It's been so long since I've seen you." The use of percussion in this song is decidedly minimal. After a two-beat triplet to introduce the next phrase of verse one, the drums are reduced to a single snare-drum tap on beat two of each measure. This is an interesting choice, as the meter is 3/4 and the rest of the ensemble is emphasizing beat one. As Williamson enters the B section, the ensemble becomes homogenous, with no single instrument highlighted. As she sings, "Either I go up, or you go down," the mandolin begins to play a descending two-note ostinato. The phrase begins

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<sup>47</sup> Cris Williamson, "Joanna," *Cris Williamson*, Ampex Records A10134, 1971, LP.

<sup>48</sup> Williamson, "Joanna," 1971.

<sup>49</sup> Cris Williamson, "Joanna," in *I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (California: Olivia Records, 1974), 8.

with an arpeggiated minor third on D-B before moving down to A in the bottom voice. The top voice then moves to C# with the bottom voice remaining on A, and finally moving back up to D before the conclusion of the section. Williamson's next phrase, "Can you hear me calling, Joanna?/Does my human voice make a sound?" is marked by the layered homophonic texture of the orchestra and a crescendo in the strings, almost drowning out Williamson's voice. The texture thins out to piano, guitar, and drums as the third section comes to a close. When the final A section returns, Williamson begins unaccompanied. The repeated opening phrase, "Get down off the ceiling, Joanna/Let's sit and talk for awhile" departs from the seemingly light-natured humor of the introduction and strikes a more solemn tone.<sup>50</sup>

"Joanna" is set in D major, but Williamson routinely expands her vocabulary to include notes and harmonies outside of the key. An F#7 chord is used throughout the song rather than F#m7. Williamson makes a similar substitution with the fourth scale degree, although both major and minor versions of G are heard consistently in the piece. In the original piece, Christian's colorful harmonic vocabulary is particularly evident in section C. The first phrase changes are Dm7-Cmaj7-G/B+A-G/B-C-Bb-Am-Am/G-Fm7-F6-C. In her cover, Williamson simplifies this phrase by using traditional triads as opposed to seventh chords. The progression of the same phrase is Em-D-A-D-C-Bm-G-D. Williamson also reduces the number of chords from eleven to eight, or one chord per measure. In Christian's version, the harmonic rhythm picks up in this section. Starting with the lines, "We don't have to speak necessarily," the harmonic rhythm moves at a pace of one chord per measure. This picks up in section C, with eleven chords over the course of eight measures. The harmonic motion matches the rapid succession of

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<sup>50</sup> Cris Williamson, "Joanna," *Cris Williamson*, Ampex Records A10134, 1971, LP.

questions posed to the protagonist: “Are you all right? Do you sleep at night? Do you have enough time to use your mind?”<sup>51</sup> Williamson maintains the same harmonic rhythm of previous sections, making this series of questions more of a conversation rather than interrogation. Williamson returns to the opening verse for the conclusion of the piece. When the final verse begins, she enters a capella. At the end of the phrase, “Let’s sit and talk for awhile,” the bass guitar plays a walking bass line on the notes A2, B2, C3 as the rest of the ensemble joins with Williamson’s entrance. As the song comes to a close, a descending pattern reminiscent of the introduction on the piano is heard, followed by a plagal cadence in the strings. As if to get the final word, the piano chimes in to reiterate the tonic chord.

It was not long after Williamson released her self-titled album on Ampex Records that the company dissolved. She continued to promote her work by touring, and at a show in Washington, D.C. she met Meg Christian, who introduced her to the idea of women’s music. In 1975, Williamson released her first album for Olivia Records, *The Changer and the Changed*. The record established Williamson as one of the pioneers of women’s music. This album introduced fans to another significant work in her output, “Song of the Soul.” The piece begins with the Methodist hymn, “Open My Eyes, That I May See,” written by Clara Scott in 1895:

Open my eyes, that I may see  
Glimpses of truth though hast for me  
Open my eyes, illumine me  
Spirit divine.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Cris Williamson, “Joanna,” in *I Know You Know: A Songbook and Scrapbook of the Album* (California: Olivia Records, 1974), 9.

<sup>52</sup> C. Michael Hawn, “History of Hymns: ‘Open My Eyes, That I May See,’” *Hymns, Hymn Singing, Hymnals, Hymnology* (March 16, 2007), accessed October 31, 2017, <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-open-my-eyes-that-i-may-see>.

In interviews discussing the origin of “Song of the Soul,” Williamson has revealed her predilection for this hymn, and the style in general. She explained,

It was a hymn I had loved as a child. Growing up in Colorado we went to this really tiny congregational church that had a woman minister named Gertrude Horn. And she did what is called the lesson not the sermon and then she would ask people, invite people, to say what hymn we should all sing. But I remember riding around on my bike in the summer just singing that hymn. I love hymns and have a hymnal way of writing, which is also akin to Emily Dickinson’s style. In my lyric writing, I am very fond of that style. And I think it holds really well in people’s memories. People can recall hymns quite easily. There’s a good rhyme scheme to it. There’s a simple, beautiful elegance to it. So, it came attached. That was the first entry that came in my mind, was “Open mine eyes that I may see.” It’s the invocation of the person whoever sings this.<sup>53</sup>

Williamson sings the hymn verse, which is not included in her songbook, a capella. Instead, the piece begins with her original material. In the recording, the piano enters with an ascending phrase on scale degrees 5<sup>^</sup>, 6<sup>^</sup>, and 7<sup>^</sup> to introduce the first verse. The percussion maintains the steady 3/4 meter with a pounding bass on beat one. Williamson plays a simple boom-chuck accompaniment in G major, which stays true to the I-ii-V progression of the original hymn. Piano and percussion accompany the verses, but the texture thickens as Williamson enters each chorus. A tack piano is introduced, first playing a countersubject to the melody and then a chord progression that aligns with the piano accompaniment an octave lower. A four-measure ritornello defines the chorus and verse. Here, the guitar enters to provide a similar color to the tack piano. Williamson sings the first chorus as a solo, but a women’s ensemble joins her for each subsequent chorus. The ensemble represents the congregation, which would have sung the hymn in unison during the service.

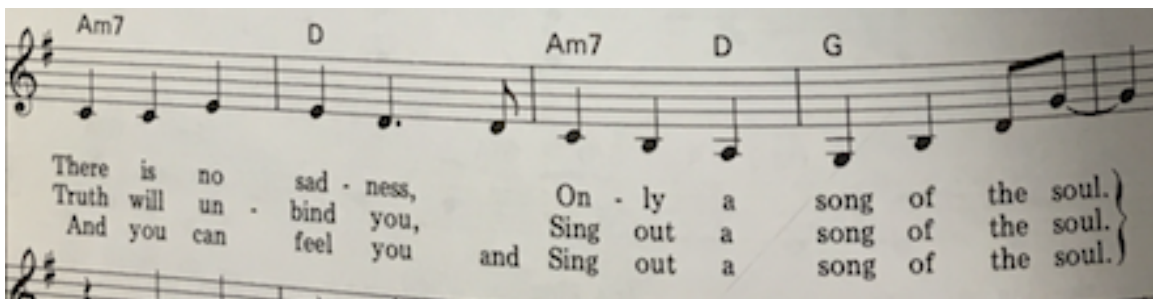
Musically, this piece lacks the complexity of the works of Adam or Christian. The

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<sup>53</sup> Mark Helpsmeet, “A Voice for Women-Cris Williamson’s Song of the Soul,” *Song of the Soul* (September 23, 2012), 30:07-31:05.

harmonic progression of the verses never strays from the three chords outlined above.

The chorus is a bit more harmonically colorful, particularly as Williamson plays with the dominant chord, incorporating inversions, sevenths, and other non-chord tones to add more variety. The melody is almost exclusively stepwise, with the exception of an octave arpeggio outlining the phrase, “song of the soul” at the end of each verse and the phrases, “sing this song” and “sing along” of the chorus, in which chords V and I are outlined, respectively.<sup>54</sup>



Example 3-5, “Song of The Soul,” mm. 12-16

The simplicity of the piece reflects the genre of its origin, as hymns were written to convey God’s message. Complexity in the music would distract from the text, and might have been difficult for the congregation to follow. Its rudimentary nature may also reflect the sweet, innocent nature of Williamson’s message. While most of the artists in the women’s music movement understood what the repercussions of sharing their love for other women would bring, Williamson was naïve to the severity of this revelation. “Song of the Soul” does not overtly discuss same-sex attraction in the way “Joanna” or “Sweet Woman” do. In this way, it is more closely aligned with Christian’s “Valentine Song,” which never mentions the name or gender of the object of her desire. Williamson’s lyrics advocate for finding your bliss, even if that is a same-sex relationship. “Song of the Soul”

<sup>54</sup> Cris Williamson, “Song of The Soul,” in *The Cris Williamson Songbook* (California: Olivia Records, 1985), 24. As presented in example 3-5.

incorporates the ideals held up through spirituality—loving strongly, possessing a forgiving nature, an enlightened soul, and the concept of community—and places them in the context of lesbian feminism. When read through this lens, a phrase such as, “Follow your heart, love will find you,” becomes a powerful message encouraging one to seek happiness in a non-traditional relationship. The subsequent line, “Truth will unbind you,” focuses on the anguish experienced within when one does not live openly. As the piece comes to a close, the final line of the chorus, “And we can sing for a long, long time,” is sung in three-part harmony.

“Sweet Woman” appears on the same album. In interviews about the song, Williamson has explained it was based on a love letter from her girlfriend at the time. Like Dobkin’s “Talking Lesbian” or “View From Gay Head,” there is no denying the relationship being described. The opening stanza reads:

Sweet woman, risin’ inside my glow  
I think I’m missin’ you  
Singin’ to me them soft words  
Takin’ me to your secret  
Letting me know, taking me in  
You let it all go<sup>55</sup>

From the beginning, the text is carefully set. Williamson lingers on the word “sweet,” letting it hang over a two-note descending phrase in the piano before landing on “woman.” The strings enter, providing foundation for the harmonic progression in the piano. The slow tempo of this section allows Williamson to take her time with each word. At the end of the phrase, “Takin’ me to your secret,” the accompanying instruments play an ascending chromatic line, highlighting the sensuality of the “secret” being revealed. The texture makes an abrupt shift from the quasi-monody of Williamson and

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<sup>55</sup> Cris Williamson, “Sweet Woman,” *The Changer and the Changed*, Olivia Records LF904, 1975, LP.

accompaniment to three-part harmony in the melody and additional instruments, including bass guitar and drums.

The tempo picks up as the second verse begins. Musically the mood shifts to a more playful and lighthearted tone. Williamson often uses tempo and rhythmic patterns as a vehicle for emotional expression. In “Sweet Woman,” the opening stanza is characterized by slow, elongated phrases, which express the desire felt between Williamson and her partner. The faster tempo in the B section is coupled with a cheeky rhythmic pattern in the bass guitar, almost undermining the sincerity of the poetic verse. The piano plays a syncopated chordal pattern. In the second line of this stanza, Williamson underscores the phrase “starin’ at me” with a stop-time pattern in the bass, guitar, and drums. She uses the same technique under the first “won’t let me be,” but keeps the momentum going when she repeats the phrase for a smooth transition to section C. Williamson opens this section as a solo, but is almost immediately joined by her back-up singers to create a treble dominated three-part texture. The two voices enter on the word “surrounding,” providing another instance of word painting. The form is ABCBC’ coda, with section C acting as a refrain. On its first appearance the violins play a subtle and supportive role. In the recapitulation, they are given a more significant part with a countermelody. As the final chorus comes to a close, the coda begins, with Williamson and the two back up singers exchanging ascending four-note motifs under the phrase, “rising so fine.” The song comes to a conclusion through a repeated loop of the third section.

Williamson followed the success of *The Changer and the Changed* with three albums: *Strange Paradise*, *Live Dream*, and *Lumiere*. All three were produced in 1978,

making it one of her most prolific years. *Strange Paradise* and *Lumiere* are departures from her first four albums, which tend to be based in the folk and singer-songwriter tradition. *Strange Paradise* incorporates more studio effects, and songs such as, “Twisted Love,” “Rock and Roll Child,” and “When Anger Takes the Wheel” all feature electric guitar and a heavier, rock ‘n’ roll quality. *Lumiere* is a concept album, a genre that grew in popularity with the releases of The Who’s *Tommy* (1969), David Bowie’s *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders From Mars* (1972), and Pink Floyd’s *The Dark Side of the Moon* (1973). This album demonstrates her versatility as a writer. She also steps away from key themes of women’s music by making the protagonist, Ted, a boy rather than a girl. Historically, male characters are often portrayed as adventurous, leading the reader or listener on a dangerous and exciting journey full of action and heroism. Women’s journeys are predominantly internalized, dealing with self-discovery. *Lumiere* is subtitled a “science-fantasy fable.” Ted awakes from a dream in which he has been locked up for not cleaning his closet. When he opens his eyes, Ted notices a beam of light coming from his closet. He opens the door, and discovers a beautiful forest with a rushing river leading him forward.<sup>56</sup> Ted follows the river through the forest, and eventually stumbles upon a woman named Glory. Glory exports Ted to her spaceship, leading him to a planet of strong, profound women.<sup>57</sup> Although Williamson’s story includes a cast of powerful women, it is Ted’s journey the listener is following.

“Ship of Fools” is on Williamson’s second album produced for Olivia, *Strange Paradise*. The piece is structured around two poetic stanzas:

Going through the motion

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<sup>56</sup> The story sounds similar to *The Chronicles of Narnia*, in which four children discover a magical wardrobe which leads them to a new world and a series of adventures.

<sup>57</sup> Cris Williamson, *Lumiere*. Pacific Cascade Records LPL7035, 1978, LP.



It's just like rowin' through the ocean  
And the ship of fools sails on  
The sky's the limit in the long run  
Sailing right on course in the Year of the Horse  
The journey so hard and long

Her sails spread like wings before the wind  
You can hear it sing through the rigging  
Sail on, Sweet Dreamer, sail on  
Don't let them take the wind out of your sails  
Faune Sauvage, Bon Voyage<sup>58</sup>

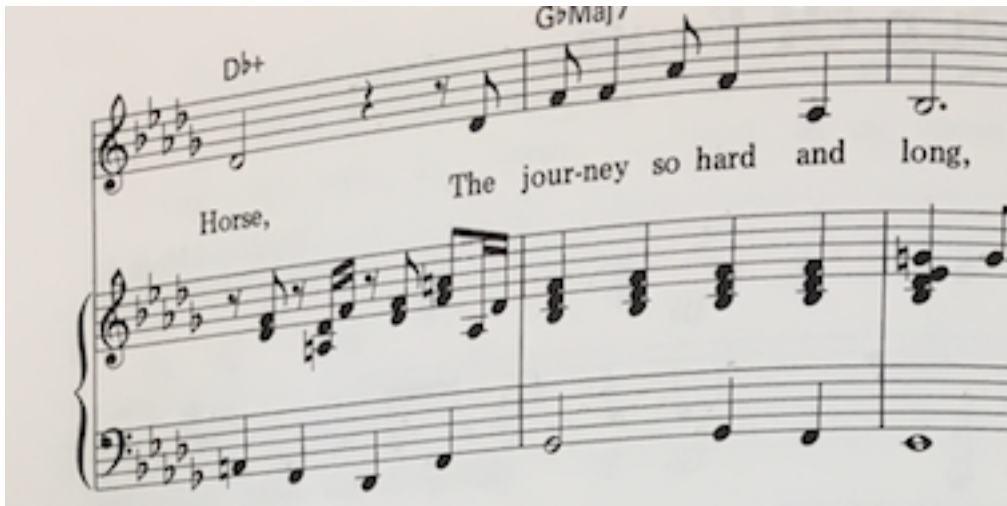
Many of Williamson's pieces follow a similar binary structure. In the A section, the key of Db major is immediately established in the bass line through an arpeggiated tonic, followed by the roots of vi-IV-V before returning to I. Williamson begins the piece with a two-measure introduction on the piano. She outlines chords IV and V in her left hand, once again confirming the key signature. Williamson's melody remains within a perfect fifth until the final line of this verse, "The journey's so hard and long." The bass ostinato under the first two lines of section A conjures the image of a steamboat sailing through the ocean.<sup>59</sup> The right hand plays a legato pattern reminiscent of the steady motion of the water. One characteristic of Williamson's writing is her fluid tempos. This is evident both within each section and with respect to the overall tempo of the two sections. One example is heard as she transitions to the B section. As Williamson sings, "Her sails spread like wings before the wind," the tempo slows down drastically. The pace continues to creep along until the phrase, "Faune Sauvage," in which Williamson begins a slight crescendo and slowly increases the tempo back to its original speed for the return of the A section. Prior to the tempo change in section B, Williamson shifts the style beat

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<sup>58</sup> Cris Williamson, "Ship of Fools," *Strange Paradise*, Olivia Records LF921, 1980, LP.

<sup>59</sup> The imagery established here is reminiscent of Disney's "Steamboat Willie," the first cartoon to feature Mickey Mouse, which debuted on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1928. The eight-minute short begins with Mickey steering a steamboat, with the two cylinders moving rhythmically as they pump steam.

at the end of section A. The piano switches from a rapid, florid accompaniment on eighth and sixteenth notes to quarter-note rhythms under the phrase, “The journey’s so hard and long.” The change highlights the incredible difficulty of the voyage. It also signals the transition to section B.<sup>60</sup>



**Example 3-6 Transition to section B, “Ship Of Fools,” mm. 10-12**

Immediately following the second line of section A, Williamson alters the rhythmic pattern in the bass to a chordal progression on beats one and three. While the tempo does not change, the rhythmic pattern on the phrase, “The sky’s the limit in the long run” is a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. This helps maintain the momentum of the verse as it heads into the final phrases. Section B adopts the tempo of the A section’s final phrase and maintains that pace until the return of section A.<sup>61</sup>

The instrumentation of “Ship of Fools” is piano and autoharp. The piano provides a dark timbral foundation, with a heavy bass line in the first two octaves of the piano. Williamson’s melody lies in the octave surrounding middle C, from Ab3 to Ab4. The autoharp provides a brighter timbre in the same octave as Williamson’s melody,

<sup>60</sup> Cris Williamson, “Ship Of Fools,” in *The Cris Williamson Songbook* (California: Olivia Records, 1985), 98. As presented in example 3-6.

<sup>61</sup> Cris Williamson, “Ship of Fools,” *Strange Paradise*, Olivia Records LF921, 1980, LP.

becoming a crucial contrast to the piano. In addition to the minimal instrumentation, Williamson incorporates several sound effects to capture the feeling of being at sea. One instance is when she sings, “You can hear it sing through the rigging,” which cues the sound of wind passing through the sails and the boat creaking as it rocks on the sea. Seagulls are also heard in several moments. The effects are subtle so as not to undermine the emotional depth of the song. The song ends with the autoharp playing a descending two-bar phrase in repetition in the octave Db5 to Db4. The sounds of seagulls and waves crashing can also be heard as the autoharp plays until the song concludes.

In 1982, Williamson released her sixth studio album, *Blue Rider*. The album features several songs inspired by fictional characters, including “Surrender Dorothy” and “Peter Pan.” The song “Night Patrol” is a tribute to John Lennon, and “Lodestar” is Williamson’s ode to an early musical influence, Judy Collins. The album also features a cover by another women’s music artist, Vicki Randle. In a review of the album, Sarie Feld acknowledges,

The most significant aspect of Cris Williamson’s latest release, *Blue Rider*, is her variation of movement...Cris Williamson had come close to locking her music within a beat that seemed plodding with repetition; *Blue Rider* bursts with fresh melodies of varying downbeats.<sup>62</sup>

Feld also addresses the heavy use of effects and technology on previous albums in relationship to this new release:

Having experimented with the possibilities provided by technology, they use it with restraint, bringing the music closer to the listener. It is a rich, warm collection, a tender “song of the soul.”<sup>63</sup>

As with many of Williamson’s albums, *Blue Rider* features a song named for a woman she is pursuing, or in this case, is pursuing her. “Lucille” is one of two rock songs on this

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<sup>62</sup> Sarie Feld, “Review: Wing Over Blue Rider,” *Off Our Backs* 13, no. 4 (April 1983): 19.

<sup>63</sup> Feld, “Review: Wing Over Blue Rider,” 19.

album. The instrumentation—drums, bass, and electric guitar—give it a gritty quality not unlike “When Anger Takes the Wheel” or “Rock and Roll Child” off of *Strange Paradise*.

“Lodestar” is an open letter to Williamson’s greatest musical inspiration, Judy Collins. Collins’ recording career began in 1961 with her debut album, *A Maid of Constant Sorrow*. Although she released six albums by 1967, it was her seventh, *Wildflowers*, which finally garnered commercial success. Collins climbed the charts with the hit single “Both Sides Now,” and her versions of “Send in the Clowns” and “Amazing Grace.” In “Lodestar,” Williamson explains the impact Collins’s career had on hers:

Years ago I drove through the snow  
To hear you sing in Boulder, Colorado  
Six nights in a row I sat in the glow of your lights  
Oh those lodestar nights

The trail you left was true  
And I followed close behind you  
Trying hard to grow the way I watched you do  
And I never knew, eyes that were as blue  
They shown right through  
And maybe you should know what you do

Oh lodestar, I followed you  
Oh lodestar, there you are  
And I never knew, eyes that were as blue  
They shown right through  
And maybe you should know what you do

The songs you made were strong  
And they helped me all along  
And now I’ll sing this song just for you  
And I never knew, eyes that were as blue  
They shown right through  
And maybe you should know what you do

Oh lodestar, I followed you  
Oh lodestar, there you are  
And I never knew, eyes that were as blue

They shown right through  
And maybe you should know what you do

I never knew eyes that were as blue  
They shown right through  
And maybe you should know what you do<sup>64</sup>

Williamson immediately engages the listener from the first downbeat of “Lodestar.”

Unlike many of her songs, in which a four or eight-measure introduction sets the piece in motion, Williamson begins singing with the very first chord. This is similar to Collins’s cover of “Just Like Tom Thumb’s Blues,” recorded by Bob Dylan in 1965. Collins often supported her voice with a single guitar. Williamson pays tribute to this by setting her song to piano and guitar accompaniment. The instrumentation represents the union of the two artists: piano for Williamson and guitar for Collins. The guitar also creates a bright contrast in timbre to the dark, heavy chord progression of the piano accompaniment. While many of Williamson’s compositions do not conform to traditional commercial music forms, “Lodestar” can be analyzed as a typical AABA form. Verses two and three end with a bridge to the chorus: “I never knew eyes that were as blue/They shown right through/And maybe you should know what you do.” The chorus reads, “Oh lodestar, I followed you/Oh lodestar, there you are.”<sup>65</sup>

An interesting element of “Lodestar” is the rhythm and tempo of the piece. Both are very rigid and consistent, which is unusual in Williamson’s writing. Here, Williamson maintains a steady tempo and little rhythmic variation. The texture of “Lodestar” is homophonic. These choices in rhythm and texture could be due to the significance of the text, which isn’t watered down with poetic symbolism. Williamson does, however, play on the double meaning of the term lodestar. A lodestar is a star used to lead or guide the

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<sup>64</sup> Cris Williamson, “Lodestar,” *Blue Rider*, Olivia Records LF931, 1982, LP.

<sup>65</sup> Williamson, “Lodestar,” 1982.

course of a ship. It can also refer to one who serves as an inspiration or model.

Williamson is obviously referring to Collins as her musical inspiration, while also describing the path on which she led Williamson as a strong female artist and activist.

“Lodestar” is written in D major, but briefly tonicizes E major in the penultimate section. As Williamson repeats the bridge, she returns to D major for the conclusion of the piece. This is not a typical compositional technique for Williamson, although she makes a similar choice in the song “Blue Rider” off of this same album. The key change could be a stylistic choice, as many of her folk ballads don’t modulate. This can also be seen as another homage to Collins, who regularly covered musical theater repertoire, a genre known for frequent key changes. “Lodestar” is not a series of musical tropes on Collins’s output. Williamson does not insert musical quotes or lyrical references to specific songs. Rather, it is through the subtle musical devices mentioned above that she acknowledges Collins’s influence on her career.

### **Margie Adam**

When Margie Adam released her first album, *Margie Adam. Songwriter* in 1976 on her record label, Pleiades, a thriving women’s music community had already welcomed the music of Meg Christian, Cris Williamson, Alix Dobkin, and Kay Gardner, among others. Adam enlisted the help of her fellow women’s music artists; Christian and Williamson sing back-up and play guitar on several songs, Kay Gardner plays the flute and Linda Tillery provides her percussive talents. The album was a departure from the previous singer-songwriter/folk styles represented by Dobkin, Christian, and Williamson. While Adam listened to artists like Joan Baez, Laura Nyro, and Judy Collins, she also drew on the traditions of George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Maurice

Ravel, Claude Debussy, and Edvard Grieg. Through such varied influences Adam creates a style that is at times intense and intricate, as well as whimsical and entertaining. In an article written shortly after the release of *Naked Keys*, journalist Daniel Wood notes,

Her music has been described as both funny and poignant, with balanced lyrics running the gamut from soft ballads to tongue-in-cheek blues—a highly listenable blend of folk, pop, and classical music.<sup>66</sup>

On her first album, Adam invoked her eclectic musical influences and stylistic range to produce ten works of varying genres and compositional complexity. The first piece is entitled “Best Friend (The Unicorn Song),” in which Adam describes three unique relationships throughout significant stages of her life:

When I was growing up, my best friend was a unicorn  
The others smiled at me and called me crazy  
But I was not upset by knowing I did not conform.  
I always thought their seeing must be hazy  
The unicorn and I would while away the hours  
Playing, dancing and romancing in the wild flowers  
And we’d sing  
Seeing is believing in the things you see  
Loving is believing in the ones you love!<sup>67</sup>

The lyrics continue, describing her best friend as the “northern star” in her teens and one that “lives inside of me” as an adult. The perceived simplicity of the lyrics is quickly overshadowed by the complexity of Adam’s songwriting. The introduction begins with a four-note motif starting on Bb and descending to G. This pattern is heard first in the piano before being passed to the bass guitar, which reintroduces it to the listener in each chorus. The motif recurs in the piano to tie each chorus to the next verse.

The song’s positive message of loving oneself and inner strength is paired with a

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<sup>66</sup> Daniel B. Wood, “She Sings Lyrics of Affirmation for Women,” *The Christian Science Monitor* 72 (September 22, 1980): 19.

<sup>67</sup> Margie Adam, “Best Friend (The Unicorn Song),” *Margie Adam. Songwriter*, Pleiades Records PC-2747, 1974, LP.

dense and flowing accompaniment that is typical of Adam’s style. The fluid quality of the accompaniment is starkly contrasted with the disjunct nature of Adam’s melody. Leaps of a minor and major third are used throughout the verse. Adam expands the leaps to a perfect fourth on “crazy” and perfect fifth on “hazy.” These changes emphasize the significance of each moment harmonically and lyrically. During the bridge to the chorus, Adam’s melody becomes a series of arpeggiations over the accompanying chord progression. The first is sung over the phrase, “The unicorn and I,” in which she sings C5-Ab4-F4-Db4-F4-Ab4 while spelling out Fmin7 and Bbmin7 chords in the accompaniment. The second time this occurs is at the end of the bridge, in which the melody over “in the wild flowers...and we’d sing” is an arpeggiated C major chord. Again, the melody starts on the tonic, C5, and descends to C4 before ascending again to E4 and G4.

Rhythmically, the melody of “Best Friend” is extremely syncopated and reliant on eighth and quarter-note patterns. When Adam approaches a cadence, the rhythm transitions to whole notes, drawing out the words “crazy” and “hazy.”<sup>68</sup>



**Example 3-7, “Best Friend (The Unicorn Song),” mm. 5-8**

The rhythm of the four-note motif in the bass and piano is a sequence of dotted quarter notes. The flute plays an important role in maintaining a legato line, juxtaposing the syncopation of the piano, bass, and vocal line. The bass guitar provides a steady rhythmic foundation against the constant motion of the piano. Kay Gardner delivers a thoughtful

<sup>68</sup> Margie Adam, “Best Friend (The Unicorn Song),” in *Paid My Dues* 1/6 (March 1976), 34. Originally published by Labyris Music Co. in California, 1974. As presented in example 3-7.



flute counterpoint to Adam's melody in the third verse. The contrapuntal texture of "Best Friend" is established from the beginning of the piece, as the piano and melody are never truly separated. Adam treats her piano accompaniment as an extension of the melody in a similar fashion to Debussy. The addition of the flute's melody in verse three completes the polyphonic tapestry presented by Adam.

"Best Friend" is in Ab major with a melodic range of roughly an octave. The narrow vocal range, stretching from Bb3-C5, could be attributed to Adam's insecurities about her capability as a singer. When discussing her vocal abilities, Adam was reluctant to label herself as a "singer-songwriter." As she explained,

When I began to perform publicly, I prefaced my communications with the audience by saying I was not a singer. I had sung in a choir. I grew up in the Episcopal Church and my mother was a church organist and I sang in choir and I loved singing in choir. I got a lot of fundamental chord color from those...fabulous...hymns...so I sang in a church choir. But the idea that I would have seen myself as a singer-songwriter...I did not use that language in the first year of my performance in women's music.<sup>69</sup>

Adam's uncertainty regarding her vocal talent is demonstrated throughout this first album, as many of the pieces have a limited vocal range. In verse one and two, Adam highlights the thin timbre of her vocal line with a deep, rich accompaniment. Adam's musicianship is apparent in these opening verses, as she knows when to use the piano as a supportive instrument, and when to build the momentum through dynamics, such as the bridge leading into each chorus. The form of this piece is verse-chorus, with a bridge leading into the chorus, and a short instrumental interlude following each refrain. The piece ends with repetition of the phrase, "loving is believing in the ones you love."<sup>70</sup>

The second song on *Songwriter* is appropriately titled "Images." Each line places

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<sup>69</sup> Interview with Margie Adam. Interview by the author, August 17, 2017. 29:50-31:39.

<sup>70</sup> Margie Adam, "Best Friend (The Unicorn Song)," *Margie Adam. Songwriter*, Pleiades Records PC-2747, 1974, LP.

a new image in the listener's mind, beginning with a flower picked from the narrator's soul and ending with the canyons of her heart. The four-measure introduction presents the first eight notes of the melody in the piano an octave above the vocal line, which enters in m. 5; Adam's voice matches the gentle nature of her playing. There is extensive word painting, which Adam also employs in the songs "Sweet Friend of Mine" and "Beautiful Soul," along with a number of her other works. In the first verse, the narrator instructs the listener to "Pick a flower from my soul/Put it in a crystal bowl/Water it with tender care/And watch it open in the air."<sup>71</sup> The image of a delicate flower and the request to care for it compassionately is underscored by the soft piano. As the verse concludes, Adam crescendos into the second verse on the line, "The rest will come with time." The bass guitar also enters on this phrase and remains crucial to the timbral structure of the subsequent verses and interlude. In the next verse, Adam sings, "Feel the ocean of my mind/Take the treasures that you find." Dynamically, this verse is significantly stronger than the first. Adam's dense playing is complemented by the intensity of her voice. The violin enters in verse three, playing an ascending line over the phrase, "Climb the canyons of my heart."

The piece is in AABA form, with the B section performed as an instrumental interlude by the piano, bass, and flute. The violin enters in m. 49, sustaining A5 before providing a similar harmonic progression to the bass guitar. The flute takes the melody, but passes it to the violin as verse three begins. In the final verse of "Images," the violin plays a countermelody to Adam's vocal line. When Adam sings, "Sing the songs you hear in me/Become part of the fantasy," the violin sustains an A5 pedal tone once again. "Images" is in the key of D major, but as with many of Adam's compositions, the

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<sup>71</sup> Margie Adam, "Images," *Margie Adam. Songwriter*, Pleiades Records PC-2747, 1974, LP.

harmonic language shifts between major and minor. She briefly tonicizes D minor in the second stanza of each verse. The vocal range is once again quite small, spanning an octave from A3 to A4. The opening melodic gesture is a repeated major second between E4 and F#4, finally leaping a minor third to A4 before descending stepwise back to E4. The melody is mostly conjunct, with occasional leaps of a third and fourth. The largest leap takes place between the E4 at the end of the third stanza and the A3 at the beginning of the refrain, “The rest will come with time.”

As with many of her songs, Adam utilizes syncopation throughout the melody of “Images.” The verses are dominated by eighth-note rhythms. When Adam reaches the conclusion of a phrase, the rhythm separates from the previous syncopation and sticks to straight quarter and half-note durations. This happens in mm. 13, 31, and 67. At the refrain, Adam highlights the phrase “The rest will come with time” through suspensions, elongating the words “rest” and “time.”

Adam is sensitive to dynamic contrast in her compositions. In “Images,” the first verse starts *piano*, with a gradual crescendo to *mezzo-forte* in the final line. As she heads into verse two, Adam maintains the intensity of the previous phrase and does not decrescendo until the line, “Run along the shoreline sand/And listen to your heart’s command.” As with the previous verse, the crescendo into the interlude begins at the refrain. Both the interlude and verse three are identical to the dynamic shape of verse two. The piece concludes with a decrescendo on the word “time,” while the flute and violin perform the final F# two octaves apart.

One of Adam’s most enduring pieces from her first album is “Beautiful Soul.” In this song, the narrator is reaching out to someone who seems deeply troubled with their

sexuality. This is one of the only pieces on her first album that overtly examines the struggle of coming out and the inner anguish of recognizing one's sexual orientation. The listener immediately gets a sense of the agony experienced by the subject of the song in the four note motif Adam plays as the song's introduction. Beginning on C#5, it gradually descends in half steps to Bb4. The harmonic line is in parallel fifths, with the exception of the tritone formed by F4-Bb4, on which Adam lingers until concluding on another perfect fifth with Eb4-Bb4. There is also a single chime of a triangle sounded each time Adam lands on this interval. The tritone creates instability in the harmonic progression and leaves the listener unsure of what key Adam will land on. Its use in this opening sequence also foreshadows the suffering felt by the subject of the composition.

When the introduction concludes, Adam seamlessly transitions into an Eb major chord and harmonic stability. The opening melody begins on Bb3 and leaps a perfect fourth to Eb4 as it continues to ascend through F4, G4, and Ab4, finally peaking on Bb4.<sup>72</sup>



Example 3-8, Opening melody of “Beautiful Soul,” mm. 1-2.

This melody is similar to the second theme in the first movement of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, which begins on G4 and leaps to Bb4 and Eb5, then ascends stepwise to F5 and G5, and reaches a climax at Ab5. Rachmaninoff's second concerto was written after a three-year hiatus in which the composer suffered from depression due to the poor reception of his First Symphony, which had been critically

<sup>72</sup> Margie Adam, “Beautiful Soul,” *Margie Adam. Songwriter* (California: Labyris Music Co., 1974), 1. As presented in example 3-8.

panned. The torment Rachmaninoff felt was poured into the concerto, which is considered one of his greatest works.<sup>73</sup> In the 1970s, a number of artists pulled from Rachmaninoff's masterpiece, sometimes quoting themes verbatim, and other times embodying the spirit of the work. Eric Carmen's 1975 hit "All By Myself" directly quotes the main subject of the second movement, as does David Bowie's "Life On Mars." It is no surprise Adam pulled inspiration from this piece. Her influences as a pianist included Rachmaninoff, and the story of its inception carries thematic similarities to the plight of the subject of Adam's song.

In the first verse, she sings,

I wonder where you are, loveable lady  
I wonder what you're thinking, beautiful woman  
It seems like fog is settling in within your eyes  
And the weight of something is pulling your shoulders down.<sup>74</sup>

As Adam sings the final line of the verse, she again employs text painting; the melody descends on the words "pulling" and "shoulders down." Like "Images," this piece is written in AABA form. In the first two lines of the B section, the melody lingers on a single pitch, ascending in whole and half steps at the end of each phrase. When Adam sings, "You want to transcend it," the melody splits into two-part harmony. Both parts start on G4, but the melody descends stepwise to F4, before ascending to G4 where it is suspended briefly before resolving on Eb4. The harmony remains on G4 before ascending a half step to Ab4. The dissonance reflects the pain both women are experiencing.

In the final verse, Adam is joined by two additional voices to give a thicker

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<sup>73</sup> Elizabeth Schwartz, "Program Notes: Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 18," *Oregon Symphony*, accessed April 2, 2019, <https://www.orsymphony.org/concerts-tickets/program-notes/1819/rachmaninoffs-second-piano-concerto/>.

<sup>74</sup> Margie Adam, "Beautiful Soul," *Margie Adam. Songwriter*, Pleiades Records PC-2747, 1974, LP.

texture. The third verse reads,

Do you hate yourself, loveable lady?  
Can I be of help, beautiful woman?  
Your silence is a wall between the two of us  
And my beautiful soul is weeping.<sup>75</sup>

All three voices enter at the beginning of the second line, and continue through to the end of the piece. Once again, the harmonic language is filled with dissonance as the narrator pleads, “Your silence is a wall between the two of us,” only to briefly resolve until the final word “weeping.” The melodic support the two backup singers provide is musically and thematically appropriate for this verse, especially as the narrator asks, “Can I be of help, beautiful woman?”

This piece relies heavily on the piano, though the instrumentation also includes bass and acoustic guitar. The guitar fills serve as a bridge between phrases and provides a brief melodic turn after lines in the second and final A sections, as well as the B section. Each of these motifs incorporates Ab4, which often acts as a starting or ending pitch. The first turn is a five-note phrase, Ab4-G4-Eb4-F4-Ab4. This same series is used following the penultimate phrase of the song. In comparison to “Lost in Inner Space” or “Would You Like to Tapdance on the Moon?,” in which the affect of the piece depends on instruments beyond the piano, the message of “Beautiful Soul” does not.

In 1977, Adam embarked upon a fifty-city tour to promote *Margie Adam*. *Songwriter*. The final show took place at the National Women’s Conference in Houston, where Adam performed her powerful anthem, “We Shall Go Forth!” to a crowd of 10,000 women.<sup>76</sup> Three years later, Adam recorded the piece in Boston with an audience of 1,500 joining her in song. The Boston recording now resides in the Political History

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Stacy Trevenon, “Margie Adam returns,” *Half Moon Bay Review* (February 27, 2002), n.p.

Division of the Smithsonian. This piece is the title track of her live album released in 1982, which includes the powerful ballads “Who Among Us,” “Tender Lady,” and “Babychild.” The lyrics of “We Shall Go Forth!” capture the dynamism and momentum of the women’s movement as it worked toward ratification of the ERA and fighting against the Family Protection Act, as well as supporting the causes of upholding affirmative action and the Voting Rights Act.<sup>77</sup>

We shall go forth from this place  
Proud of the things we’ve done  
Sharing the things we’ve won  
We shall not fail  
We shall go forth from this place  
Willing to open wide  
Sharing the light inside  
We shall not fail  
Bringing together all we know  
For others who are struggling alone  
Bringing together all we are  
Offering those who want to find us  
A way to find us  
A way to see  
We shall go forth from this place  
Taking with us the pride  
Of knowing we can decide  
We shall not fail  
We shall go forth.<sup>78</sup>

In an interview shortly before the recording, Adam explained, “‘We Shall Go Forth!’ is a way of capturing that kind of energy and determination concretely.”<sup>79</sup> This piece does not share many similarities with protest songs like Dylan’s “The Times They Are A Changin’

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<sup>77</sup> The Family Protection Act was presented to the House on January 5, 1981. Title V states that the proposed bill, “Prohibits the expenditure of Federal funds to any organization which presents male or female homosexuality as an acceptable alternative life style [sic] or which suggests that it can be an acceptable life style [sic]. Amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide that any action taken by an employer against a homosexual shall not be considered an unlawful employment practice. Prohibits any instrumentality of the Federal Government from seeking to enforce nondiscrimination with respect to homosexuals.”

<sup>78</sup> Margie Adam, “We Shall Go Forth!,” *We Shall Go Forth!*, Pleiades Records HB2749, 1982, LP.

<sup>79</sup> Clara Kern, “An Interview with Margie Adam,” *The American Women Making History and Culture: 1963-1982* (May 1981), 23:04-23:13.

or “We Shall Overcome.”<sup>80</sup> These and analogous songs are in the folk tradition; the accompaniment is usually a guitar or another stringed instrument. The melody is simple and stepwise with a limited range, and rhythmically unchallenging. The form of the song is strophic with a refrain in between each verse, and the harmonic progression is typically I-IV-V. By contrast, “We Shall Go Forth!” was composed for piano and women’s chorus. The piece begins in F major but modulates to F minor in the B section. Adam plays a four-note motif to introduce the piece. The sequence begins on F5 and descends stepwise to Eb5-D5-C5. The Eb establishes that this phrase is in F mixolydian, considered to be a “woman’s mode” by Kay Gardner.<sup>81</sup> The same eighth-note pattern is repeated as the melody of the refrain, “we shall not fail.” In the introduction, the motif is harmonized in thirds and leaps to F4 between each chord, reinforcing the key. The melody is mostly conjunct and employs eighth and sixteenth-note rhythms. Both the melody and chordal accompaniment are highly syncopated. Adam draws out the phrase “we shall not fail” by setting it in quarter-note rhythms; in the final refrain, she sets the repeated phrase “we shall go forth” to quarter notes as well. While the dynamic contrast Adam creates instrumentally provides a clear distinction between sections, her accompaniment is thick and full throughout.

“We Shall Go Forth!” it is most closely aligned with the complex civil rights

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<sup>80</sup> Noah Adams, “The Inspiring Force of ‘We Shall Overcome’,” *All Things Considered: National Public Radio* (August 28, 2013), accessed September 19, 2017, <http://www.npr.org/2013/08/28/216482943/the-inspiring-force-of-we-shall-overcome>. To simply refer to “We Shall Overcome” as a contemporary protest song of the 1960s is a bit reductive. “We Shall Overcome” began as a slave work song with the lyrics “I’ll be alright someday.” Charles Albert Tindley published it in 1901 with the title “I’ll Overcome Someday.” Its first political use was in 1945 during a tobacco strike, and it later became the anthem of the civil rights movement when Joan Baez performed the piece on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1963 at the culmination of the March on Washington.

<sup>81</sup> In multiple interviews throughout her career, Kay Gardner described the scales and modes she believed were feminine or lesbian. The Mixolydian mode is attributed to Sappho, a poet and musician who lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. on the island of Lesbos. In a recent interview with Ms. Adam, it was brought to the author’s attention that she did not take this into consideration when composing in this mode.



anthems of Nina Simone. Simone was a classical pianist who brought her formal training to more popular genres. While primarily influenced by jazz, her classical background was foundational to her style and output. Many of her compositions contributed to the soundtrack of the civil rights movement, including “Mississippi Goddam,” “Four Women,” “Old Jim Crow,” “Revolution,” and her powerful tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr., “Why? (The King of Love is Dead).” Like Adam, Simone’s pieces boast greater rhythmic and harmonic variety. Simone did not consider herself a singer either, so most of her melodies span an octave in range, though her lyrics are poetic and allegorical, as opposed to Adam’s literal approach to text. One of the most important components of “We Shall Go Forth!” is the communal element. The arrangement is for piano and chorus, but there is also an opportunity for audience participation. The final chorus is repeated a total of twelve times. In the live recording, one can hear Adam call out, “sing it with me,” to the audience as the chorus begins.<sup>82</sup> Adam has described the connection with her audience as one of the most important aspects of her performance. She explains,

In an audience-performance situation, which is filled with humor, which is filled with love, which is filled with real hopefulness. You put a combination of all that stuff together and then you stir in a sense of community building, which always happens when an audience not only starts to identify with the artist onstage but also with itself. When an audience sits there and goes, “I’m not the only one who’s feeling this. I get a sense that other people are having the same reaction to this woman on the stage.” When an audience member starts to feel like he or she is not the only one, then you start making contact, connections, like a psychic thing, a connection with other audience members. I can hear that onstage. There’s a point at which, it’s almost as if the audience starts to breathe as one...Part of my work, part of what drives me crazy and keeps me sane is that wonderful connection that happens, not only when I connect with the audience, but when the audience connects with me...When we get a circle going, the kind of empowering that goes on in that room ends up going

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<sup>82</sup> Margie Adam, “We Shall Go Forth!,” *We Shall Go Forth!*, Pleiades Records PC-2749, 1982, LP.

way beyond the concert.<sup>83</sup>

“We Shall Go Forth!” becomes a collaboration between audience and artist. Adam creates the same opportunity in “Who Among Us,” in which she calls out to the audience to join her on the chorus, “Gotta build another plan, gotta find a way.”<sup>84</sup> While the style and complexity of these pieces do not fit the traditional criteria of a protest song, the messages and sense of community embody the spirit of the genre.<sup>85</sup>

A handwritten musical score for the final chorus of the song "We Shall Go Forth!". The score is written on five staves: vocal (Soprano, Alto 1, Alto 2), and piano accompaniment (Right and Left Hand). The lyrics "WE SHALL GO FORTH." are written across the vocal staves. The piano part features a complex, rhythmic accompaniment with many accidentals and dynamic markings such as *f*, *ff*, *pp*, and *fff*. The score includes various musical notations like slurs, ties, and dynamic hairpins. The piece concludes with a double bar line and a final chord.

Example 3-9, Final Chorus, “We Shall Go Forth!,” mm. 37-42

Women’s music compositions were celebrated by fans for their powerful, political lyrics, centered on same-sex relationships and empowering women. The clearest way to state their position was through text. However, included in the output of the founding mothers are instrumental tracks, and in the case of Margie Adam, an entire instrumental album. Her second album, *Naked Keys*, was produced in 1980 and established her as a serious composer. Adam’s reluctance to produce a solo piano album is made apparent in her liner notes:

<sup>83</sup> Clara Kern, “An Interview with Margie Adam,” *The American Women Making History and Culture: 1963-1982* (May 1981), 7:13-8:52.

<sup>84</sup> Margie Adam, “Who Among Us,” *We Shall Go Forth!*, Pleiades Records PC-2749, 1982, LP.

<sup>85</sup> Margie Adam, “We Shall Go Forth!,” in *Paid My Dues 2/3* (Spring 1978), 15. Originally published by Labyris Music Co., California, 1977. As presented in example 3-9.

Traditionally, women musicians have been viewed as singers, no matter how stunning their instrumental work. It occurred to me that if I ever expected to be identified as an instrumentalist, I would have to stop singing. At the same time, the exposure involved, the vulnerability inherent in recording a solo instrumental album, created an intensely self-confronting experience for and in me. What I learned in the process is that when we risk new possibilities we give birth to ourselves. When we stand clear of others' expectations, we define our own dimensions. The air is cool and clear on the edge.<sup>86</sup>

Instrumental compositions established a more serious tone within the women's music market as made evident in Deborah Weiner's review of *Naked Keys*. Weiner wrote,

*Naked Keys* should not be passed off as "easy listening" merely because of the absence of lyrics. Margie has firmly maintained all along that "women's music does not necessarily have to be about women's issues or even about women per se. What makes it special is that it comes from the consciousness of a woman who views herself as a self-reliant entity." And it is from this position of strength and individuality that she allows the piano to sing about her own experiences and those that women share. This new women's music is serious and intelligent, down to the team of women who controlled the production, engineering, and designing of the album.<sup>87</sup>

Adam, along with Kay Gardner and Meg Christian, had integrated instrumental tracks onto previous albums, but this was the first entirely instrumental album in women's music. As with *Songwriter*, the eleven tracks comprising *Naked Keys* vary in style, genre, and complexity. The use of imagery is still a foundational element of Adam's compositional approach. In "Waves," Adam conjures an image of waves crashing and the tide coming to shore with constant melodic movement. The momentum never comes to a stop as Adam weakens cadence points through rhythmic consistency and changes key abruptly. Heavy accents on beats four and one indicate the moment of impact between water and rock. "Whimsy Salad" is jovial and quaint, combining harmonic and rhythmic complexity with the energy and humor of a 1970s sitcom theme

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<sup>86</sup> Margie Adam, *Naked Keys*, Pleiades Records PC-2748, 1980, LP.

<sup>87</sup> Deborah Weiner, "From Songwriter to Naked Keys," *Off Our Backs* 10, no. 6 (June 1980): 20.

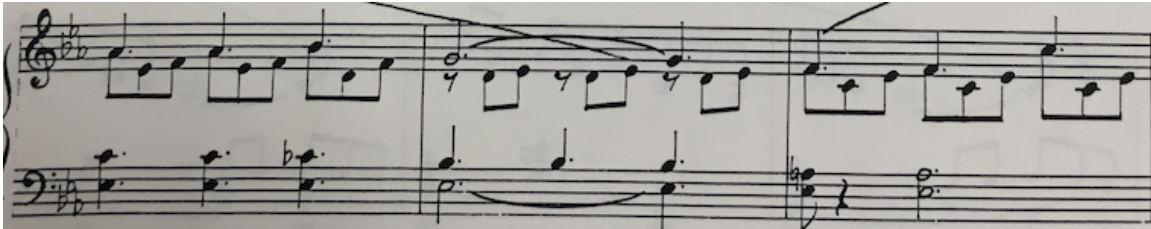
song. “Woodland” stands alone in Adam’s output, as it evokes the image of a vast, open forest through a sparse and chordal texture. While many of her pieces are reminiscent of nineteenth-century romantic compositions, this piece can be compared to the “voice of solitary contemplation” in the works of Aaron Copland. Among the characteristics of Copland’s works are his use of open octaves and empty space. In the book *Aaron Copland and His World*, Morris Dickstein describes his style as an “economy of means,” in which the simplification of resources ultimately creates a vastly complex work.<sup>88</sup>

The title *Naked Keys* describes Adam’s emotional and mental state when she was writing the album. However, the title track does not represent the exposure and sense of vulnerability she describes feeling as she wrote instrumental pieces. The opening eight measures is a repeated rhythmic pattern beginning with a strong downbeat outlining an Eb triad with an added seventh. Adam begins each measure on Eb3 or Bb2, working her way through a two-octave descending arpeggio. The chord clusters built on major and minor seconds create tension and harmonic instability, which is coupled with the constant change of rhythmic pulse. Theme one is a descending sequence of eighth notes beginning on G4. At measure fifteen, the pattern transforms to a dotted quarter note ascending phrase, which emphasizes the transition to theme two. The strong downbeat of the introduction is muffled by the melody in mm. 9-16, causing a sense of metric instability. Theme one is interrupted by the entrance of the second theme in m. 21, but re-enters in m. 29. Theme two is interwoven with the accompaniment, which now acts as a countermelody to theme two rather than a structural harmonic foundation. At m. 31, Adam resets the piece with a two-bar return of the introduction. The third theme begins in

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<sup>88</sup> Morris Dickstein, “Copland and American Populism in the 1930s,” in *Aaron Copland and His World*, ed. Carol J. Oja and Judith Tick (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), 84-98.

m. 53 with a repeated triplet pattern over a series of descending chords.<sup>89</sup>



Example 3-10, Theme 3 from “Naked Keys,” mm. 55-57

The melodic and harmonic patterns begin to interweave at m. 60, passing the patterns to the opposite hand from which they began. The next entrance of theme one follows shortly after the transition. There is a gradual crescendo to this point, which now reaches its dynamic zenith. Adam begins a decrescendo in m. 77 to *piano*, with an immediate crescendo in mm. 79-80, before returning to *piano* at the entrance in m. 81. Adam begins another crescendo in m. 87 as she heads into the final entrance of theme three in m. 90. Adam stretches the range of this composition into a fifth octave, playing an ascending scale to Bb5. The final section is a series of cascading phrases, culminating in the final entrance of theme one. The final phrase is a five-octave descent beginning on G5 and outlining a C major triad before landing on an imperfect authentic cadence in C major.

Adam’s fourth album, *Here is a Love Song*, was her final recording before an eight-year hiatus. The album is an aural departure from the first three. Although the instrumentation of the first three records varies from song to song, she relies on her ensemble to a greater degree on this album. With the exception of “Simple Ways,” each piece is scored for no less than four instruments. New to this record are the tenor and soprano saxophone, trumpet, flugelhorn, harp, and acoustic bass. *Here is a Love Song* is also a dramatic shift in genre. “Cool Around You” is rooted in jazz and harkens back to

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<sup>89</sup> Margie Adam, “Naked Keys,” *Naked Keys* (California: Labyris Music, Co., 1980), 1. As presented in example 3-10.

“Sleazy,” off of Adam’s debut album. “Undone” reflects the influence of funk in popular music, beginning in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Adam’s penchant for ballads is echoed in “Consequences,” “How Many Ways?” and the title track, “Here is a Love Song.”

Of the four albums Adam recorded from 1976 to 1983, *Here is a Love Song* is the most commercial. This change in style and element of experimentation appears to be a common theme among women’s music artists around this time. In 1981, Holly Near released *Fire in the Rain*, admittedly a record written with the intention of reaching a wider audience. Selections from Alix Dobkin’s fourth album, *These Women/Never Been Better* are divorced from her typical, folk-rooted style. Meg Christian’s fourth album, *From the Heart*, released in 1984, is another example of these changes in style. “Cheap Thrills” is reminiscent of Adam’s “Undone,” and the opening track, “You Got My Attention” highlights a percussive piano rather than Christian’s signature guitar.

While “Here is a Love Song” can be categorized as a ballad, it is different from her previous compositions. Adam opens the piece on the piano, but is quickly joined by a cymbal roll in mm. 2 and 6, and chimes signal the beginning of the verse. Each line of the verse is punctuated with piano and percussion, signaling the beginning of the next phrase. Adam’s accompaniment is a repeated four-note sequence in the right hand. The momentum of the verse immediately shifts in the transitional bridge between verse and chorus. The piano is featured as a solo instrument and the accompaniment becomes chordal. The percussion enters as the chorus begins, with the harp providing an imitative pattern at the end of the phrases “come what may” and “day by day”.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Margie Adam, “Here is a Love Song,” *Here is a Love Song*, Pleiades Records HB2750, 1983, LP.

The counterpoint provided by the vibraphone and harp creates layers of sound in verse two, as Barbara Borden maintains a steady pulse on the snare drum. As Adam enters the next bridge, the accompaniment transitions to chords in the piano, with the percussive instruments remaining as additional rhythmic support. The harmonic rhythm dramatically decelerates in the bridge. Adam stretches the line, “And all through the years” over a four-measure phrase, creating rhythmic tension between voice and instruments. The piece is in Ab lydian. Although liberties are taken with the tempo between sections, the momentum of the piece is never lost due to Adam’s avoidance of cadential points, another common tendency in her music.

“Here is a Love Song” also includes a number of percussive instruments. The trap set enters in verse two and remains prominent throughout the piece. In the final chorus, the vibraphone harmonizes with Adam’s melody on the phrases, “Here is a love song coming straight from my heart/Though our lives may change in ways we never have to part.” Chimes are used sparingly to signal a transition, both from the introduction into the first verse and in the final phrase of the first chorus. Although not as prominent as in her other pieces, Adam does employ a few moments of word painting in this composition. In the opening phrase of the second verse, “And as the days went rushing by,” the harp plays an ascending eighth-note pattern as she sings “rushing.” In the final chorus, the piano and harp alternate between ascending and descending sequences under the words, “though we change,” and “rearrange.”

### **Holly Near**

Holly Near was already an experienced performer and a very engaged activist in the social and political movements of the 1960s by the time she began performing with

other women's music artists. In 1972, Near developed her record label Redwood Records, which then became an outlet for her own albums, as well as other artists who demonstrated value in activism and various other causes. Within five years, Near had released four albums on her label; *Hang In There, A Live Album*, *You Can Know All I Am*, and *Imagine My Surprise*. The fourth album, *Imagine My Surprise*, was, as Near recalls, "...my first "OUT" lesbian identified recording."<sup>91</sup> The album featured eleven original songs, two of which were written with her pianist and writing partner, Jeff Langley, and three were written with her girlfriend and fellow women's music artist, Meg Christian.

One of the pieces written in collaboration with Christian was the song "Nina." This piece embodies Near's folk style and is paired beautifully with her rich, full soprano voice. In a review from *Off Our Backs*, Marcy Rein describes,

As on Holly's other albums, the style is solidly rooted in American traditional and pop and Western European classical traditions. For the most part the melodies are lyrical, the harmonies round and resonant, the rhythms steady and flowing.<sup>92</sup>

"Nina" is structured in verse-refrain format, with the refrain opening the piece:

Oh Nina, where does your heart take you today  
To play with Negra and Rose and Maria  
I sadly recall the friends of my childhood  
You, my love, bear the fruit of my pain

Do you ride wild horses in Amazon battles  
I rode like a lady – except when alone  
I wept for dead soldiers then burned all my journals

Chorus

Your muscles are shining as you dance with each other

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<sup>91</sup> Holly Near, "Track Notes," *Imagine My Surprise!*, Redwood Records RRCD 401, 1978, LP.

<sup>92</sup> Marcy Rein, "Imagine My Surprise! an album of songs about women's lives by Holly Near," *Off Our Backs*, 9, no. 1 (January 1979): 14.



I wore shiny stockings, I was led to the floor  
I learned how to follow but never got married

Chorus

Nina, my daughter, sometimes I resent you  
Your laughter, your lovers, your courage to feel  
I was never allowed to love Eloisa  
Yet you sleep so warm in the arms of your friends  
But as I lie awake and hear your soft pleasure  
My resentment fades, and I shelter your love  
For the outside world makes you cry all too often  
And because of you, I too hold a woman tonight

Oh Nina, where does your heart take you today  
To play with Negra and Rose and Maria  
You will sadly recall your pages of childhood  
Women unborn will bear the fruit of your pain<sup>93</sup>

Christian begins the piece with a strong, energetic strumming pattern that continues through the refrain. The guitar is joined by bass and percussion to fill out the texture. At the verse, Christian changes her pattern to a simple root-chord structure. The pattern emphasizes the 3/4 dance meter, but also allows Near to experiment rhythmically and does not limit her tempo choices. In that way, this section takes on a quasi-recitative style. The waltz rhythm is appropriate for the style and message of the text, as love songs are often written in a dance meter.

The refrain begins in F major. The melody begins with a perfect fourth from F4-C4, then leaping up a perfect fifth to G4 before continuing in stepwise motion. As with typical folk-style songs, the melody of the refrain is largely in stepwise motion and does not exceed an octave plus a major second in range. The leaps that do occur in the refrain are no larger than a perfect fifth, but the most commonly used interval is the perfect fourth. When Near begins singing, “I sadly recall the friends of my childhood,” the

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<sup>93</sup> Holly Near, “Nina,” *Imagine My Surprise!*, Redwood Records RRCD 401, 1978, LP.

harmony takes on a minor quality. There is no real modulation; rather, Christian tonicizes G minor until the return of F major at the close of the refrain. The first two verses are in Ab major, with the final line leading back into F major for the chorus. In the third verse, the harmony modulates to F major when Near begins singing, “but as I lie awake and hear your soft pleasure,” accounting for the additional lines in the verse. The harmony moves back to Ab major as the verse comes to an end. The first two verses also end with chromatic ascension underneath the final words of each verse, emphasizing the pain in the narrative. In the final verse, the chromaticism is noticeably missing from the lyric, “And because of you, I too hold a woman tonight.” This signifies the joy experienced by the narrator as she finally embraces her sexuality.

Near performs each verse as a solo, as well as the opening refrain. The second, third, and final refrains include harmony parts performed by Rhiannon, Teresa Trull, and Christian. The harmony splits on the opening two lines. When Near begins the third line, “I sadly recall the friends of my childhood,” all four voices join together in unison. On the final phrase, “You, my love, bear the fruit of my pain,” the backup singers create a foundation underneath Near’s soprano melody, creating a degree of depth to the phrase. The piece ends with all four voices coming together on the final line, “Women unborn will bear the fruit of your pain.”

Near considers the title track, “Imagine My Surprise,” as “my first attempt to write a lesbian song. So hard to remember how ‘new’ this was to the musical literature.”<sup>94</sup> Although this piece can be interpreted as an obvious love song between women, there is also a much broader topic being explored. Near was inspired to write the piece after learning about women who had been left out of the history books. In that way,

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<sup>94</sup> Holly Near, “Track Notes,” *Imagine My Surprise!*, Redwood Records RRCD 401, 1978, LP.

“Imagine My Surprise” possesses a certain innocence in discovering women who have been overshadowed by their male contemporaries throughout history.

Imagine my surprise! I love that I have found you  
But I ache all over wanting to know your every dream  
Imagine my surprise! To find that I love you  
Feeling warm all over knowing that you've been alive

Pirates off an Eastern Coast  
Women you lived in danger  
But I hear your laughter free of petticoats  
No need for foolish chivalry  
Though you're living in the eighteenth century  
You make love to each other on your boats out on the sea

Imagine my surprise! I love that I have found you  
But I ache all over wanting to know your every dream  
Imagine my surprise! To find that I love you  
Feeling warm all over knowing that you've been alive

Lady poet of great acclaim  
I have been misreading you  
I never knew your poems were meant for me  
You lived alone in a quiet den  
Pouring passion through your pen  
And weeping for your lady lovers  
As they safely married men

Rugged women have gone before me  
Paving paths like pioneers so often all alone  
I dreamed of queens and cinderellas  
Facing disappointment when I was grown  
Facing disappointment when I was grown

Imagine my surprise! I love that I have found you  
But I ache all over wanting to know your every dream  
Imagine my surprise! To find that I love you  
Feeling warm all over knowing that you've been alive<sup>95</sup>

The opening refrain suggests this piece is a personal love story. In the second stanza she exclaims, “Imagine my surprise! To find that I love you.” While the refrain is a declaration of her love to another woman, each verse is a lament for women throughout

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<sup>95</sup> Holly Near, “Imagine My Surprise!,” *Imagine My Surprise!*, Redwood Records RRCD 401, 1978, LP.

history who had to hide their affection for other women. Near sings the opening phrase a capella, and the guitar answers. The piano joins at the beginning of the line, “I love that I have found you.” With only two instruments and two voices, Near varies the texture frequently with dramatic shifts in the combination of these performing forces. The piece starts with solo voice before the guitar enters. When the piano joins, the guitar and piano complement each other, with the guitar taking on a solo role. The piano provides a strict pulse for metric clarity.

There is a clear musical separation between the refrain and verse one. The piano and guitar both change their accompanimental style to something stark and aggressive. Musically, the verse is defined by cascading phrases in the piano while the guitar imitates the vocal line. As Near sings, “No need for foolish chivalry,” the mood shifts and the accompaniment adopts a legato pattern that remains through the end of the verse. The second verse follows a similar structure. When Near sings, “And weeping for your lady lovers, as they safely married men,” the accompaniment stops on the word “safely.” Three seconds of silence are followed by the entrance of the piano with an abrupt, pounding bass line from C3 to F2, leading to the phrase, “Rugged women have gone before me.” The silence following the final line of the second verse allows those words to land and for the listener to fully absorb and comprehend the magnitude of the statement. The constant change in style and mood is reflective of Near’s musical theater background. The tempo is fluid and unpredictable, which gives Near more freedom to emphasize specific phrases.

The accompaniment is once again extremely malleable. Thomas begins this section with broken chordal accompaniment. The bass line, comprised of the root, fifth,

and octave in the left hand is distinctly separated from the triads in the right hand.

Christian's accompaniment is more subtle in the mix. She briefly enters the foreground to connect the first and second stanzas before returning to the background. The tone of this section changes when Near begins singing, "I dreamed of queens and cinderellas."

Christian and Thomas anticipate this change with a textural alteration. The piano, which has created a rich, deep, and dark color, now slips into the background and allows the guitar to brighten the timbre. The piano begins an ascending phrase that is completed by the guitar. To finish out the verse, the guitar and piano play straight, quarter-note chordal patterns, slowly crescendoing with the line, "Facing disappointment when I was grown," culminating with the final entrance of the chorus.

This section also modulates to a minor key. For that reason, coupled with the vastly different mood, timbre, and accompaniment pattern, it seems more appropriate to label this section a bridge, rather than verse three. The melody tonicizes Bb minor and F minor without ever landing firmly in either key. Eventually, Near leads back to the original key of C major with the phrase, "Facing disappointment when I was grown," in which she repeatedly sings a B4, emphasizing the leading tone of the C major scale to create tension, which is resolved with the final entrance of "Imagine my surprise." This piece, and the record in full, not only embodies the newly discovered affection Near had for women, but also the movement as a whole. As she explains in an interview with Rick Moore, "*Imagine My Surprise* focused more on the fact that there was a real enthusiastic rise and visibility of the lesbian-feminist community and that record honored that."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Rick Moore, Jeri Dilno, "Rick Moore Interviews Holly Near," *Out in San Diego*, KPBS Radio (c.1980s), [https://archive.org/details/casdla\\_000074](https://archive.org/details/casdla_000074).

On November 27, 1978, former San Francisco Board of Supervisors member Dan White arrived at City Hall to demand his reinstatement to the board. After Mayor George Moscone denied his request, White shot Moscone, proceeded down the hall, and shot Harvey Milk. Milk, the first openly gay elected official in American history, was mourned by the city of San Francisco through both peaceful demonstrations and riots.<sup>97</sup> Shortly after the murders, Near wrote a song in his memory. Near explained her motivation in an interview with JD Doyle on his radio show “Queer Voices” on KPFT in January 2010:

I wrote "Singing for Our Lives" after Harvey Milk and Mayor Moscone were assassinated in San Francisco, and I can remember it being sung at many events but the thing that always moved me so was that people would put up their lighters, their candles, and there were people in the streets singing this song, the first verse is that "we are gay and lesbian people"...were saying those names about themselves for the first time. They were being very brave in coming forward and trying to take the rage and the hurt of the city as a result of Harvey being killed, trying to take that anger and direct it toward the social change movement so that something can be built rather than something destroyed. And the song flew out around the world. People kept adding verses. The Irish and English women sang it when they were trying to work for peace in Ireland and England, and it was sung in a prison in Latin America...I keep hearing all these stories of where the song had travelled. So allies began to change the verse to “we are gay and straight together” and eventually the song made it into the Unitarian Hymnal, so it’s become kind of a peace anthem, a gay and lesbian anthem, and an anthem that allies and gay people can sing together. In fact, oftentimes in the concerts when I start to sing that song people stand, and take hands, and sing it together as a real glue in their community, which is very moving to me. Eventually we learned a lot more about sexuality, so now I can’t fit all the different identities that we have into the meter of the song. It’s impossible...transgender and queer and questioning, so now I’ve added a verse that says that we are all in this together singing for our lives.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Denis Cummings, “On This Day: Gay Activist Harvey Milk Murdered,” November 27, 2011, <http://www.findingdulcinea.com/news/on-this-day/November/Harvey-Milk-Murdered.html>.

<sup>98</sup> Holly Near, Interview by JD Doyle, *Queer Voices* (January 2010), accessed November 25, 2018, <http://www.queermusicheritage.com/jan2010s.html>.

“Singing for Our Lives” appeared on the album, *HARP: A Time to Sing*. The name HARP was an amalgam of the first initial of each artist performing: Holly Near, Arlo Guthrie, Ronnie Gilbert, and Pete Seeger. The group did a concert tour in 1984, and the album was a culmination of their tour.

“Singing for Our Lives” is in the traditional protest song style. Near sings four verses in total:

We are a gentle angry people  
We are a land of many colors  
We are gay and straight together  
We are a peaceful loving people<sup>99</sup>

Near follows each verse with the refrain, “And we are singing, singing for our lives.” The song is in Eb major, although it is often sung in gatherings a capella, leaving the key signature to vary situationally. The basic chord progression is I-IV-V, with an occasional ii or iii chord to create additional color. The melody is mostly stepwise. It is catchy, but very easy to follow, allowing the audience to join in. With each changing verse, Near sings an introductory phrase to make the audience aware of the next set of lyrics. After the final verse, Near invites the audience to hum to close out the song.

Another piece in a similar style is “It Could Have Been Me.” As with “Singing For Our Lives,” it was written following tragic circumstances. On May 4, 1970, an anti-war rally was held on the Commons at Kent State University. The Ohio National Guard had been requested by the mayor to assist with crowd control. As the guardsmen attempted to bring the demonstration to an end, angry protesters began throwing rocks and yelling at the guard. The guardsmen began to retreat, but as they reached the top of Blanket Hill, twenty-eight members of the guard started shooting. More than 60 shots

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<sup>99</sup> Holly Near, “Singing for Our Lives,” *HARP: A Time to Sing*, Appleseed Recordings, APRCD 1054, 1984, LP.

were fired in under fifteen seconds. When the gunfire had ceased, four students were dead and nine more were wounded.<sup>100</sup>

At the time of the shooting, Near was a member of the Broadway cast of *Hair*, which held a silent vigil in response to the massacre. Near also chose to remember the four lives lost with her song. In addition to Kent State, Near devoted a verse to the life of Victor Jara, the Chilean poet killed by the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. The original recording included a total of three verses:

It could have been me, but instead it was you  
So I'll keep doing the work you were doing as if I were two  
I'll be a student of life, a singer of song  
A farmer of food and a righter of wrong  
It could have been me, but instead it was you  
And it may be me dear sisters and brothers  
Before we are through  
But if you can work (die, sing, live) for freedom  
Freedom, freedom, freedom  
If you can work (die, sing, live) for freedom I can too

Students in Ohio 200 yards away  
Shot down by nameless fire one early day in May  
Some people cried out angry  
You should have shot more of them down  
But you can't bury youth my friend  
Youth grows the whole world round

Refrain

The junta broke the fingers on Victor Jara's hands  
They said to the gentle poet "play your guitar now if you can"  
Victor started singing until they shot his body down  
You can kill a man but not a song  
When it's sung the whole world round

Refrain

A woman in the jungle so many wars away

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<sup>100</sup> See Jerry M. Lewis and Thomas R. Hensley, "The May 4 Shootings at Kent State University: The Search for Historical Accuracy," *The Ohio Council for the Social Studies Review* 34, no. 1 (Summer 1998): 9-21.



Studies late into the night, defends the village in the day  
Although her skin is golden like mine will never be  
Her song is heard and I know the words  
And I'll sing them until she's free

Refrain<sup>101</sup>

Since she recorded this piece in 1975, Near has expanded the song with two additional verses. In 1983, she added the verse,

The songs of Nicaragua and El Salvador  
Will long outlast the singers who face the guns in war  
They sing at the line of fire, they sing from the fire within  
All across the land the poets stand  
El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido  
El pueblo unido jamas sera vencido

The final added verse is about Karen Silkwood, who was killed in a car crash in 1974 just days after raising concerns regarding health and safety regulations for employees in nuclear facilities. Many people believe Silkwood was murdered to keep her concerns silent.

One night in Oklahoma Karen Silkwood died  
Because she had some secrets that big companies wanted to hide  
There's talk of nuclear safety and there's talk of national pride  
But we all know it is a death machine and that's why Karen died

The majority of the piece is sung a capella, which gives the verses a haunting quality. Near carries the weight of each verse vocally, allowing the tension to build with her inflection and dynamic contrast. In verse two, Near emphasizes the final three lines with a crescendo through the end of the verse. When she begins the refrain, Near contrasts the final line of the verse and the first line of the refrain with a drastic shift in dynamics.

As Near begins the final refrain, the bass guitar enters to outline the chord progression coming with the piano accompaniment. "It Could Have Been Me" is in F

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<sup>101</sup> Holly Near, "It Could Have Been Me," *A Live Album*, Redwood Records RR 3700, 1975, LP.

major, but the chord progression of the refrain begins on a Gm7 chord, jumping back and forth between the supertonic, mediant, dominant, and tonic chords. The piano joins with the second statement of “It could have been me.” Although the subject matter of each verse is solemn, the overall message of this piece is hopeful. The upbeat accompaniment reflects that theme. The accompaniment is also reminiscent of a song from a musical, and was perhaps influenced by her Broadway tenure at the time of the Kent State shootings. The mood dramatically shifts with the entrance of the piano and bass. Near’s melody is lyrical and singable, yet complex. She incorporates major and minor sixths, minor sevenths, and major ninths into an otherwise simple melodic phrase surrounding the D major triad. These large leaps and non-chord tones break up the monotony of conjunct motion and predictable progressions. This is typical of Near’s writing style. Her melodies are catchy enough to sing along but difficult enough to remain interesting, even when repeated.

Throughout her career, Near was able to adapt her political and social messages to the current musical milieu. While no single album can be defined by one genre, there are often common traits and styles among the pieces on each record. On her first album *Hang In There*, songs such as “She” and “The Train Song” are in a bluegrass/country style, while “The Meek Are Getting Ready” is a gospel-swing piece with heavy percussion. The first two songs feature strong female characters, while the third suggests that the meek (women) are beginning to rise up and will soon take charge. On *A Live Album*, songs like “Water Come Down,” “It Could Have Been Me,” “Feeling Better,” and “Faces” are examples of Near’s ties to musical theater.

*Imagine My Surprise* demonstrates a shift in her writing style, as many of the pieces were written in collaboration with her girlfriend, Meg Christian. Christian's background was rooted in folk music, so many of the pieces from this album are a representation of her musical upbringing. The song "Mountain Song/Kentucky Woman" is a perfect example of this period of Near's output. The piece is about the activists of Appalachia, particularly Widow Combs. Combs laid in front of a bulldozer to prevent the strip-mining of her Kentucky farm. Her efforts eventually led to the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977.<sup>102</sup> The piece begins a capella and evokes the music traditions of Appalachia through Near's passionate delivery of the text. She embodies the singing style of Appalachian performers with a nasal, shrill tone, and ends many of her phrases with an ascending wail. Many Appalachian songs are based on the Anglo-Celtic folk ballad style, in which most songs are sung by women and often reflect upon the harsh conditions of their lives. Appalachian music also separated into two other distinct ballad styles, one of which was influenced by African songs remembering the life of a historical figure. This piece is representative of both the African and Anglo-Celtic traditions. When the guitar enters, the piece transitions to focus on the second half of the title, "Kentucky Woman." Near's voice softens as the melody becomes more lyrical and fluid. This is an appropriate shift, as the guitar provides a harmonic foundation not present in the a capella section of the piece.<sup>103</sup>

Near's fifth album, *Fire in the Rain*, is the result of a conscious decision to release a commercial album. Once again, she incorporates a variety of styles: pop, country,

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<sup>102</sup> Theresa Burris, "Appalachian Women: A Vital Role in the Drama," *The Appalachian Voice* (February 1, 2007), accessed December 5, 2018, <http://appvoices.org/2007/02/01/2645/>.

<sup>103</sup> Debby McClatchy, "Appalachian Music: A Short History," (June 27, 2000), accessed December 6, 2018, <https://www.mustringrad.org.uk/articles/appalach.htm>.

honky-tonk, ballad, funk, and rock. However, there are clear distinctions from her previous output. For example, the ballad “Sit With Me” could be mistaken for a Barbra Streisand hit. The title track, “Fire in the Rain,” is layered in synthesized, electronic sounds. The instrumentation is typical of a rock ensemble, with electric guitar, bass, keyboard, and drums. It is extremely percussive, with a heavier pulse than her other pieces. Reverb is also added to Near’s melody, and sound effects produced by the synthesizer. This is drastically different from the final track on the record, “Golden Thread,” which harkens back to the under-produced sound of her previous records.

Although the music of Holly Near has evolved over time in order to stay relevant, the intentions behind her music have remained the same. She has always sought to evoke conversation and incite radical change through her songs. She, like the other artists discussed in this chapter, was drawn to the women’s music movement because of its inherent activism. Her most recent album, *2018*, addresses the current political climate, as well as issues of bullying, domestic violence, and technology, presented through a variety of musical styles.

Meg Christian, Cris Williamson, Margie Adam, and Holly Near created the “Women on Wheels” tour of 1976, and often collaborated with each other on their respective albums. Some were entangled in romantic relationships, but all four were close friends and incredible musicians who shared a love of activism and a variety of musical experiences. In the next chapter, I will continue my analysis of four more founding mothers: Kay Gardner, Alix Dobkin, Mary Watkins, and Linda Tillery.

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**Chapter Four:**  
**Music Analysis – “Lavender Jane and Other Wise Women”**

Wise women, wise women/Sing what you know of life/Wise women, proud women/Play what you feel in life.

-Kay Gardner, *Wise Woman*

One of the most unheralded attributes of the women’s music movement is the immense stylistic variety among composers, and sometimes, within a single composer’s output. Kay Gardner’s career is an example of such contrast. As a flutist, Gardner was versatile and virtuosic; as a composer, her music ranges from the simplest folk songs and canons to full-scale orchestral and opera pieces.

**Kay Gardner**

Gardner began composing at a young age and received her master’s degree in flute performance at SUNY, Stony Brook.<sup>1</sup> Gardner and Meg Christian were the only founding mothers to receive a formal post-secondary musical education. Gardner’s extensive historical and theoretical knowledge is apparent in her writings, specifically in her book *Sounding the Inner Landscape: Music as Medicine*.

Although Gardner’s recording career began with the seminal album *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, for the purposes of this analysis I will begin with her first solo album, *Mooncircles*. Released in 1975, the nine compositions of *Mooncircles* are a combination of small chamber pieces and folk songs:

**Side A**

Prayer to Aphrodite  
Changing

**Side B**

Inner Mood I  
Touching Souls

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<sup>1</sup> Gardner began a bachelor’s degree in music education at the University of Michigan but never completed the program. When she returned to school over a decade later, the department waived the requirement of a bachelor’s degree and allowed Gardner to begin a master’s program, as she had an extensive performance resume.

Beautiful Friend  
Moon Flow  
Wise Woman

Inner Mood II  
Lunamuse

With the exception of “Changing,” “Beautiful Friend,” and “Wise Woman,” the album is entirely instrumental. Meg Christian is a featured guitarist on the songs “Touching Souls,” “Inner Mood II,” and “Lunamuse.” In their review of the album, Janis Kelly and Fran Moira explain,

*Mooncircles* engages all your senses—those of the flesh and of the mind and of time and continuing. Although there are lyrics in some selections, Kay Gardner needs no words to transport us through history and into the future. Her incredibly delicate, erotic music does it all.<sup>2</sup>

The album begins with “Prayer to Aphrodite,” written for cello, alto flute, violin, and viola. Gardner drew inspiration from the poem, “Hymn to Aphrodite,” by Sappho. Like many lesbian feminists, Gardner studied the works of the ancient Greek poetess, which many believe contain references to same-sex relationships and desire. Sappho’s poetry was written to be accompanied by lyre; thus, the small string ensemble with which Gardner sets “Prayer to Aphrodite” is fitting.

The piece “Touching Souls” is built on a guitar ostinato that came to Gardner while on a train from Washington, D.C. to New York City.<sup>3</sup> In *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, Gardner writes,

A musical phrase came to me over and over again. (This is the way most of my compositions begin...a phrase repeats itself obsessively until I write it down and develop it.) Underneath the musical phrase, which later became a piece called “Touching Souls,” was the repeated rhythm of the train wheels. This rhythm became the chant bass of the guitar part.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Janis Kelly and Fran Moira, “Mooncircles,” *Off Our Backs* 5, no. 11 (January-February 1976): 25.

<sup>3</sup> Kay Gardner, “Droning, Toning, Mantra, and Chant,” in *Sounding the Inner Landscape: Music as Medicine* (Massachusetts: Element, 1990), 58. As represented in Figure 4-1.

<sup>4</sup> Gardner, “Droning, Toning, Mantra, and Chant,” *Sounding the Inner Landscape: Music as Medicine*, 58.

The key signature is two sharps, suggesting either D major or B minor, but the main theme is modal. The opening theme is in D Mixolydian, which Gardner renamed the Lesbian mode. She explains,

The invention of this mode has been attributed to Sappho of Lesbos by the Roman biographer Plutarch (46-120 A.D.). Because there was no Mixolydian Greek tribe—and because the mode was Lesbian in origin—I have renamed it.<sup>5</sup>

For a period of Gardner's output she wrote exclusively in the Mixolydian and Lydian modes. According to Gardner, the Lydian mode had been banned by Plato for being too feminine.<sup>6</sup> Gardner introduces a second melody in the alto flute part, but it is in D major. She outlines a D major triad in first inversion to emphasize the scale, and plays with registers as she heads up the fifth octave to give this section of the piece a distinct new character.



Example 4-1, Guitar ostinato from “Touching Souls,” mm. 1-2

The final track on *Mooncircles* is a composition entitled, “Lunamuse.” According to Gardner, this piece became the “formal basis for much of my compositional style.”<sup>7</sup> It begins with an ostinato in the guitar that repeats nine times throughout the composition.<sup>8</sup> Gardner employs the instrumental forces from the previous tracks for this final piece.

<sup>5</sup> Gardner, “Melody: Heart and Soul of Music,” in *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, 136.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>7</sup> Gardner, “Form and the Divine Proportion,” in *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, 201.

<sup>8</sup> Gardner, “Droning, Toning, Mantra, and Chant, in *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, 58. As presented in example 4-1.



While string instruments dominated the first eight tracks, “Lunamuse” incorporates the various percussion instruments that appeared on tracks such as “Wise Woman,” and “Touching Souls.” The themes are carried by the flute and cello, while a percussive ensemble comprised of hand drums, finger cymbals, and cowbell provides rhythmic support. In the March 1976 issue of *Paid My Dues*, Gardner explained the choice of instrumentation for her compositions in an article entitled, “Women’s Music. What’s That?” She also describes the use of certain circular forms when composing. She explains,

I, believing the circle to be an ancient archetypal woman’s symbol, am presently composing songs and instrumental works in circular form (i.e. ABACADACABA or ABCDCBA...ending as they begin just as does a circle) using instrumentation that I feel has expressed Women’s Music from the beginning of time...hand percussion (drums, finger cymbals, tambourines), strings (including harp, guitar, lute, viols) flutes and women’s voices.<sup>9</sup>

As with many of her compositions from this period, the formal design of “Lunamuse” is circular, creating a palindrome. The themes are presented in rondo form, ABACABA. The flute introduces theme A. The entire melody rests in the octave from E4 to E5; the majority of the theme is dominated by four notes—A4, B/Bb4, C5, and D5. Gardner presents a motif in E Locrian within the melody that starts on E4 and leaps in thirds to G4 and Bb4, creating an E diminished triad. She then descends to A4 and G4 before landing on E4. The second occurrence of this motif ends on G4 rather than descending to E4, which then leads into a new section starting on F4. This opening theme is both rhythmically and melodically simple. The long, sustained notes and legato, fluid phrasing

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<sup>9</sup> Kay Gardner, “Women’s Music. What’s That?,” *Paid My Dues: Journal of Women and Music* 1, no. 6 (March 1976): 6.

is a stark contrast to the second theme.<sup>10</sup> Theme B begins with staccato leaps from B5 to E5 and B4 before starting a stepwise ascent that eventually reaches D6 before plummeting back to E4. Theme A is then passed to the cello. The motif heard in the flute returns in the cello, but this time with slight alterations to the rhythm. As the cello continues to play the main theme, the flute joins in with a countersubject. At first, the flute is heard responding to the melody in the cello. After this brief interaction, the flute joins the cello in harmony. Eventually the flute takes lead and plays a separate subject as the cello continues with theme A. Theme C is an improvisation between cello and flute. Gardner often created opportunities for improvisation in her compositions as a means of personal expression for the performer. After this duet, theme A is restated in full in the cello, followed by a restatement of theme B in the flute. The piece closes with theme A in the flute and one final statement of the guitar ostinato.

Gardner's second studio album, *Emerging*, was released in 1978 on Urana Records. The album consists of eight instrumental tracks:

<b>Side A</b>	<b>Side B</b>
The Cauldron of Cerridwyn	Rhapsody
Romance	Pisces
Crystal Bells	Mermaids
Anagram	Atlantis Rising

Gardner lends her vocal skills to two tracks: “The Cauldron of Cerridwyn” and “Mermaids.” In both cases, her voice acts as an additional instrument rather than delivering the main melody.

The second track is entitled, “Romance.” The flute presents the opening theme, which is built on a series of four-measure phrases, each ending on a half cadence until the

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<sup>10</sup> In her book, *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, Gardner suggests this theme was improvised.

final PAC in m. 16. The melody begins on B3, rising up the octave to B4 and landing on A4 briefly before working its way back down to B3 through stepwise motion. In measure five, Gardner begins on B3 again but leaps a minor third from B4 to D5. This eight-measure phrase peaks at m. 7 on E5, moving chromatically to D#5-C#5-D#5. Measures 10-16 are a series of sequences, beginning on D5 and eventually leading back to the tonic E. The guitar accompaniment in m. 16 sets up the first note of theme two, which begins in the viola in m. 17. The guitar plays a C major arpeggio followed by an Am7 chord spelled A-C-E-G-C. The octave C4 leads into stepwise motion to D4 and E4, passing the line to the viola, which enters on G4. While theme one is symmetrical in design, theme two is a complete departure. The first eight measures are broken into four-measure phrases. Theme two begins on G4, descending gradually to G3. A sequence starting on F#3 in m. 20 brings the melody back up to G4, once again descending to G3. The first phrase ends in a half cadence, but the second does not cadence at all. The second sentence is comprised of a seven-measure phrase, which ends on a half cadence, followed by a two-measure phrase that does not cadence. In mm. 30-32, the viola plays a repeated six-note motive starting on G3. The line descends from G3-F#3-E3 before leaping a twelfth to B4-A4-G4. This sequence repeats two more times and leads into the final two measures of theme two, closing this section with the opening two-measure phrase. The lack of cadence in m. 34 allows the viola to lead immediately into a reiteration of its theme. Measure 35 begins a new section, A', in which both theme one and theme two are heard simultaneously. The final section contains two four-measure phrases, each ending in half cadence, followed by an eight-measure phrase ending on a PAC. The final three measures are a short coda, ending on an E minor chord.

“Romance” is set in the key of E minor. The harmonic progression in the guitar accompaniment is dominated by added sevenths and ninths, suggesting influences from twentieth-century composers such as Oliveros, and the *style brisé* texture is a reference to French Baroque performance practice. The harmonic rhythm and texture remain consistent throughout the piece, creating a soothing backdrop for the composition. As with many of Gardner’s works, this piece is meant to inspire meditation and tranquility. The entire composition remains in E minor without modulation. This is a rare compositional choice for a work in ABA’ form, but may have been done so as not to disturb the ambiance created by the other calming elements. In her book, *A History of Key Characteristics in the 18<sup>th</sup> and Early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, Rita Steblin discusses the twenty-four major and minor key signatures and reflects on the emotional or qualitative characteristics of each, according to the Classical and Romantic aesthetics. E minor was considered a “naïve, womanly innocent declaration of love, lament without grumbling... this key speaks of the imminent hope of resolving in the pure happiness of C major.”<sup>11</sup> Gardner reflects these themes, particularly of lament, through a repeated sighing gesture in the viola (mm.30-32). The dark, warm timbre of the three instruments—guitar, alto flute, and viola—also complement the mood of “Romance.”

In 1976, Gardner embarked upon an eight-year project, which culminated in her fourth studio album, *A Rainbow Path*. In her article, “Making A Rainbow Path,” Gardner provides a brief synopsis of her album:

The idea in its simplest form: a musical composition designed for meditation on eight energy centers, or chakras, of the human organism.

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<sup>11</sup> Rita Steblin, *A History of Key Characteristics in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, 2nd Ed. (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 162, 171. This quote represents Gardner’s summary of multiple theoretical interpretations of key characteristics by the theorists Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, Justin Heinrich Knecht, and August Gathy.

Because clairvoyants and yogis see these chakras as clockwise-spinning wheels of colored light, each piece of the composition touches a different chakra, taking an ascending rainbow path through the listener/perceiver.<sup>12</sup>

Gardner began her research into the medicinal applications of music in the early 1970s. Her belief that the definition of women's music should go beyond feminist lyrics led her to the discovery of certain shapes, scales, and modes utilized in women's music. Gardner began studying the functionality of music and how it can benefit the healing process.<sup>13</sup> The subject of music and medicine required Gardner to examine Eastern cultures, which eventually brought her to the chakra energy system of the yoga tradition. Her research also inspired tracks on the albums *Emerging* (1978) and *Moods and Rituals* (1981). Her study of ancient healing rituals and the chakra energy system also resulted in her book *Sounding the Inner Landscape: Music as Medicine* in 1990. The full title of Gardner's third album is *Moods and Rituals: Meditations for Solo Flute*. It features four healing tracks, each no shorter than five minutes in length, and the final track, "Soul Flight," runs an impressive twenty minutes. Music from this album was incorporated into an episode of the PBS series *Nova*, entitled "Can AIDS Be Stopped?"

In her book, Gardner describes the basic concepts of energy centers within the human body. According to her research, Gardner pinpoints seven chakras and their location on the human body:

- 1) The root chakra is located at the sacrum ("sacred bone") at the base of the spine.
- 2) The belly chakra is two finger-breadths below the navel.
- 3) The solar plexus chakra is above the navel in the diaphragm area.
- 4) The heart chakra is at the sternum at the center of the chest.
- 5) The throat chakra is at the neck.

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<sup>12</sup> Kay Gardner, "Making A Rainbow Path," *Hotwire: A Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 1, no. 1 (November 1984): 56.

<sup>13</sup> Maida Tilchen, "Musical medicine; Kay Gardner's *Sounding the Inner Landscape* examines the healing power of sound," *Gay Community News* 18, no. 49 (July 13, 1991): 20.

- 6) The brow chakra, also called the Third Eye, is right above and between the eyebrows.
- 7) The crown chakra is like a cap at the top of the head.<sup>14</sup>

The theory of chakra systems began with Tantrik Yoga and flourished from 600-1300 CE. Each branch of Tantrik Yoga articulates a different chakra system, with some including nearly thirty energy centers on the body. The seven-chakra system, which is taught by most Western yogis today, became prominent in the sixteenth century.<sup>15</sup> This is the system Gardner studied for her book, and forms the basis of her album *A Rainbow Path*. After listing the seven energy centers, Gardner continues her discussion with an analysis of each chakra, associating them with a specific color, pitch, emotional state, and mantra. The root chakra is red and C is the designated pitch. Gardner states that when the root chakra is in balance, we feel “secure, alert, full of active energy, stable, and warm.”<sup>16</sup> The mantra for this chakra is LAM. Gardner also associates a balancing pitch for each chakra. As the root chakra is C, its balancing pitch is the fifth above, G. She continues with each subsequent chakra, ascending the scale until she reaches the heart chakra. Gardner associates the heart chakra with F# rather than F natural, and the crown chakra with Bb rather than B natural. With the inclusion of F# and Bb, the resulting scale is the Lydian mode with a flat seventh, rather than the diatonic major scale. Appropriately, this progression follows the Saraswati Raga in C. Gardner chose this scale based on the ratio of the distance between the colors red and violet in the color spectrum and red to green in

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<sup>14</sup> Kay Gardner, “Medicine Wheels and ‘Unseen Bodies,’” in *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, 1-3.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Wallis, “The real story on the Chakras,” Blog. *Tantrik Yoga*, 2016, <http://tantrikstudies.squarespace.com/blog/2016/2/5/the-real-story-on-the-chakras>.

<sup>16</sup> Gardner, “Medicine Wheels and ‘Unseen Bodies,’” 16.

photosynthesis. Red and violet are a minor seventh apart, and red and green a tritone apart.<sup>17</sup>

Gardner read over a hundred sources when writing *Sounding the Inner Landscape*. In addition to sources on chakras, Gardner explores the Kundalini Yoga tradition, mysticism, spirituality, and theoretical and historical references on music. One of Gardner's sources was C.W. Leadbeater's *The Chakras*, published in 1927.<sup>18</sup> Leadbeater was a theosophical leader, author, and clairvoyant. Born in Stockport, England, his family moved to Brazil when he was four. In 1879, Leadbeater was ordained a priest in the Church of England and in 1883 he joined the Theosophical Society.<sup>19</sup> He published forty-five books on dreams, clairvoyance, Freemasonry, Buddhism, and theosophy, among other subjects. *The Chakras*, his book on the Sanskrit chakra system, is considered the first introduction of the chakras in Western culture. It is important to recognize that Gardner's understanding of the chakra energy system is based in Western interpretations of Sanskrit writings. Although Western teachings have attached specific geometrical shapes, pitches, colors, and emotional states to each chakra, Sanskrit scholars such as Christopher Wallis dispute their validity. One of the most important points Wallis emphasizes in his study of chakras is that they are "prescriptive, not descriptive."<sup>20</sup> Simply put, the original Sanskrit sources offer a specific yogic practice for each chakra, rather than explaining how things are through descriptions such as "the muladhara chakra

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<sup>17</sup> Gardner, "The Instrumental Spectrum," in *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, 156.

<sup>18</sup> Gregory Tillett, "Charles Webster Leadbeater." Accessed January 28, 2018, <http://blavatskyarchives.com/leadbeaterbib.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> The theosophy movement originated in the nineteenth century with roots in ancient Gnosticism and Neoplatonism. Theosophical doctrine emphasizes mystical experience and dictates that a deeper spiritual reality can be obtained through intuition, meditation, and revelation. The modern theosophical movement was established in 1875 by Helena Blavatsky, Henry Olcott, and William Judge.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Wallis, "The real story on the Chakras," Blog. *Tantrik Yoga*, 2016, <http://tantrikstudies.squarespace.com/blog/2016/2/5/the-real-story-on-the-chakras>.

is at the base of the spine; it has four petals, and so on.”<sup>21</sup> Although much has surfaced regarding Sanskrit teachings and the chakra systems since Gardner’s study, for the purpose of analyzing *A Rainbow Path* I will use the sources and teachings that were available to her.

With the exception of the finale, each track on Gardner’s fourth album is associated with a chakra in the seven-chakra system, as well as the eight colors of the rainbow and seven notes in the Saraswati raga in C. The final movement, set in the key of B, which is not in the raga, is also not associated with a chakra. Rather, it is meant as a summary of the entire work. As Gardner explains,

For the finale, a movement designed to integrate all the colors and tones used in the composition, I scored all of the instruments that had appeared in the preceding movements. The key center is B, and the scale is the nine-note mode which appears in the fourth octave of harmonics. The orchestral scoring is intended to vibrate the entire organism and thus ground and bring the listener to center.<sup>22</sup>

The first track, “Processional: The Root Chakra,” is scored for bassoon, cello, double bass, drone, French horn, harp, tambura, timpani, gong, bells, and trombone. In her book, Gardner explained the choice of instrumentation:

This movement needed heavy instruments to vibrate the mass of this heaviest part of the physical body...I scored the bassoon as the featured instrument, and the horn in F, bass trombone, timpani, large Chinese gong, cello, and double bass as the accompanying instruments.<sup>23</sup>

The movement begins with a vocal drone on C, performed by a septuplet from the women’s chorus Libana. The chorus is combined with a second drone on the tambura, an

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<sup>21</sup> Wallis, “The real story on the Chakras,” Blog. <http://tantrikstudies.squarespace.com/blog/2016/2/5/the-real-story-on-the-chakras>.

<sup>22</sup> Kay Gardner, “The Instrumental Spectrum,” in *Sounding the Inner Landscape: Music as Medicine* (Massachusetts: Element, 1990), 158-159.

<sup>23</sup> Gardner, “The Instrumental Spectrum,” 156.



instrument native to India. All eight movements on *A Rainbow Path* begin with a drone on their respective tonic. According to Gardner,

At the basis of healing music is the drone or long, uninterrupted tone or chord. Used as a tonic, and I mean this both musically and medicinally, the drone becomes the bed on which all the other healing musical elements rest.<sup>24</sup>

The drone sounds for close to a full minute prior to the entrance of the bassoon. Gardner explains that the musicians should not begin the melody until they believe that they, along with the audience, are in sync through the shared vibration of the drone. It is unclear if Gardner employed this technique when recording these movements, but one can surmise she did based on her devotion to these practices. The bassoon enters in m. 9. The melody moves in stepwise motion around E3, eventually landing on tonic. The melody is divided into two four-measure phrases. The second begins on Bb2 and again centers around that note before landing on C3. The dark timbre of the bassoon coupled with the low register of the melody captures the idea of planting one's roots and being firmly grounded. A second iteration of the opening theme immediately succeeds the first, this time joined by the French horn. The horn brightens the timbre of the melody, almost as though the music is slowly moving up the body from the base of the spine toward the crown. Theme two is introduced in the cello and neo-Celtic harp. Once again, the theme is divided into two balanced phrases. The first tonicizes E, while the second returns to C through a second inversion C major arpeggio. The third theme, which is presented by the bassoon up an octave, returns to the spirit of the opening melodic material. Each note is ornamented as it moves up the scale from E to Bb. The second phrase is characterized by staccato rhythms, which mimics the second phrase of theme one. The formal structure of

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<sup>24</sup> Gardner, "Droning, Toning, Mantra, and Chant," 28.

“Processional” is ABCBA. Gardner refers to this as her “hybrid three-part ‘closed’ form.”<sup>25</sup> The circular nature of the form was by this point a common trend in Gardner’s compositional output.

The second movement is entitled “Dorian Hills: Belly Chakra,” and is scored for bassoon, cello, double bass, French horn, harp, alto recorder, tambura, trombone, and vocal drone. Gardner provides a brief synopsis of her choice in instrumentation and mode for this movement, stating,

In the second movement, designed for the belly chakra, I used the Aeolian and Dorian modes in D and scored for the medium-low instruments, including the bassoon, trombone, cello, and double-bass. Here I featured the horn in F (not because it’s shaped like an intestine, but because it has the perfect mid-to-low range that I desired). In the middle of this piece I gave a solo to the alto recorder in order to lend a little lightness to a piece already quite heavy with low instruments.<sup>26</sup>

The Voices of Libana enter with a drone on D, followed by an eight-note motif in the French horn. The French horn repeats the motif, shortly succeeded by the trombone as it segues into the first statement of theme one, which begins in D Aeolian, with the first phrase emphasizing the lower pentachord. The opening phrase is both rhythmically and melodically simplistic; the complexity of this theme begins in the second four-measure phrase, which is in D Dorian. In contrast to the first phrase, phrase two has more rhythmic vitality. It also expands melodically to include B and C4, which reveals its foundation in the Dorian mode.

A four-note ostinato accompanies the entrance of the second theme and is comprised of D, E, and F, the first three notes of D Aeolian. As the theme comes to a close, the ostinato transforms into a cadential sequence to support the thematic resolution

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<sup>25</sup> Gardner, “Form and the Divine Proportion,” 201.

<sup>26</sup> Gardner, “The Instrumental Spectrum,” 156.

harmonically. Theme two is a duet for trombone and alto recorder, which balances the extremes in timbre of each instrument to create a warm, bright melody.<sup>27</sup> The pair initially play in parallel octaves but split apart with two octaves between them in the second phrase. The French horn then performs a reiteration of the second phrase, bridging the gap between the trombone and recorder. When the third theme enters in m. 42, it is accompanied by the original drone sustained by the tambura and women's chorus, with additional layers introduced in the bassoon and cello. The character of theme three is bouyant and jovial.<sup>28</sup>



Example 4-2, *A Rainbow Path*, Movement II “Dorian Hills,” mm. 43-46

The timbre of the alto recorder underscores the enthusiastic nature of this section. The melody is in D Dorian, and the rhythm is comprised mostly of eighth-note runs and a few trills that emphasize the light-hearted theme.

The formal design of “Dorian Hills: Belly Chakra” is an imperfect palindrome: ABCB’A, with each theme repeated before introducing the next. Although the form is still circular, the final restatements of theme one and two are incomplete. Only the second phrase of theme two returns to create the final B section, and theme one is performed in full but not repeated.

Movement three is entitled “Awakening: Solar Plexus Chakra.” The intention of this movement is to soothe the part of the body just above the navel, particularly the

<sup>27</sup> Originally Gardner scored this theme for French horn and alto recorder. However, in the subsequent recording, the trombone replaces the horn, giving it the juxtaposed timbre discussed above.

<sup>28</sup> Kay Gardner, “Dorian Hills,” *A Rainbow Path* (Maine: Sea Gnomes Music, 1984), 29. As presented in example 4-2.

diaphragm. Gardner scored “Awakening” for English horn, temple bell, Celtic harp, viola, tambura, and a vocal drone on “aw.” She writes,

When I came to the solar-plexus chakra, my scoring became less heavy. Here I used the English horn (an alto oboe) and the viola (an alto violin), playing melody lines in the Dorian mode in E with a very simple harp part in E octaves and an E Tibetan bell as accompaniment.<sup>29</sup>

The vocal drone of the opening measures is quickly interrupted by the temple bells, which play a series of octave Es stretching from E3 to E6 and back down again, forming a palindrome. The violin enters with the opening theme, beginning on E3 and quickly ascending to E4 before gradually progressing down the scale to B3. The next phrase begins on E3 but immediately leaps a fifth to B3 and the octave to B4. The violin then plays a series of triplets from A4 to B3. As the theme draws to a close, the phrase continues its descent in triplet rhythms on D3, eventually concluding on C#3. Theme two is built around the reciting tone of E and is performed by the English horn. The modulation to the fifth creates a clear distinction from theme one, as does the bright, thin timbre of the horn. As with the opening theme, a series of descending triplets begins phrase three and brings it to a close in the final phrase. Although theme two begins on B3, this section concludes on the final.

Theme three is performed by the Celtic harp and does not share characteristics with either of the preceding themes. Theme three reaches the registral climax of this movement as it opens on E5 and remains in the fifth octave almost entirely throughout this section. In the final phrase the melody dips down to A4 and concludes on the reciting tone, B4. In the second phrase, Gardner creates melodic tension by suspending the penultimate note, D5, before resolving on E5. Moments of tension are rare throughout

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<sup>29</sup> Gardner, “The Instrumental Spectrum,” 156-57.

these movements as the intention of this work is to balance the listener and soothe the particular area of the body for which it was written. This theme also contains more syncopation than the previous two, which contributes to the moments of tension and release.

The formal design of “Awakening: Solar Plexus Chakra” is circular. Following the presentation of theme three, the second theme returns, and the first theme concludes the movement. A brief interlude separating the third theme and return of theme two creates a C’ section. Therefore, the form can be diagrammed as ABCC’BA. With the inclusion of C’, this movement is circular but does not form a palindrome. The interlude is performed by the English horn, which plays theme three, and the viola, performing a countermelody. Theme three is characterized by long, sustained notes descending stepwise through the scale from F#4 to B3. The viola initially contrasts this melody with constant motion in mm. 34-35. In m. 36 the two instruments begin to move in rhythmic unison, but remain separated by fourths harmonically. There is also a moment of dissonance created in these first three measures with the tritone C-F#. As with the first two movements, “Awakening: Solar Plexus Chakra” concludes with the same vocal drone on which it began.<sup>30</sup>

The fourth movement of *A Rainbow Path* is entitled, “Greenwood: Heart Chakra. The heart chakra is scored for violin, viola, cello, double bass, harp, vocal drone, and timpani. When composing this movement, Gardner determined the string family best represented the heart. She explained,

The family of instruments that touches the heart is the string orchestra, so for the fourth movement, designed to touch the thymus/lungs area and the heart chakra, I scored in F# Mixolydian for the string orchestra—violin,

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<sup>30</sup> Kay Gardner, *A Rainbow Path* (Stonington, Maine: Sea Gnomes Music, 1984).

viola, cello, and double bass. Included also in this movement is the timpani playing the habanera or Spanish tango, a rhythm suggesting the healthy heart pulse.<sup>31</sup>

While the tamboura solidifies the modality of the fourth movement through the constant drone on F#, the timpani ensures the rhythmic pulse does not waiver. The four-note ostinato begins in m. 3 and continues to the final measure.

The image shows a musical score for three parts: Percussion I, Percussion II, and Harp. The Percussion I part is marked 'mp' and has a tempo of '♩ = 57'. The Percussion II part is marked 'mp' and has a tempo of '♩ = 58'. The Harp part is marked 'mp'. The score shows a rhythmic ostinato in the Percussion II and Harp parts, and a melodic line in the Percussion I part. The Percussion I part has a 'mp' dynamic and a tempo marking of '♩ = 57'. The Percussion II part has a 'mp' dynamic and a tempo marking of '♩ = 58'. The Harp part has a 'mp' dynamic. The score shows a rhythmic ostinato in the Percussion II and Harp parts, and a melodic line in the Percussion I part.

Example 4-3 *A Rainbow Path*, Movement IV “Greenwood: Heart Chakra,” mm. 1-4

As seen in example 4-3, the timpani and harp begin with a rhythmic ostinato that will continue throughout this movement.<sup>32</sup> The viola enters in m. 5 with theme one. Its recurring gesture is a minor seventh leap from F#3 to E4. Gardner opens the melody with this interval and immediately repeats it in m. 7. The melody begins with two balanced two-measure phrases, followed by a four-measure phrase ending on a cadence. The two-bar phrases are similar in design, although the composition of the melody changes from phrase one to phrase two. In m. 13 the viola joins the violin to create theme two. It begins identically to theme one, with a minor seventh leap from F#-E in both instruments. The violin and viola play in unison throughout this section, while the cello provides a countermelody in the first four measures. As with theme one, the melody of theme two is in constant motion. The countermelody in the cello provides a stable, steady foundation upon which the violin and viola elaborate. After a cadence in m. 16, the cello begins to

<sup>31</sup> Kay Gardner, “The Instrumental Spectrum,” 157-58.

<sup>32</sup> Kay Gardner, “Greenwood: Heart Chakra,” *A Rainbow Path* (Manuscript, Stonington, Maine: Sea Gnomes Music, 1984), 45.

play a pizzicato rhythm beneath theme two. The violin and viola cadence in m. 20. In the original score, the cello takes over the theme, almost as a brief ritornello or coda after theme two. However, in the recording the violin and viola continue to perform this section, finally cadencing in m. 24.<sup>33</sup>

Following theme two, the violin, viola, and harp play a series of short phrases prior to the restatement of the theme, beginning in m. 38. This twelve-measure interlude highlights the Celtic harp, which is often associated with meditative music, as a solo instrument. Ascending and descending glissandos throughout this section are idiomatic to the instrument. A descending glissando in m. 37 cues the re-entrance of the violin and viola, which begin the final statement of theme two. Unlike the previous movements in *A Rainbow Path*, the form for “Greenwood” is circular, but not a palindrome. Gardner returns to theme two in m. 38 and the movement concludes without restating the opening theme.

As stated above, this movement is in F# Mixolydian, renamed the “Lesbian” mode by Gardner. In *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, Gardner explains that the Mixolydian mode was typically reserved for “open and joyful music.”<sup>34</sup> “The Greenwood: Heart Chakra” is grounded in F# through the recurring ostinato in the timpani, which play an F# major arpeggio. In addition to the tamboura and vocal drone, the double bass plays an F# pedal tone to provide additional support for the pitch center. The violin and viola perform the second theme in octaves. According to Gardner, the octave signifies openness and completeness. As she writes,

Like the unison, the octave has a feeling of sameness, or oneness, because of the in-sync vibrations...Zarlino, the sixteenth-century music theorist,

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<sup>33</sup> Kay Gardner, *A Rainbow Path*, 50.

<sup>34</sup> Kay Gardner, “Melody: Heart and Soul of Music,” in *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, 136.

wrote that the octave is “the mother, the generator, the source, and the origin, from which every other consonance and every other interval are derived.”<sup>35</sup>

In mm. 50 and 55-56, the violin and viola play in unison. Gardner says of the unison,

...it is an important place to start because unison stands for the One, the source, the root, or fundamental...According to my workshop participants, singing in unison brings feelings of strength, solidity, security, and calmness.<sup>36</sup>

Gardner creates variety in “Greenwood” through constant changes in density. The movement begins with the drone by Libana and the tamboura, but soon another layer is added with the heavy, dark timbre of the timpani. The texture continues to transform between theme one and theme two. Theme one is performed by solo viola, accompanied by the three sounding instruments. When theme two begins, the viola and violin join together in duet, and the cello performs a countermelody. The thick texture of this section is then juxtaposed with the solo harp. The transition between full ensemble and solo harp continues throughout the remainder of the movement.

The fifth movement is entitled, “Castle in the Mist: Throat Chakra,” scored for oboe, clarinet, harp, violin, cello, and as always, vocal and tamboura drone. The clarinet and oboe trade off performances of the melody. According to Gardner,

When I got to the throat movement, I wanted the throatiest instrument I could find...A clarinet player later told me that there is a certain range in the clarinet that is called the “throat” range!<sup>37</sup>

Gardner categorizes the harmonic makeup of this movement as a combination of G Ionian and G Lydian. The continuation of the opening theme in the harp and later in the clarinet introduces a C#5, first in m. 6 and again in m. 14. The addition of the C# pulls

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<sup>35</sup> Gardner, “The Moods and Shapes of Harmony,” in *Sounding the Inner Landscape* 106.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 105-106.

<sup>37</sup> Gardner, “The Instrumental Spectrum,” 158.



the melody from G Ionian into the Lydian mode. The C# may signify the tonicization of D and a brief modulation to D major in these sections. However, because the melody consistently returns to G, it is more fitting to acknowledge this non-chord tone as an introduction to the Lydian mode in G. The consistency of the original mode is also apparent in the drone, as the harp, violin, and cello consistently sustain pedal tones on G and D.

The first theme is initiated by the harp on beat two of the first measure. It opens with an ascending perfect fourth leap from D4 to G4. In her book, Gardner states that workshops, her participants often associate the fourth with clarity, serenity, openness, and light.<sup>38</sup> These may have been feelings she wanted to evoke by emphasizing that interval in the opening measures. This becomes a repeated interval within the first five measures of the theme. The melody reaches a climax in m. 7 on G5, before descending to E4. The harp passes theme one to the clarinet in m. 9. Theme one is not presented in its complete form until the clarinet joins the phrase. The clarinet solo is accompanied by a sweeping G major arpeggio in the cello and a countermelody in the violin. At m. 17, the violin takes the lead in duet with the harp, and the clarinet performs the countermelody. Once again, the theme is not played in its complete form. Instead, the pair begins the theme at the second phrase of the first statement, followed by the closing statement performed by the clarinet. The violin hands the melody back to the clarinet at m. 25, which restates the melody, performed by the harp and violin. At m. 35, the oboe begins theme two. The violin and cello resume their drones on D4 and G3, respectively. Theme two is predominantly comprised of a three-note ostinato on B4-D5-A4, with brief interjections of a three-measure phrase ascending from B4-F5 before descending back down to G4.

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<sup>38</sup> Gardner, "The Moods and Shapes of Harmony," 109.

While the oboe is playing mostly sustained phrases in dotted quarter and quarter-note rhythms, the countermelody in the clarinet remains in constant motion. After a repeat of theme two, the clarinet returns to theme one at m. 50. The oboe and harp perform a duet on theme three at m. 66.<sup>39</sup>

Example 4-4, *A Rainbow Path*, Movement V “Castle In The Mist,” mm. 66-69

The clarinet and cello perform the drone, with the violin joining at m. 73 after a four-measure statement underscoring the rhythmic vitality and high register of the melody in the oboe and harp. Gardner mirrors her melody after a vocalist’s line. The themes are simple and songlike, with movement in steps or small jumps through a compact intervallic range. The timbre is consistent throughout the movement, as Gardner scored for similar sounding instruments: oboe, clarinet, and violin, and keeps their range in tessituras that will highlight the warmth and purity of their timbre. This, of course, is appropriate for a chakra centered on the throat.

The form of “Castle in the Mist” is slightly different from that of the previous movements, due in part to the way in which theme one is presented. The movement is not a palindrome, nor are the instruments associated with specific thematic elements to create

<sup>39</sup> Kay Gardner, “Castle In The Mist,” *A Rainbow Path* (Maine: Sea Gnomes Music, 1984), 71. As presented in example 4-4.

a timbral palindrome or retrograde inversion; this differs from many of Gardner's works, which typically follow these patterns. In *Sounding the Inner Landscape*, Gardner discussed the hybrid forms she created. This movement may fit more appropriately in that category. The best way to break this movement down is to look at the larger sections. Section A can be marked by the multiple occurrences of theme one in all its forms. Section B is comprised of the repeated statements of theme two. Finally, section A is once again defined by the incomplete statements of theme one. This, of course, is more appropriately labeled A', as the themes are not presented exactly as they were in the original A section.

Gardner's sixth movement is a meditation for the brow chakra, also known as the third eye chakra. The movement is entitled, "See My Wings Shining." The sixth movement is scored for alto flute, vibraphone, harp, cello, and drone. The warm tone of the alto flute and vibraphone are juxtaposed with the thin, bright timbre of the harp. The intention behind this choice in instrumentation is to elicit a certain amount of depth.

For the Third Eye chakra's movement, I wanted a deep but light sound. Since this chakra represents insight and intuition, I wanted the feeling of going within to dominate the piece, necessitating the use of instruments with depth; but I also wanted the bony cavities of the head to vibrate, which called for my featuring instruments in a treble range.<sup>40</sup>

Libana begins a drone on A with the syllable "ih." The harp enters in m. 2 with a three-note pattern: A2-E3-A3. The vibraphone responds with a pedal tone on D, which succeeds each pattern. The motif highlights the tonic and dominant, as this movement is in A Aeolian. In m. 6, the alto flute begins theme one, characterized by large leaps of a ninth and seventh, as well as phrases containing long, sustained notes. Each phrase is only two measures in length, but each note lingers due to the slow tempo and suspended

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<sup>40</sup> Gardner, "The Instrumental Spectrum," 158.

rhythms. Theme one is immediately repeated at m. 16, this time with the addition of ornamental grace notes.

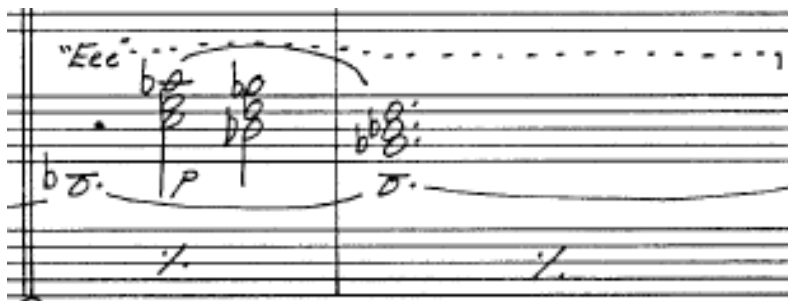
In m. 27, the alto flute begins theme two. As theme one was characterized by elongated phrases through suspensions, this theme becomes a contrasting response. It is characterized by constant motion through a series of eighth-note phrases. This theme is passed to the harp in m. 38, transposed up a fifth and doubled at the octave. The timbral dichotomy, coupled with the registral shift between the alto flute and harp, is striking. The return of theme one takes place in m. 50, first with ornamentation, and immediately repeated without. The alto flute finishes the theme on E4 in the penultimate measure. Gardner takes a deep breath, signaling the final chord.

The texture subtly changes throughout the movement, as Gardner pairs instruments in three, four, and five parts. The movement begins with all five instruments, although the drone, cello, and voices are all sustaining notes of the A triad (A-E-A), thus allowing the harp and vibraphone to emerge from the texture. In m. 8, the cello and voices drop out, leaving the alto flute to carry the melody over the remaining accompanying instruments. At m. 27, only three instruments remain: alto flute, vibraphone, and harp. Although this is the thinnest the texture in the movement, the lack of supporting instruments is almost unnoticeable. The tambura remains with the constant drone, and the harp and vibraphone become more active participants underneath theme two.

The form of this movement is circular, but it is not a palindrome. The structure can be broken down as AA'BB'A'A. Gardner creates a palindrome in the bookends of

this movement, as AA' is repeated in mirror image at the end of the movement, A'A. However, because of the middle section BB', the palindrome is broken.

The final chakra is the crown. Gardner entitled the movement for this chakra "Soaring." This movement is scored for flute, vibraphone, harp, chimes, drone, and choir. Gardner incorporates wind chimes and an "angelic choir" to evoke a "celestial or cosmic vibration."<sup>41</sup> The tambura and Voices of Libana begin the movement with a drone on Bb, with the chimes quickly joining in at m. 2 with a pedal tone on Bb. The first motif enters at m. 5 and is performed by the vibraphone. This motif is a whole-tone scale built on Gb: Gb-Ab-Bb-C-D. The vibraphone passes this motif to the flute in m. 7. At m. 8 the choir performs a three-note motif, beginning on Ab5 and descending to Gb5 and D5. The chords produced by the choir underneath this melody form a first inversion Ab augmented triad, a first inversion Gb augmented triad, and root position Gb augmented triad.<sup>42</sup>



Example 4-5, *A Rainbow Path*, Movement VII "Soaring," mm. 8-9

The choice of augmented triads is particularly fitting for this movement, as it evokes openness and mystery. Underneath this series of descending triads is a pedal tone on Bb3. The bells double the choir in m. 9, and immediately repeat the sequence in m. 11. The

<sup>41</sup> Gardner, "The Instrumental Spectrum," 158.

<sup>42</sup> Kay Gardner, "Soaring," *A Rainbow Path* (Maine: Sea Gnomes Music, 1984), 83. As presented in example 4-5.

original motif is heard in the flute once again at m. 12. In addition to the drone and pedal tones on Bb throughout, the harp and piano interject with a pedal tone on C8. Another unusual feature of this movement is the incorporation of a quote from the 1979 musical, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. In mm. 25-26, and again in m. 31, the flute plays a melodic phrase associated with the song “Epiphany.” Although the quote may have been unintentional, the song from which it is quoted is very fitting for the crown chakra.

This movement is structured differently than the previous six. The drone and pedal tones are constants, as is the five-note motif passed between the flute and vibraphone, and the three-note motif in the choir. For this movement, Gardner chose instruments with similar timbre; unlike previous movements, there are no major registral or timbral juxtapositions. Her decision to use the timbre as a form of structure could be perceived as a form of *Klangfarbenmelodie*.<sup>43</sup>

The final movement of *A Rainbow Path* is the “Fountain of Light.” It is meant to be a summarization of the previous movements, like the final choruses of Handel oratorios, Bach cantatas, and operas of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Gardner explains,

For the finale, a movement designed to integrate all the colors and tones used in the composition, I scored all of the instruments that had appeared in the preceding movements...The orchestral scoring is intended to vibrate the entire organism and thus ground and bring the listener to center.<sup>44</sup>

This movement begins with a series of tones in the woodwinds, horns, and string section. Collaborately, each section forms a B major triad, with each instrument sustaining either

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<sup>43</sup> The concept of *Klangfarbenmelodie* was first introduced by Schoenberg in his *Harmonielehre* (1911). It refers to the possibility of a series of tone colors relating to one another in a way that is analogous to the relationship between pitches in a melody.

<sup>44</sup> Kay Gardner, “The Instrumental Spectrum,” 158-59.

the root, third, or fifth of the chord. This opening sequence firmly establishes the key signature. In m. 5, the opening theme is introduced by the flute, oboe, vibraphone, and harp. Theme one is written in B mixolydian, which is quickly determined by the opening phrases, which begin on A natural. Each phrase grows more elaborate than the last. As the theme expands, it reaches a climax at m. 10 on D#6, then quickly descends two octaves through minor seventh leaps. At the close of theme one, the sequence of tones begins again. The sequence is modified, as the string section is now performing theme one. Theme two is introduced in m. 26 in the harp, vibraphone, and French horn.<sup>45</sup>

The image shows a musical score for five instruments: Flute/Oboe, French Horn, Harp, Vibraphone, and Strings. The score is for measures 26 and 27 of the piece 'Fountain Of Light' from the final movement of 'A Rainbow Path'. The music is characterized by staccato notes and dotted rhythms. The dynamic markings are mostly *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The French Horn part is marked 'w. horn sharp'. The Harp and Vibraphone parts have a '3m' (triple meter) marking. The Strings part has a '4' marking. The score is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

Example 4-6, *A Rainbow Path*, Final Movement "Fountain Of Light," mm. 26-27

Theme two is characterized by staccato notes throughout and dotted rhythms. In m. 29, the flute and oboe join the harp to bring this theme to a close at m. 33. Theme one is immediately reiterated in the strings. The string section passes this melody to the bassoon, trombone, and harp at m. 43. Following this last iteration of theme one, the

<sup>45</sup> Kay Gardner, "Fountain Of Light," *A Rainbow Path* (Maine: Sea Gnomes Music, 1984), 94. As presented in example 4-6.

harp, clarinet, and vibraphone play an ascending and descending B mixolydian scale. The flute and oboe play octave Bs, as well as the harp and violin. The final B major chord is created through sustained notes in the French horn, trombone, vibraphone, and string section, and the resounding drone on the tambura.

Although all sixteen instruments of the previous movements are being used in this one, the texture is not thick or muddy. Each theme is performed in unison by three or four instruments of similar timbre. As this work is intended for meditation and healing, the dynamics typically do not exceed *mezzo-piano* or *mezzo-forte*. The majority of each movement is written in *piano*, *pianissimo*, or softer. In “Fountain of Light,” the dynamics reach a climax in m. 10 and m. 38 as Gardner highlights the zenith of theme one with a crescendo to *forte*. The form of this final movement is circular and a perfect palindrome: AABAA. The themes are passed between the various sections of instruments but remain identical rhythmically and melodically.

### **Alix Dobkin**

As discussed in chapter two, Gardner was not always a solo artist. Her first album in the women’s music movement was *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, a collaboration with Pat Moschetta and Alix Dobkin. Dobkin had been performing as a solo artist for over a decade when she entered the women’s music movement. For Dobkin, music about her personal experiences as a woman and as a lesbian were a natural progression in her musical maturation. Dobkin quickly became an outspoken and controversial women’s music artist. Her vehement opposition to transgender women and alignment with lesbian separatism often isolated her from some members of the women’s music community, but also spoke to the fears of many women in and outside of the movement.



*Lavender Jane Loves Women* first hit women's coffeehouses and bookstores in the fall of 1973. The album included the original songs "A Woman's Love," "The Woman in Your Life is You," "Talking Lesbian," and "View From Gay Head," along with covers of Dusty Springfield's "I Only Want to be With You," the Scottish ballad "Eppie Morrie," and Blind Alfred Reed's "Beware."<sup>46</sup> First recorded in 1929, "Beware" was written by Reed as an "earnest warning to young ladies concerning the wiles of unscrupulous male suitors and the dangers of dishonorable men."<sup>47</sup>

We know young men are bold and free, beware, oh take care  
They'll tell you they're friends, but they're false, you see, beware, oh take care

Beware, young ladies, they're foolin' you  
Trust them not, they're foolin' you  
Beware, young ladies, they're foolin' you  
Beware, oh take care

They smoke, they chew, they wear fine shoes, beware, oh take care  
And in their pocket is a bottle of booze, beware, oh take care

(Chorus)

Around their neck they wear a guard, beware, oh take care  
And in their pocket is a deck of cards, beware, oh take care

(Chorus)

They put their hand up to their heart, they sigh, oh they sigh  
They say they love no one but you, they lie, oh they lie

(Chorus)<sup>48</sup>

Each verse is followed by the cautionary chorus, as well as an instrumental ritornello in which Reed and his son play the verse and chorus in their entirety prior to the start of the next pair of lyrics. The original tune was recorded with guitar and fiddle. Reed and his

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<sup>46</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Pat Moschetta, *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Women's Wax Works A001, 1973, LP.

<sup>47</sup> John Lilly, "The Blind Man's Song - Recalling Alfred Reed," *Goldenseal Magazine* (Winter 2008), <https://nativeground.com/the-blind-mans-song/>.

<sup>48</sup> Blind Alfred Reed, "Beware," Victor 23550, 1929.

son Orville sing in harmony throughout, coming together in unison on the words “take care” at the end of each chorus.

When Dobkin and Gardner recorded their rendition of “Beware,” they made several alterations to the text. In the first verse, Dobkin sings, “*They say* young men are bold and free,” rather than “*We know*.”<sup>49</sup> Dobkin also cuts the third verse about a guard around their neck. Dobkin begins each verse solo, with Gardner providing harmony on the final words of each line. She then continues to harmonize throughout the chorus; the two come together in unison on “take care,” as in the original recording. The performance is entirely a capella, which gives Dobkin’s solo sections a stark, haunting effect. Although the lyrics are hardly changed and the tune is identical, the tone of the piece is altered when Dobkin and Gardner perform it. The original comes across as a father chastising his daughters, or men attempting to place the blame or responsibility on women in this situation. However, when sung by Dobkin, the piece turns into a warning between women. It emboldens them to take control and watch out for one another.

In 1976, Dobkin released her first solo album, *Living With Lesbians*. The album was produced on her label, Women’s Wax Works, and featured musicians Casse Culver and Martha Siegel, who continued to work within the movement on their own and other musicians’ albums. Songs on this album included “The Lesbian Power Authority,” “Thoughts for Penny,” “Over The Banks,” “Amazon ABC,” and the title track, “Living With Lesbians.” “Over The Banks” was the first song Dobkin ever wrote. The piece is a blend of original material, Scottish poetry and Macedonian dance music. In the accompanying songbook, Dobkin describes her state of mind when composing this piece:

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<sup>49</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Pat Moschetta, *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Women’s Wax Works A001, 1973.

I find it amusing to recall how I carefully changed “she” to “he” and “pants” to “skirt” way back then in ‘62. In those days I took pains to appear as heterosexual as possible. I didn’t want anyone getting the idea that I might be a Dyke and covered my tracks well. I still sing “skirt” although I haven’t worn one in years.<sup>50</sup>

As with her previous album, Dobkin devoted several pieces on this record to the subject of women’s only spaces and the radical concept of lesbian separatism. In the piece, “Hearts and Struggles,” Dobkin sings, “After all these years it seems so clear/It’s elementary/The satisfactions of women living together so naturally.”<sup>51</sup>

Dobkin often used humor to convey her message. Witty song lyrics, musical quotes, and satire allowed women’s music songwriters the freedom to discuss controversial topics such as gender identity, sexual orientation, misogyny, and bigotry. We hear this in the music of Meg Christian, whose “Ode to a Gym Teacher” became one of her greatest hits. Dobkin is no exception. Her tongue-and-cheek approach to lyrics was well received by her fans.

“Amazon ABC” demonstrates the humor employed by Dobkin when composing. The song is based on the 1949 Perry Como hit, “The Alphabet Song.”

A you’re adorable  
B you’re so beautiful  
C you’re a cutie full of charms  
D you’re a darling and  
E you’re exciting  
F you’re a feather in my arms

G you look good to me  
H you’re so heavenly  
I you’re the one I idolize  
J we’re like Jack and Jill  
K you’re so kissable  
L is the love light in your eyes

**A** you’re an Amazon  
**B**ecoming Brave and strong  
Clearly and consciously you **C**  
**D** you’re so Dykey  
**E** how you Excite me, how  
Fortunate a Female Faculty, oh

**G**ee I Guess it’s Good for me  
**H**ow heavenly  
**I** never knew how butchy I could be  
**J** for sweet justice  
**K** for sweet kisses  
**L**-e-s-b-i-a-n

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<sup>50</sup> Alix Dobkin, “The Songs,” in *Alix Dobkin’s Adventures in Women’s Music* (New York: Tomato Publications, 1979), 21.

<sup>51</sup> Alix Dobkin, “Hearts & Struggles,” *Living With Lesbians*, Women’s Wax Works A002, 1976, LP.

M, N, O, P you could go on all day  
Q, R, S, T alphabetically speaking,  
you're OK

U made my life complete  
V means you're very sweet  
W, X, Y, Z  
It's fun to wander through  
The alphabet with you  
To tell (us what?) I mean (uh-huh?)  
To tell you what you mean to me  
(We love you alphabetically)<sup>52</sup>

For letting go of **M-e-N**  
**O**ppression is no longer over me, oh  
**P** is political: power to the personal

**Q** for the queer you feared you **R**  
Remember you gotta respect your  
Essential Sensibilities  
between us is the **Tie**  
**U**terine empathy  
**V** is for vagina, the virgin you can  
"double your" experience  
Until you get through to **X**-actly  
Where you want to **X**-ist  
**Y** let them drive you cra-**Z**<sup>53</sup>

When explaining her inspiration, Dobkin recalls,

The alphabet song was a hit in 1949...Perry Como had the hit, but the Fontaine Sisters had the great hit that I loved, and I loved it so much that I went out and bought the sheet music and thought it was the cleverest thing I ever heard. So there it was, sitting in my memory, when I came out.<sup>54</sup>

The piece is originally in AABA form, with the verse starting at "M, N, O, P" acting as the bridge. As with many songs based in the Tin Pan Alley tradition, this piece begins with a brief introduction. In Dobkin's cover the introduction is cut and the bridge is integrated into the first A section, creating a three-verse structure with an instrumental interlude before Dobkin finishes the final verse. The tempo of the original tune is much slower, as Como croons it as a love song. The faster tempo at which Dobkin performs her rendition suits the song's politically driven message.

In "Amazon ABC," the lyrics are given a feminist makeover, becoming the embodiment of female empowerment. Her clever arrangement begins with the phrase, "A you're an Amazon," working through the alphabet as she proclaims "Q is for the Queer

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<sup>52</sup> Perry Como with the Fontane Sisters, "A - You're Adorable," 20-3381-B, 1949.

<sup>53</sup> Alix Dobkin, "Amazon ABC," *Alix Dobkin's Adventures in Women's Music* (New York: Tomato Publications, 1979), 54-55.

<sup>54</sup> Alix Dobkin, Interview by JD Doyle, *Queer Music Heritage* (May 2002), <http://www.queermusicheritage.com/may2002s.html>.

you feared you R.” Dobkin places words such as “queer” or “dykey” in this sweet and playful context, effectively softening their negative connotations. She also frames the separatist strategy of living free from men with her phrase “L e-s-b-i-a-n for Letting go of M -e- N,” which comes across as far less threatening and more entertaining when set to the Perry Como tune. After an instrumental interlude performed on guitar and violin, Dobkin returns to the final A section. In the recapitulation, Dobkin makes several substitutions in the text. She replaces “sensuality” with “sexuality,” “experience” with “universe,” and the final phrase, “Y not, Y’s up, but it’s not ea-Z.”<sup>55</sup> The instrumentation for this piece includes violin and bass guitar. Dobkin leads the performance with a heavy, dense strumming pattern, with the bass guitar providing an additional layer to the texture as well as a steady rhythmic pulse. The violin performs the melody during the instrumental interlude, an octave higher than Dobkin’s vocals. “Amazon ABC” is a typical example of Dobkin’s writing style. The song is ultimately about the text, which is not overshadowed by flashy effects or heavy instrumentation. As with traditional folk music, the melody is simple to follow and falls within a comfortable range of just over an octave.

Dobkin also wrote several original pieces for both albums. “A Woman’s Love” was composed for Liza, Dobkin’s partner at the time. The liner notes for this piece read, “Liza’s birthday song for 1972. I wrote it just like it was for me.”<sup>56</sup> In the piece, the narrator explains the revelation of being in love with another woman, but not recognizing it as love:

Because she's a woman

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<sup>55</sup> Alix Dobkin, “Amazon ABC,” *Living With Lesbians*, Women’s Wax Works A002, 1976, LP.

<sup>56</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Pat Moschetta, *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Women’s Wax Works A001, 1973, LP.

I didn't think I loved her  
So unexpected  
We just stood and smiled  
And I felt so fine  
And it was so right inside  
But how could I know I loved her  
Because she's a woman?

Because she's a woman  
Confusion hid my feelings  
I tried to name it  
Everything but love  
But like a magic dream  
It would not be turned aside  
But softly and warmly it held me  
Because she's a woman

Because she's a woman  
She doesn't try to change me  
She knows and understands a woman's ways  
And I feel so free  
To be what she sees in me  
It's so easy to be her lover  
Because she's a woman

I realize a woman's place is my home  
And I know  
We've always been in love  
And so it will be  
For Liza and me

Because I'm a woman  
A way was laid out for me  
I always thought I'd need a man to love  
But while the men I've known  
Were as loving as they could be  
There's no one can match her beauty  
Because she's a woman  
And she feels so much  
The sweet touch of  
A woman's love<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Alix Dobkin, "A Woman's Love," in *Alix Dobkin's Adventures in Women's Music*, (New York: Tomato Publications, 1979), 30.

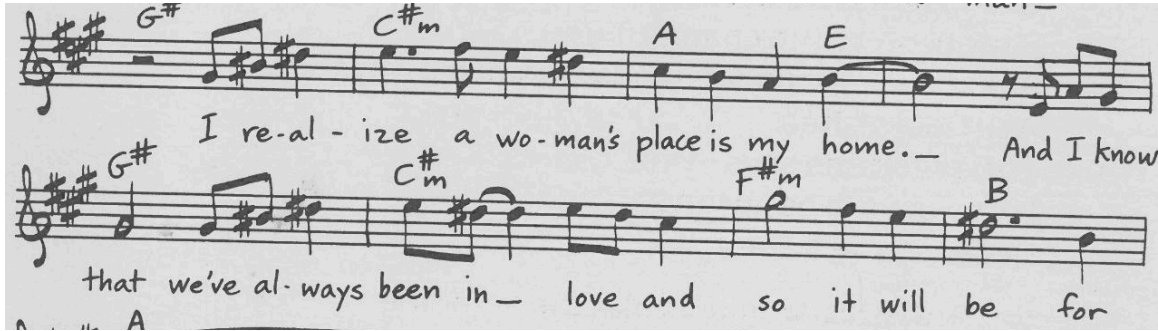
This song perfectly captures the coming out process for many men and women in the gay community. The initial response to one's feelings for someone of the same sex is often confusion and denial. As Dobkin explains, "Because she's a woman/Confusion hid my feelings/I tried to name it everything but love."<sup>58</sup> The song is scored for guitar, alto flute, bass, and cello. The piece begins with a four-measure introduction on the guitar. The flute enters in m. 3 and sustains E3 before dropping to the tonic when Dobkin begins the first verse. "A Woman's Love" is in the key of A major, and Dobkin's vocal range centers around C#4. The melody does not exceed A4 but dips down to E3 in the second line of each stanza, giving Dobkin an octave and a fifth to explore. With the melody in a lower register, along with the accompanying bass and guitar, the alto flute provides a brighter quality to the opening verse. In verse two, the flute is replaced by the cello, and a warmer tone emerges. An instance of word painting is provided by the cello on the line, "But softly and warmly it held me/Because she's a woman."

The texture of this piece is constantly changing. Dobkin introduces the tune on the guitar, and is quickly joined by the flute in m. 3. When Dobkin begins the first verse, she and Gardner are joined by the bass. In verse two, the alto flute drops out and the cello enters. Verse three incorporates all four instruments, but the mix highlights guitar and flute. The texture continues to change with Dobkin's variance in strumming patterns. She begins with a picking pattern arpeggiating the opening chords, leading to the dominant. When she reaches the dominant chord, Dobkin begins her strumming pattern. Dobkin highlights the lyrics, "She knows and understands a woman's ways" and "I always thought I need a man to love" by changing her strumming pattern to an

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<sup>58</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Pat Moschetta, "A Woman's Love," *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Women's Wax Works A001, 1973, LP.

arpeggiated picking pattern.<sup>59</sup> There is a drastic change in mood when she enters the bridge. The additional instruments drop out, leaving Dobkin and her guitar. The strumming pattern becomes heavier and more syncopated.<sup>60</sup>

The image shows two staves of handwritten musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains the melody for the first phrase: "I re-al - ize a wo - man's place is my home. — And I know". The second staff contains the melody for the second phrase: "that we've al - ways been in — love and so it will be for". Chord symbols are written above the notes: G# (G major), C#m (C# minor), A, E, F#m (F# minor), and B. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllable placement.

Example 4-7, Bridge from “A Woman’s Love,” mm. 52-59

The bass joins Dobkin on the second phrase of the stanza, and the cello enters on the words, “Liza and me.” The constant change in performing forces keeps the listener engaged.

“A Woman’s Love” is written in a similar fashion to the folk songs Dobkin grew up listening to and was surrounded by during the revival in the 1960s. The piece is structured as four verses and a bridge, which is placed in between verses three and four. The phrase “Because she’s a woman” acts as the bookend for each stanza. Typically the refrain of a strophic folk song would be the title of the piece, but this is not the case for “A Woman’s Love.” The simple nature of this form allows the music to support the lyrics, rather than overpower them.

Unlike the formally trained Meg Christian, Margie Adam, and Kay Gardner, Dobkin’s musical education was a combination of jam sessions, private lessons, and personal study. Her compositions are musically straightforward, which allows the lyrics

<sup>59</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Pat Moschetta, “A Woman’s Love,” *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Women’s Wax Works A001, 1973, LP.

<sup>60</sup> Alix Dobkin, “A Woman’s Love,” *Alix Dobkin’s Adventures in Women’s Music* (New York: Tomato Publications, Ltd., 1979), 28. Lyrics originally published in 1973. As presented in example 4-7.



to take precedence. Dobkin's lyrics tell a story without the over-saturation of symbolism or metaphors. Another example of Dobkin's writing style is the song "View From Gay Head," also from *Lavender Jane Loves Women*. The song was written on a roadtrip to Gay Head in Martha's Vineyard. In her liner notes, Dobkin writes,

The chorus came to me while Liza, Adrian and I were driving to Gay Head in Martha's Vineyard in the summer of '73. After we arrived I wrote the verses and very carefully lifted the tune from the Balkan song, *Savo Vodo* which I had recently learned at my Balkan singing class.<sup>61</sup>

The lyrics of this piece personify Dobkin's separatist identity, giving several examples of the hope for a community devoid of men:

I heard Cheryl and Mary say  
There are two kinds of people in the world today  
One or the other  
A person must be  
The men are them and  
The women are we!  
They agree it's a pleasure to be a

Lesbian. Lesbian  
Let's be in no man's land  
Lesbian, lesbian  
Any woman can be a lesbian

Liza wishes the library  
Had men and women placed separately  
For theirs is the *kingdom*  
She knows who she'll find  
In the *history* of *mankind*  
But then she's inclined  
To be ahead of her time. She's a

Lesbian. Lesbian  
Let's be in no man's land  
Lesbian, lesbian  
Any woman can be a lesbian

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<sup>61</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, Pat Moschetta, "View From Gay Head," *Lavender Jane Loves Women*, Women's Wax Works A001, 1973, LP.

Carol is tired of being nice  
With a sweet smile and a pretty face  
Submissive device  
To pacify the people  
For they won't defend  
A woman who's indifferent to men  
She's my friend. She's a lesbian and

Women's anger, Louise explains  
A million second places in the master's games  
It's real as a mountain  
It's strong as the sea, besides  
An angry woman is a beauty  
She's chosen to be a dyke like me, she's a

Lesbian. Lesbian  
Let's be in no man's land  
Lesbian, lesbian  
Any woman can be a lesbian

The sexes do battle and batter about  
The men's are the sexes I will live without  
I'll return to the bosom where my journey ends  
Where there's no penis between us friends  
Will I see you again when you're a

Lesbian. Lesbian  
Let's be in no man's land  
Lesbian, lesbian  
Any woman can be a lesbian  
Every woman can be a lesbian<sup>62</sup>

The arrangement is scored for guitar, flute, bass, cello, and women's chorus, which enters at each refrain. In the liner notes, the vocal chorus is labeled "The Great Patriarchal Reunion." The group is comprised of Liza Cowan, Cheryl Eule, Mary Korechoff, Kay Prothro, Carol Hardin, Mary Dorman, Julie Hoover, and Florence Kanner, several of whom are referenced in the piece. Also participating in the chorus are Dobkin's daughter Adrian and Gardner's daughters Jenny and Julie. In an article about the trio and their first album, Liza Cowan comments,

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<sup>62</sup> Alix Dobkin, Kay Gardner, and Pat Moschetta, "View From Gay Head," 1973.

*View From Gay head* is the first Dyke separatist song I ever heard. It chronicles the events and ideas that led us to be separatists. Smokey and Mary used to talk about men being ‘them’ and the women ‘us,’ not all human beings. I was really upset at having to look through all the books by men in the library. Carol Hardin, our neighbor and my partner for *Cowrie* (a Lesbian magazine) spoke of pacifying men with pretty smiles, and Louise Fishman had just finished her electrifying series of paintings: *Angry Djuna, Angry Radclyffe Hall, Angry Alix, Angry Harmony, Angry Judy, Angry Billie, Angry Sarah, Angry Bertha*, et. al. Alix took all our thoughts and turned them into a song so Dykes all over the world could share the ideas with us.<sup>63</sup>

Dobkin explores the concepts of lesbian feminism, radical feminism, and political lesbianism through this song. Both lesbian and radical feminism are derivations of modern feminism and the women’s liberation movement. While radical feminists believe that all women are to be regarded as potential allies in a struggle for liberation that brings them into conflict with all men, lesbian feminists argue that the interests of lesbians are not necessarily identical with those of heterosexual women, and that they should therefore organize and work separately.<sup>64</sup> Lesbian feminists were born out of the radical feminist argument that lesbians could potentially be silenced in women’s organizations, and that political lesbianism was a logical choice for women whose identity was largely based on their existence as women and abhorrence to a traditional heterosexual lifestyle.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the refrain “every woman can be a lesbian” is Dobkin’s political call to action, rather than a radical definition of the nature of sexuality.

“View From Gay Head” begins with Dobkin’s solo voice accompanied by guitar and cello. Dobkin initially plays a soft picking pattern, which is overshadowed by the constant counterpoint of the cello. When she reaches the phrase, “And they agree it’s a

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<sup>63</sup> Liza Cowan, “Review: Lavender Jane Loves Women,” *Dyke, A Quarterly* no. 2 (1976): 26-27.

<sup>64</sup> David Macey, “Lesbian Feminism,” “Radical Feminism,” in *The Dictionary of Critical Theory* (New York: Penguin Reference, 2000), 226, 323.

<sup>65</sup> Macey, “Lesbian Feminism,” 226.

pleasure to be a lesbian,” Dobkin switches to a strong strum to indicate the significance of this theme. The flute joins at the chorus to contrast the lower sonorities of the guitar and cello. The bass guitar fills out the lower registral instruments, but is hardly audible in the mix. Similar to “A Woman’s Love,” the main theme of each verse is confined to an octave from A#3 to G#4. In the chorus, Dobkin and the Great Matriarchal Reunion expand the range to C#5 on the phrase, “Let’s be in no man’s land.” The final phrase, “Any woman can be a lesbian,” is sung to a descending B major scale. The melody of the chorus is mostly stepwise motion, making it easier for the children and a large group to follow along without a lot of rehearsal. On the words, “lesbian, lesbian,” Dobkin employs a descending sequence, first on G#4 to F#4, then E4 to D#4.<sup>66</sup>



Example 4-8, Chorus from “View from Gay Head,” mm. 30-43

The flute’s melody in each chorus is composed. However, Gardner improvises the material she performs in each verse. Gardner cited her work with Dobkin and this album as her introduction to improvisation. This is apparent in some of her choices, which occasionally do not fit the energy of the moment. However, she supports Dobkin perfectly in verse four, anticipating vocal breaths and propelling the momentum forward to connect the verse with the following chorus. She is technically proficient and keenly aware of the harmonic progression as a classically trained flutist. In her review of the

<sup>66</sup> Alix Dobkin, “View from Gay Head,” *Alix Dobkin’s Adventures in Women’s Music* (New York: Tomato Publications, Ltd., 1979), 36. Lyrics originally published in 1973. As presented in example 4-8.

album, Cowan highlights the contribution of Gardner's performance in tandem with Dobkin's voice. Cowan acknowledges, "Kay Gardner's flute playing on this album is wonderful to hear, supporting Alix's voice with her beautiful tone and intonation. Her arrangements add another dimension to Alix's music."<sup>67</sup>

Alix Dobkin's third album, *XX Alix*, was released in 1980. As with her previous records, many of the songs are inspired by the female relationships in Dobkin's life. "A Mother Knows" is an intimate account of Dobkin's relationship with her daughter. In "Denny's Tune," Dobkin explores a budding romance with a new lover. In addition to these love songs, Dobkin's third album contains several pieces, which paint a contradictory picture from the one she created with her first two records. The song, "Living With Contradictions," is a perfect example. In this piece, Dobkin realizes living with lesbians is not as easy as she anticipated. She jests, "It's not what I expected, I stand politically corrected."<sup>68</sup> The timing of these albums is particularly relevant in understanding her shift in attitude. When *Lavender Jane Loves Women* was released, Dobkin had recently ended her marriage and come out publicly. She deeply resented men, a feeling that had festered for years within the confines of a heteronormative lifestyle. Her marriage hindered her growth as an artist and the result was a complete disassociation with men. By the time she had released *XX Alix*, Dobkin had been living with women exclusively for almost a decade. Her relationship with her daughter, Adrian, was strained. Adrian was now living with her father. Dobkin had ended a seven-year relationship with Liza, her first girlfriend following the dissolution of her marriage. Her new romance with Denny was structured as an open relationship, which produced

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<sup>67</sup> Liza Cowan, "Review: Lavender Jane Loves Women," *Dyke, A Quarterly* no. 2 (1976): 26-27. This lyric was taken out of the version that was published in 1980.

<sup>68</sup> Alix Dobkin, "Living With Contradictions," *XX Alix*, Women's Wax Works WWA003C, 1980, LP.

unceasing drama and required constant maintenance. All of these new problems were completely devoid of men, which tore at the fabric of Dobkin's lesbian separatist argument. For that reason, *XX Alix* became an album of honesty. Dobkin admitted her lack of transparency on previous albums after a European tour in 1979. She was confronted by several women who asked very biting questions about her relationship with Liza and Adrian. When she answered honestly, the women replied,

You know how hard these relationships are for Lesbian mothers, their lovers and their children, but your book ignores them and talks only about loving and sweetness. Look at these photos! We need validation. You should write more of the truth. You should discuss the problems, not just the happy times.<sup>69</sup>

One of the more candid songs on this album is "Just Like a Woman." Dobkin sets a deeply honest text to a rather playful tune:

Isn't it just like a woman to look you in the eye  
Though not a word is spoken there's a bond you can't deny  
It's a fraction of a minute  
But your whole being's in it, you know  
You're responding just like a woman!

Isn't it just like a woman, adores her dearest friend  
Exposes secrets of her heart, upon her love depends  
With her relaxed and confident, but  
Touching seems much too intimate. It's a  
Pity, but it's just like a woman!

Isn't it just like a woman to take care of a man  
To clean up all his messes and to fill his needy hand  
To suffer his abuses  
And then invent his excuses. It sounds  
Crazy. It sounds just like a woman!

And women all know the experience  
Discovering everything seems to be  
Stacked against us

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<sup>69</sup> Maida Tilchen, "Alix Living With Contradictions," *Gay Community News* 8, no. 29 (February 14, 1981): 10.

Isn't it just like a woman to raise a little boy  
And to train him for the privileges she does not enjoy  
And when everything is due to him  
Her duty is endless mothering. It's  
Depressing, but it's just like a woman!

Isn't it just like a woman to have a change of mind  
To change her hair, her clothes, her furniture  
The way her heart's inclined  
To change her ways of living  
Add some getting to the giving. It's a  
Miracle, it's just like a woman!

Isn't it just like a woman, creative and unique  
To make up new relationships, new ways to think and speak.  
Through overwhelming difficulties  
She's doing what comes naturally  
Enriching life just like a woman!

And isn't it just like a woman to look you in the eye  
Though not a word is spoken there's a thrill you can't deny.  
It's a fraction of a minute, but, honey  
Your whole being's in it, you know  
You're responding just like a woman!  
It's easy to see, you're naturally a woman!<sup>70</sup>

Dobkin explained the inspiration behind this piece in her album liner notes. She wrote,

The study of man fills libraries, archives and academic institutions. The popular notion of the study of women consists largely of Freudian commentary (spare us!) and pulp mythology in the form of jokes, insults and simplistic assumptions. As far as I'm concerned, almost anything a woman does is just like a woman, but there are certain similarities of female behavior too peculiar and too universal to escape comment. This song addresses a few obvious, yet generally ignored, female commonalities gathered from my own experience and observations. It is just like a woman to take care of others at her own expense. It is also just like a woman to come to her own rescue in an unpredictable and radical fashion. We all know, or have been, many of these women at one time or another.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Alix Dobkin, "Just Like a Woman," *XX Alix*, Women's Wax Works WWA003C, 1980, LP.

<sup>71</sup> Alix Dobkin, *XX Alix*. Liner notes for "Just Like a Woman," Women's Wax Works WWA003C, 1980, LP.

This piece shares similar themes to “Toughen Up!” off of Dobkin’s second album. The Dobkin illuminates this disturbing reality with phrases such as, “To suffer his abuses and then invent his excuses,” is juxtaposed with a jovial melody and allegretto tempo. Dobkin’s whimsical introduction begins on E4 and descends through a series of minor thirds down to E3. The descent brings the melody back to tonic through a typical V-I progression prior to Dobkin’s first verse. This progression returns as the piece comes to a close with the phrase, “It’s easy to see, you’re naturally a woman.”<sup>72</sup>

“Just Like a Woman” begins with solo guitar and voice in the first verse. The bass guitar enters as the verse comes to a close. As verse two begins, the instrumentation expands to guitar, bass, piano, and drums. Harmonica joins in verse three, introducing a higher registral layer than the previous four instruments. When Dobkin transitions to the bridge, the accompanying instruments drop out, with the exception of drums and guitar. Her strumming pattern changes to a rhythmic and chunky chordal down strum, which is mimicked by the bass drum. The harmonica returns toward the end of this section to link the succeeding verse.

The form of “Just Like a Woman” is strophic, save for the phrase “And women all know the experience/Discovering everything seems to be stacked against us,” which acts as a bridge. There is also an instrumental interlude performed by the harmonica following verse four. Each eight-measure stanza contains a four-measure rhymed phrase followed by a two-measure rhymed phrase, and concluding with the refrain, “just like a woman.” Once again, Dobkin emphasizes the text through a simple formal structure and repetition. The melody is comprised of stepwise motion often centering on E4 and F#4. Dobkin’s rhythmic choices are dictated by the text. She draws out certain phrases by

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<sup>72</sup> Alix Dobkin, “Just Like a Woman,” *XX Alix*, Women’s Wax Works WWA003C, 1980, LP.



constantly varying the tempo, and does not conform to a rhythmic formula for each verse. The text is always the most important element Dobkin's songs. Therefore, she manipulates the rhythm and melodic contour to fit her text, rather than forcing the text to fit a prescribed plan. Dobkin brings this song full circle with the final verse. In it, she repeats the opening verse with some minor adjustments. Rather than a "bond you can't deny," it is a "thrill you can't deny."<sup>73</sup> The implication is that the young woman from verse one has realized her sexual attraction to another woman over the course of the song. Dobkin hints at this in verses five and six, which both discuss a woman's ability to change her mind and to seek new types of relationships. Once again, Dobkin is describing the lifestyle of a lesbian as both sexual and political.

### **Linda Tillery**

Two of the most influential artists of the women's music movement were Linda Tillery and Mary Watkins. Both were classically trained musicians, and both worked as producers, studio musicians, and solo artists. Both Tillery and Watkins participated in several endeavors outside of women's music, and neither woman can be categorized as a lesbian separatist. Nor were their performances exclusive to women's-only spaces. However, their contribution to women's music is apparent, and their ability to crossover into the mainstream should be acknowledged as a significant bridge that helped other artists achieve commercial success.

Linda Tillery's professional career began in San Francisco when she joined the rock group The Loading Zone in 1968. Tillery recorded two albums with the band, *The Loading Zone* and *One For All* before they disbanded in 1971. She quickly landed on her

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<sup>73</sup> Alix Dobkin, "Just Like a Woman," *XX Alix*, Women's Wax Works WWA003C, 1980, LP.

feet with an offer to record a solo album with CBS Records. *Sweet Linda Divine* was not a commercial success, and Tillery found herself entering the next stage of her career as a solo artist vying for employment. In an interview for *Hotwire*, Tillery explains,

I did a lot of “casuals.” Casuals are when someone hires you for the night or two nights, you learn a bunch of different songs, and after the gig is over you go your own way and pick up more work. So I sang in a lot of different situations: wedding receptions, bar mitzvahs, debutante balls. I sang standards, rock, soul. I met a lot of different musicians and was introduced to many styles of singing.<sup>74</sup>

In 1975, Tillery decided she wanted to learn to play the drums. She started jamming with another female musician, and soon ran into women from Olivia Records. The label needed a producer for their upcoming album by the band BeBe K’Roche, and asked Tillery if she would be able to assist. Although Tillery was willing to work with Olivia on this project, she was initially reluctant to be a part of the women’s music movement. What Tillery knew of women’s music was their lack of black women and black music. As she told Gautreaux, “When, in the United States of America, someone starts a record company and there’s no black music there, to me that is the strangest thing on earth.”<sup>75</sup> Tillery agreed to produce one album with Olivia. Following this project, Tillery was approached by another artist on the label, and soon she found herself producing three more albums with Olivia Records, including her own.

Tillery’s self-titled album was released in 1977, the first album recorded by a black woman on a feminist label. The album featured seven tracks:

**Side A**

Womanly Way  
Wonderful  
Freedom Time

**Side B**

Brand New Thing  
Heaven is in Your Mind  
Don’t Pray For Me

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<sup>74</sup> Michele Gautreaux, “Sweet Linda Divine: An Interview with Linda Tillery,” *Hotwire: The Journal of Women’s Music and Culture* 1, no. 2 (March 1985): 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

## Markin' Time

“Heaven is in Your Mind” was written by June and Jean Millington and first appeared on their album, *Ladies on the Stage*. The songs “Don’t Pray For Me” and “Markin’ Time” were written by Mary Watkins, who also played keyboard on the album. The songs “Womanly Way” and “Freedom Time” were Tillery originals. Following the release of this record, Tillery worked as singer, drummer, and producer on the albums of fellow women’s music artists. Tillery also performed as a backup singer for the 1983 Carnegie hall concert celebrating Olivia’s tenth anniversary, which was headlined by Meg Christian and Cris Williamson. In total, Tillery worked on 31 albums from 1969 to 1984. Only three of those albums featured her as the lead singer or solo artist.

In 1985, Tillery released her first solo album in seven years. *Secrets* was produced on the Redwood label, owned by Holly Near. The album featured eight tracks written by a team of musicians. Unlike most of her contemporaries in the movement, Tillery did not exclude men from her musical process. Prior to her involvement with women’s music, Tillery had performed on albums for Santana, Boz Scaggs, and Coke Escovedo. As a result of her past experiences in the music industry, Tillery was more willing to incorporate male artists into her creative circle and allow them to assist on her solo works. The songs, “Special Kind of Love,” “Secrets,” “Basin Street,” and “Count On Me” were all written by Ray Obiedo and Teresa Trull. In total, six of the eight pieces on the album were written or co-written by men. Tillery composed the track “I’m So Thankful,” and Mary Watkins once again provided her compositional expertise with the piece, “I Suppose (Bring Me to Your Love).” In addition to the original songs on the album, Tillery also included a cover of the 1956 hit “Fever.”

**Side A**

Special Kind of Love  
 Secrets  
 I Suppose (Bring Me to Your Love)  
 I'm So Thankful

**Side B**

Basin Street  
 Count On Me  
 The Chosen Ones  
 Fever

The album received critical acclaim within the women's music movement.

In the years following *Secrets*, Tillery explored collaborative opportunities outside of women's music. In 1986, she became a founding member of Bobby McFerrin's Voicestra. The group was known for its versatility, often performing an eclectic assortment of jazz, classical, blues, R&B, and more. The group was featured in the songs "Sweet in the Mornin'" and "Discipline" on McFerrin's 1990 album *Medicine Music*. Her experience in Voicestra served her well as she entered into her next great adventure, the Cultural Heritage Choir. Founded in 1992, the group was inspired by Tillery's personal research on field recordings of traditional African American music. After careful examination of the folk music catalog at the Library of Congress, the documentary recordings of the Lomaxes, and the ethnomusicological work of Bernice Johnson Reagon, Tillery formed the a capella group in an effort to preserve the music she had discovered. The ensemble of six perform work songs, spirituals, Afro-Cuban chants, and other songs rooted in the oral tradition.<sup>76</sup> Together they have recorded six albums: *Good Time, A Good Time* (1995), *Front Porch Music* (1997), *Shakin' a Tailfeather* (1997), *Hippity Hop* (1999), *Say Yo' Business* (2001), and *Still We Sing, Still We Rise* (2009).

Like many of her contemporaries, in addition to her musical contributions to the women's music movement, Tillery also published articles on various topics, which

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<sup>76</sup> Jesse Hamlin, "Music: Linda Tillery Sings Her Heritage," *San Francisco Chronicle* (February 14, 2015), accessed June 13, 2018, <https://www.sfchronicle.com/news/article/Music-Linda-Tillery-sings-her-heritage-6081859.php>.

served to strengthen the musicianship of those participating in the movement. One article published in *Paid My Dues* was entitled, “A Beginner’s Guide to Drums.” Tillery thoroughly examined the different components of a basic drum kit, including exact measurements for each piece in the set and the necessary hardware. She also provided information on where to find private lessons or group classes and what brands to consider when purchasing.<sup>77</sup>

While in many ways Tillery strayed from the “traditional” path of the women’s music artist, her contributions to the movement are vital to the conversation. Her musical background and personal tastes brought in a new list of genres and possibilities for Olivia Records and exposed fans of the movement to styles which they may have otherwise overlooked.

When her eponymous album was released in 1978, Tillery had already appeared on fourteen albums for seven major labels. Her musical background influences included blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, swing, gospel, and informal vocal training through the Baptist Church. When she joined the Loading Zone in 1968, the styles she had grown up singing were coupled with funk, soul, and psychedelic rock. On the album *Linda Tillery*, one can hear the marriage of these various influences. Reviews for the album were universally positive. Terri Clark posited, “Linda (Tui) Tillery, drummer/singer, demonstrates a comfortable fusion of commercial popular styles, originality, and women’s consciousness.”<sup>78</sup> Carolyn Lee Bottum adds,

Closeted mainstream music fans, come out – Linda Tillery has arrived. Brought to you by the good women of Olivia Records, Linda (Tui) uses her musical background in spirituals, soul, and the blues to add to their

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<sup>77</sup> Linda Tillery, “A Beginner’s Guide to Drums,” *Paid My Dues* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 28, 37.

<sup>78</sup> Terri Clark, “Linda Tillery: Feminist Funk,” *Off Our Backs: A Women’s News Journal* 8, no. 10 (November 1978): 8.

catalog a highly professional, yet warm and joyous album...Not only is it excellently written and performed, but the recording, mixing, and graphics are up to an equally high standard. Being nonsexist, high-quality commercial music, *Linda Tillery* is the perfect alternative to the sexist elements of commercial music and an answer to the charge the feminists are lousy musicians.<sup>79</sup>

Lesley Mallgrave declared, "This album marks the best effort yet by a women's recording company in terms of complexity, diversity and instrumental depth."<sup>80</sup>

Tillery's ties to the blues and the spirituals of her youth are clear influences in the style and lyricism of "Freedom Time." The lyrics read:

No more praying, no more crying  
Look all around us  
People are starving and dying  
Time for livin', if you're willin'  
It's freedom time, yeah

We've been given empty answers  
Pain of oppression grows inside like a cancer  
There's no savior in the struggle  
For freedom time

If I could just tell you what it's really like  
To live this life of triple jeopardy  
On top of daily battles of all my people  
Just to sacrifice my pride but not my strength  
No more crying and no more weeping  
You better believe it that I do hold up half the sky

Tellin' the children, since the soldier  
To have faith in all of the things that you told them  
They'll believe you because they'll need you  
At freedom time, yeah

We've been given empty answers  
The pain of oppression grows inside like a cancer  
There's no savior in the struggle  
For freedom time  
(ad lib)<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Carolyn Lee Bottum, "Reviews: Linda Tillery," *Paid My Dues* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 41.

<sup>80</sup> Lesley Mallgrave, "And All That Jazz," *Lesbian Tide* 7, no. 5 (March/April 1978): 33.

<sup>81</sup> Linda Tillery, "Freedom Time," *Linda Tillery*, Olivia Records BLF 917, 1977, LP.

The lyrics are both striking and non-confrontational. Tillery draws attention to the ongoing fight experienced by the black community, and particularly the struggles faced by black, gay women. Unlike the verbal substance of Alix Dobkin's songs, Tillery highlights these issues through limited language. In an interview with Michele Gautreaux in *Hotwire* magazine, Tillery explained,

I wrote a song called "Freedom Time" which basically says it's time for us as black people, black women to take our own destiny in our hands. Obviously, we are not going to be given very much, but that is no reason to be stuck in a rut. It just means that our work will be much more difficult than need be. The obstacles are not insurmountable, and while the church has been the most dominant force in the black community (and I certainly know that my years of involvement in the church were good years for me), I think that beyond prayers there has to be a time of action. So I was trying to say all that in the song.<sup>82</sup>

The voices become an added layer to the texture but are not given preferential treatment over the other instruments. Each verse is performed in unison, while the final "yeah" at the end of verses one and three splits into three-part harmony. The song begins with two themes presented by Tillery, both on the syllables "hum" and "ah." This moan reflects influences from spirituals and sorrow songs, and would have been heard in recordings by the blues artists Tillery grew up listening to, such as Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday. The rubato nature of Tillery's melody gives the introduction a feeling of metric instability. The bass begins a nine-note motif on a syncopated, funk groove, which acts as the ostinato support for the musical interlude preceding the opening verse. The drums provide a steady backbeat, and the guitar enters with a rhythmic pulse emphasizing beats one, three, and four. The form of the piece is AABAA. The final A section is both musically and lyrically identical to the second A section. A quasi-improvisational musical

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<sup>82</sup> Gautreaux, "Sweet Linda Divine" 4.

interlude follows the B section. The synthesizer becomes the prevailing instrument, improvising over the heavy funk rhythm provided by the bass, drums, and guitar. The piece ends in a similar fashion, this time with Tillery improvising lyrics over a guitar solo.

When Tillery decided to produce a solo album on the Olivia label, she was determined to write some of the music herself. As she explained in an interview with *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*,

I was beating my brains out until somebody suggested that if I'd just relax, whatever was in my head could come out. One night when I was on the way to a movie, this little song started going through my head, and I really liked it. I kept singing it over so I'd remember it, wrote it down on a paper bag I picked up from the sidewalk, and got to the theatre just as the first verse was completed. Whenever there was a scene in the movie with a lot of light, I'd get out the brown paper bag and sing the verse over so I wouldn't forget it. A few days later, I sang it to Diane Lindsay, who's a bass player, to establish the rhythm. The song needed a bridge, so Mary [Watkins] helped me with that. Once we got all the chords, we were able to arrange it and establish the groove beneath the melody...The melody and the chords in many songs are so interdependent that it's hard for me to think about writing a song unless I can work out all the parts. Sometimes a melody suggests a harmonic structure, but just as often, a series of chords can suggest a melody.<sup>83</sup>

The piece Tillery is referring to in the quote above is "Womanly Way." The instrumentation for "Womanly Way" is a typical jazz/funk band arrangement. The bass, drums, keyboard, and electric guitar comprise the rhythm section, with a small brass ensemble providing a treble register contrast to the warm timbres of the rhythm instruments. The keyboard enters first with a block chord progression. The bass plays a descending chromatic phrase, which is doubled by the keyboard. The guitar interjects a brief solo before Tillery begins the first verse. The melody sits comfortably in Tillery's

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<sup>83</sup> Mary S. Pollock, "The Politics of Women's Music: A Conversation with Linda Tillery and Mary Watkins," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 10, no. 1 (1988): 16.



chest voice. She varies the stepwise motion in each section of the verse with occasional leaps down a major sixth or up a perfect fourth. Most of her melodic choices follow a consistent Bb major progression, with the exception of a flattened seventh and third to add more traditional jazz color. Back-up singers join in the chorus with two-part harmony under Tillery's melody. This additional layer continues into the second verse. As Tillery sings, "The moments when you held me/And I looked inside you/Keep me coming back again and again," the trumpet interrupts with a repeated phrase on F4.<sup>84</sup> The brass ensemble continues to interject a four-note phrase bridging the verse and chorus, followed by a sequence on C# and C-natural that leads into Tillery's final phrase, "I'd like to get to know ya/In a special kind of womanly way."<sup>85</sup>

Tillery explores multiple registers throughout this piece. The verse, chorus, and first bridge lie in the third and fourth octaves of the piano. Tillery juxtaposes her low vocal timbre with the bright, high-treble timbre of the keyboard. The brass ensemble enters as the second phrase of the bridge begins, enriching the thin texture with additional layers. The bridge is restated after a brief instrumental interlude. Tillery launches into the second bridge from C#5. The melody lingers on C5 before descending to Eb4 and remains in that octave until the next instrumental interlude. Tillery evokes various blues traditions into her vocal styling, including vocal bends, hollers, and blue notes. Following the bridge there are a series of improvised vocal phrases interspersed with bass riffs and a reiteration of "baby" and phrase endings from the back-up singers.

Included on this album is the provocative piece, "Don't Pray for Me." Originally debuted on *Lesbian Concentrate: A Lesbian Anthology of Songs and Poems*, the song

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<sup>84</sup> Linda Tillery, "Womanly Way," *Linda Tillery*, Olivia Records BLF 917, 1977, LP.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid..

addresses Anita Bryant and her anti-homosexual crusade. Bryant's condemnation of homosexuality began at the height of her career as a spokeswoman for Florida Orange Juice. Her celebrity status granted Bryant a platform from which to promote heterosexuality as the only appropriate lifestyle. By 1977, the gay community had had enough, and began organizing protests in every city in which Bryant touted her rhetoric. Articles in pro-gay publications assisted in announcing protest locations and warning members of the community about Bryant's destructive campaign. The release of *Lesbian Concentrate* was advertised in several feminist and lesbian magazines, including the July/August issue of *Lesbian Tide* in 1977. The advertisement reads, "We've had it with your brand, Anita," with a picture of the album's cover art.

While the entire album is dedicated to Ms. Bryant, "Don't Pray for Me" blatantly singles out the pious orange-juice queen. The piece was composed by Mary Watkins, but Tillery recorded it for both *Lesbian Concentrate* and her self-titled album. Even on Tillery's own album this is a far cry from her other material. She sings,

I know why you cry Sister 'Nita  
Life's passin' you by while rules enslave you  
And it's your blind innocence that traps you  
That makes you think it's the wrong I do

Well don't you know that you're a victim  
A sweet Christian lady preachin' hate  
I think you need to get your head free  
And yet face up to insecurity

Don't pray for me proper lady  
Pray for the truth your money can't buy  
Don't pray for me you bitter woman  
The happy slave is a lie

How many people need to suffer  
To pay for your own guilt and lack of faith  
Use the word to get your head free

Not as a way to oppress me

You really ought to try to be more careful  
If you sincerely do believe  
Haven't you heard the first shall be the last  
And the last shall be the first

We understand why you say you love us  
Because misery loves its company  
But in the good name of the Lord, 'Nita  
We don't need your kind of love

So don't take pride in your innocence  
It won't make you pure and holy  
Stop quotin' scriptures out of context  
To stir up fear and bigotry (hate and bigotry!)

You needn't worry 'bout my soul 'Nita  
You need the time to heal your own  
We're comin' out to walk in the sunlight  
We're comin' out to fight for right!

Don't pray for me proper lady  
Pray for the truth your money can't buy  
Don't pray for me you bitter woman  
The happy slave is a lie<sup>86</sup>

As with “Freedom Time,” this piece does not apologize for its severity. The message is clear and the lyrics are biting. The music personifies the sassy snark and tongue-in-cheek wit of the text. The electric guitar contributes improvised fills after every phrase of the verse, each more aggressive than the last. In the version released on *Lesbian Concentrate*, the piano plays a more prominent role in the fourth and fifth verses. This is replaced by the electric guitar in Tillery’s album recording. Following the fourth verse is a brief instrumental interlude by the guitar, as opposed to the piano. In the verses, the drums maintain a steady pulse behind Tillery as the bass and electric guitar carry on a separate conversation under the text. In the chorus, the texture thickens through the addition of

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<sup>86</sup> Mary Watkins, “Don’t Pray for Me,” *Lesbian Concentrate: A Lesbian Anthology of Songs and Poems*, Olivia Records LF915, 1977, LP.

trumpet and the back-up vocalists. The back-up singers are employed intermittently in the verse, mostly to emphasize certain lines in the text, such as the word “insecurity” in the final line of verse two. In the chorus, the back-up singers repeat the phrase, “Don’t pray for me.”

The texture of the chorus bleeds into verse three. The brass instruments and back-up singers play a more prominent role in the succeeding verses. Tillery embodies a quasi-preacher persona as she begins the section, “You needn’t worry ‘bout my soul ‘Nita.” The texture thins to a single bass note, followed shortly by a haunting guitar riff and a quiet pulse on the hi-hat to keep time. As the bridge continues, the brass section enters with a sustained chord under, “We’re comin’ out to walk in the sunlight,” and crescendos into the climax of the bridge, “We’re comin’ out to fight for right!” The piece comes to a close as Tillery improvises over the final chorus.

### **Mary Watkins**

In 1978, Olivia Records released its ninth album, entitled *Something Moving*. The recording was by a new artist to the label, who had started working in the shipping department of Olivia just two years prior. Mary Watkins began her professional career accompanying the children’s choir at her family church in Pueblo, Colorado. She began piano lessons at the age of four, and by the time she was eight she could improvise entire compositions. Even as an accompanist, Watkins struggled to conform to the confines of the page.

I think I got the music mixed up with self-expression, and it was the hardest thing in the world not to add something, to put more in the music than was on the page. They tried to stop me from doing that, but I didn’t see what was wrong with it. So it was in church that I got my first experience with accompanying people. I noticed very early that certain

chordal progressions made me feel certain things; certain arrangements of instruments made me feel different thing.<sup>87</sup>

Her spirited attitude toward musical traditions proved problematic both in private lessons and competitions. Watkins insisted on learning piano by ear, as she had perfect pitch.

This frustrated her private instructor, Edith Johnson, whose expectations for piano study followed the discipline of reading music. When Watkins was fifteen she entered a piano contest and won second place for her rendition of Schubert's *Ave Maria*. She was not granted first place due to the liberties she took in the score. She was, however, offered a ticket to the Pueblo Civic Symphony, affording Watkins her first exposure to a live symphony.

To further her music education, Watkins enrolled in college to study piano performance. Soon into her academic career, Watkins transferred to Adams State University in Alamosa, Colorado, and met a soldier named Edward Dawkins. Watkins left college; she and Dawkins were married in February 1963 and settled in Washington, D.C. The couple soon started their family with the birth of their daughter, Sharron. Edward and Mary separated shortly after Sharron's birth, and subsequently divorced in 1974. Determined to complete the degree she began in Colorado, Watkins enrolled at Howard University and majored in composition. She graduated cum laude in 1972 and continued to reside in Washington to pursue a professional music career. Watkins gigged throughout Washington, playing in combos and as a solo artist, and became the musical director and resident composer for the theater group Ebony Impromptu. In 1976, Watkins moved to California and was introduced to the singer Holly Near and women's music. Soon after, she began working for Olivia Records, working her way up from the shipping

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<sup>87</sup> Toni L. Armstrong, "Redwood Records: More than just 'Holly's Label'," *Hotwire: Journal of Women's Music and Culture* 2, no. 3 (July 1986): 30.

department to the recording studio. Watkins produced Linda Tillery's debut album before releasing her first solo album in 1978. *Something Moving* received critical acclaim and was granted regular airplay, earning Watkins a nomination for Best Debut Album from the Bay Area Music Awards. Watkins continued work with the artists of Olivia Records, arranging pieces for Teresa Trull's *Let it be Known* and Holly Near's *Fire in the Rain*. Following the success of her first album, Watkins received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, allowing her to begin work on her second solo album. *Winds Of Change* was released in 1982 on the Palo Alto label. The album was recorded live at two separate concerts in October of 1981. The personnel included Watkins's septet, a nineteen-piece all-female string ensemble, and the big band Maiden Voyage, which was also comprised entirely of women, with the exception of one trombone substitute.<sup>88</sup>

Watkins released her third album, *Spiritsong*, in 1985, her last full-length studio album until 2000. Watkins collaborated with other artists in and outside of the women's music movement, contributing countless arrangements and original compositions. She also composed twenty film scores and continued to receive grants to fund her various projects. In 2000, Watkins and Kay Gardner collaborated on the album *Dancing Souls*, which featured eight pieces for solo flute and piano. Watkins followed this album with the release of her fourth solo album, *Prayer for Peace 2003*. Watkins continues to compose chamber and large-scale works, including two operas. The first, *Queen Clara*, was completed in 2005, and tells the story of American Red Cross founder Clara Barton. The second premiered in 2009, and is based on the life of Fannie Lou Hamer. Hamer was a civil rights activist and member of Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 62.

was one of the first African-Americans to register to vote in Mississippi. The opera is entitled *Dark River: The Fannie Lou Hamer Story*.

Like Linda Tillery, Watkins has never limited her career to the women's music movement. As with Tillery and other African-American composers in the movement, Watkins has addressed the misrepresentation of black voices in women's music. She is also acutely aware of the specific genres, styles, and other musical elements that have been disproportionately emphasized in women's music. In an interview with Eileen M. Hayes, Watkins explained,

I'm an American composer, an African American composer. Anytime I have the opportunity to express the soul of the African American people, I'm going to do that. I love classical music, and I also love the music of my people. I understand where it comes from. I am not bound by a combination of instruments...if you want to use strings, use them. I'm saying this because there is a history of 'this is what you should use' in women's music. I don't have much patience with it— with women's music or whatever it is. I'm not invalidating the need for an identity, but I don't take well to being dictated to. You don't win popularity contests that way.<sup>89</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter One, the women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s did not represent all women. Most of the issues presented by women's liberation and second-wave feminism were from the perspective of the straight, white, middle-class. As a result, the women's music movement perpetuated the issues of that group of lesbians, but struggled to highlight the perspective of other minorities. Watkins, Tillery, and groups such as Sweet Honey in the Rock felt compelled to incorporate their musical heritage into the movement. Tillery and Watkins pulled from influential African-American genres such as gospel, spirituals, blues, jazz, funk, and soul. Watkins and

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<sup>89</sup> Eileen M. Hayes, "Interview with Mary Watkins, Oakland, California, November 27, 1995" *Songs in Black and Lavender: Race, Sexual Politics, and Women's Music* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 194.

others were also more willing to explore other record labels and collaborations outside of the women's music network. Tillery started her career as the lead singer of an otherwise all-male band, and she continued to collaborate with male artists after her transition into women's music. Watkins produced two of her solo albums on women's music labels, but two were recorded on mainstream labels. With the exception of *Something Moving*, her albums have all included male musicians.

Her first album, *Something Moving*, features seven original compositions and sixteen musicians.

**Side A**

Yesterday's Children  
Back Rap  
Brick Hut  
A Chording to the People

**Side B**

Leaving All the Shadows Behind  
Witches' Revenge  
I Hear Music

“Witches’ Revenge” is a musical summarization of Watkins’ classical training at Howard University, blended with contemporary styles popular in the 1970s. It is also a direct response to Miles Davis’ 1970 release, *Bitches Brew*. The piece begins with an ominous conversation between the percussion and piano. The effects are reminiscent of a Henry Cowell or John Cage prepared piano piece. This eerie discussion sets the tone for the entire composition. Soon after, Tillery enters on the drums, followed by the bass guitar playing a three-note phrase. Watkins enters on piano with a short, three-note phrase starting on Ab4 before descending to G4 and F4. The phrase is repeated once before it is transposed up a minor third, then once more in its original form. The bass guitar and percussion begin a rhythmic ostinato that continues under the second solo, taken by the synthesizer. The ostinato breaks for a moment to signify the transition from the second solo to the third. When the trumpet begins the solo, the bass picks up the ostinato once



again. Tillery shifts from the aggressive percussive energy of the first two solos to a restrained performance, mostly employing the hi-hat as opposed to the crash cymbal. Watkins comps underneath the trumpet solo.

After a four-measure interlude by the rhythm section, the trumpet pierces through the dark timbre established by the congas, bass guitar, and previous solo instruments. Bonnie Kovaleff incorporates various performance techniques from the jazz idiom, starting with bends in the opening phrase. The second phrase opens with a compact trill that gradually transitions to a wider tremolo. Kovaleff also uses a common jazz trumpet technique, the rip, or indefinite glissando. The trumpet and rhythm section begin trading phrases back and forth when the guitar interrupts the conversation in m. 85. The guitar solo is the most substantial of “Witches’ Revenge,” both in terms of length and material. Thick distortion permeates Jerene Jackson’s solo. Jackson begins each phrase with considerable virtuosity before letting the sound trail off without reaching a cadence. Even with considerable distortion, the solo is very crisp. Jackson travels down the fretboard to offer a timbral contrast to the thin, shrill timbre that marks the majority of this solo. A two-measure interlude breaks up the intensity of Jackson’s solo with Watkins’s mellow tone.

Watkins’s solo is completely different from the previous forty-five measures. Her initial reaction to Jackson’s aggressive statement is soft, warm, and inviting. Watkins’s opening phrase evokes the energy and innocence of a Vince Guaraldi melody. However, she quickly abandons this for a descending series of dissonant chord clusters. This chromatic phrase is followed by several blues notes and another descending line. Another series of dissonant chords immediately follow the previous statement, bringing her solo

to a brief conclusion. The rhythm section interrupts to allow the synthesizer a few licks before Watkins begins one final chromatic phrase, officially concluding her solo.

Watkins's solo marks the end of the first section of "Witches' Revenge." The formal structure of this piece is ABA', with the B section beginning in m. 166. This section is filled with sound effects, used to create a psychedelic soundscape. In m. 182, the opening motif enters once again, followed by the same rhythmic ostinato from the beginning. This leads into a series of sound effects simulating the sharpening of a blade as the music fades to silence.

Another piece off of her first album makes a bold and innovative statement, similar to "Witches' Revenge." "A Chording to the People," incorporates many of the traits characteristic of Watkins's composition style. The song begins with a melody doubled in octaves on the synthesizer. With her left hand she plays an open chord on the downbeat of each measure to provide a harmonic and rhythmic foundation. Following the introduction, the bass guitar begins a three-note descending ostinato on E-D-C. This evolves into an ascending phrase at m. 17 on A-B-C. Watkins begins an improvisation over the ostinato at m. 9. Her performance is a blend of virtuoso melodic passages with elaborate ornamentation and brief chordal motion to reinforce the harmonic foundation. As Watkins prepares to enter the refrain, the bass guitar sustains a pedal tone on D. The melody of the refrain is doubled in octaves. It begins on G, ascending stepwise to C. The melody changes directions back down to B and up to D before leaping down a fifth to G. The melody continues to descend to D. Watkins transitions from the refrain into a legato phrase beginning on G5. This melody retains the stepwise motion established in the refrain, moving from G5-F#5-G5 and finally leaping down a seventh to A4. This line

repeats, followed by a trill on E4-F#4 leading to G4. From there, the melody starts to descend chromatically. At m. 65, the next improvisatory section begins with an ascending flourish. Watkins inserts several blue notes into her descending phrase. Her embellishments of the melody are carefully placed. The bass guitar becomes an integral part of the texture, following the motion of the piano solo more intimately.

The guitar takes the next improvisatory section, beginning at m. 105. The bass returns to the ostinato figure from the opening. As with the piano, the guitar provides a registral contrast to the bass guitar and percussion. The texture of the guitar solo can be categorized as thin and treble dominated. This solo seamlessly transitions into the synthesizer solo at m. 124. The synthesizer enters by sustaining an A5 as the guitar concludes its solo. The synthesizer passes the melody back to the piano, which heads into a return of the refrain at m. 144 with just a slight variation of the melody. The bass guitar takes the final solo of the piece, beginning in m. 193. The piano comps underneath, with the occasional, and brief, elaborate phrase.

Throughout the piece, Watkins demonstrates her ear for orchestration with constant contrasts in timbre and texture between the soloing instruments. The dynamics of Watkins's opening solo seem to naturally ebb and flow, as with the emphasis in a conversation. As the texture thickens in the first refrain, the dynamics also climax at *forte*. There is an immediate decrescendo following both refrains, which allows the piano to regroup and start a slow crescendo once again. Although Watkins does not employ quite as many variations in timbre or register as in "Witches' Revenge," both pieces stand out on this album for their originality. As a result of works such as these, one critic went as far to say *Something Moving* was,

The best thing to come out of Olivia Records...For a change, someone has used the fusion medium as a means of expression...the all-woman band plays and sings with so much feeling and depth of expression that in many ways this is the best electric jazz album of the year.<sup>90</sup>

In 1982, Watkins's second album was released. *Winds of Change* was recorded live at San Francisco's Herbst Theater over a two-night concert event. The album was funded by a National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Performance grant. This project proved to be an enormous undertaking, as the performing forces included a small jazz combo and a 42-piece jazz orchestra, comprised of the all-women big band Maiden Voyage, plus a nineteen-piece string ensemble. Watkins pulled from her experience as an arranger, producer, composer, bandleader, musician, and engineer to bring the record to fruition. *Winds of Change* was released on the Palo Alto label and received critical acclaim from mainstream publications such as *Down Beat* and *Keyboard* magazines.

*Winds of Change* featured seven original works by Watkins:

**Side A**

Winds of Change  
Samba Orleans  
Water Wheel  
Street Merchant

**Side B**

Billy's Barb  
Mother's Song  
Woman Messiah

The title track, "Winds of Change," sets the tone for the concert event. The piece begins with an ostinato in the piano line. The seven-note motif spans a minor sixth, moving chromatically from Eb2 to B2. This ostinato eventually transforms into a sequence, moving through the third, fourth, and fifth octaves of the piano before a descending glissando leads to the entrance of the flute solo. The flute maneuvers between single-note, sustained lines and choppy, broken ascending and descending phrases. At m. 25, the flute and percussion perform a unison rhythm that is answered in the piano. This is

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<sup>90</sup> Larry Kelp, "Moving Up: From Piano to Her Own Band," *Oakland Tribune* (February 7, 1979).

repeated at m. 47. The section ends with a refrain that returns two additional times in this piece. The refrain is an Eb arpeggio with an added augmented fourth, creating a tritone in the final leap from Eb to A. The orchestral instruments double the phrase in their respective octaves, and the rhythm section emphasizes the rhythm of the motif. The orchestral colors combined with the jazz combo are reminiscent of Leonard Bernstein's 1944 ballet *Fancy Free*, which featured similar performing forces and incorporated various jazz and blues idioms popular at the time. Watkins's use of the tritone can also be seen as homage to several songs from Bernstein's *West Side Story*, which became synonymous with the interval. The heavy percussion in the refrain reflects works by twentieth-century American composers such as Bernstein and Copland, both of whom pulled inspiration from the Russian composer Igor Stravinsky.

The saxophone solo begins immediately following the first refrain. The sax solo is performed by Ylonda Nickell, and is in extreme timbral contrast to the flute, which is most likely an intentional juxtaposition. Nickell's opening phrase starts on a sustained note, crescendoing into a slow, descending phrase, followed by several ascending trills. Her choppy phrasing is reminiscent of the flute solo, but she soon transitions to more legato lines. Nickell utilizes the full range of her instrument, but does not focus on the extremes. The majority of her solo lies in the middle section of the alto's range. Once again, this solo is brought to a close with the refrain performed by the entire orchestra.

Watkins's piano solo follows. She begins with a disjunct melody that transforms into a smooth, legato, ascending line. The solo gradually crescendos toward the climax at m. 206. Watkins maintains the energy and dynamic of this climax throughout the remainder of her solo. In reviewing this piece, one critic explains,

Watkins' arranging trademark is the way she slowly builds a crescendo...In the tune *Winds of Change*, she builds a crescendo from the sax section through the brass behind a flute solo...the [super] brass sections peek out thrillingly under Watkins' arranging hands...The timing of the strings' entrance...spurs Nickell's alto solo to great intensity.<sup>91</sup>

The texture of "Winds of Change" is constantly evolving through the various combinations of performing forces, once again demonstrating Watkins's ability as an orchestrator. The piece begins with piano and percussion before adding the bright timbre of the flute and the deep resonance of the bass. At m. 56, the alto saxophone enters, adding another layer to the texture. Subtle additions from the orchestra begin to intertwine with the established voices, a process that eventually reaches its zenith with the entrance of the refrain. The entire orchestra performs the refrain, but immediately scales back to piano, bass, and percussion for the alto sax solo. The piano solo section begins in deep textural contrast to the previous sections as only the rhythm section participates. However, Watkins maintains the color variation she has established orchestrally through the broad range she utilizes on the piano. The string section enters, gradually crescendoing underneath the rhythm section. This solo comes to a head at m. 212 with the entrance of the final refrain. The piece comes full circle by concluding with a flute solo. Watkins even harkens back to the opening section with the same rhythmic motif performed by flute and percussion that is answered by the piano.

Although Watkins did not become actively engaged in the women's music movement until 1976, she began composing at Howard University. Some of her first works were written as a composition student, including the *Woodwind Quintet #1-5* and *Piece for Flute and Piano*, both completed in 1971. These pieces demonstrate her influences during this period, including the dissonant polytonality of Hindemith,

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<sup>91</sup> Cathy Lee, "Swingin' Along with Mary," *Equal Times* 8, no. 153 (January 30, 1983): 13.

Stravinsky, Bartók, and other twentieth-century composers. Watkins also incorporated African-American idioms into these early pieces, as these were constant influences and a significant part of her musical education.<sup>92</sup> Between 1971 and 1985, Watkins composed 46 works, with nearly half (21) appearing on her three albums *Something Moving*, *Winds of Change*, and *Spiritsong*. The music of *Spiritsong* is meditative and reminiscent of the New Age genre. The songs range in style from the gospel melodies of “Comin’ Home” to the children’s tunes of “Playground.” The song “Changing Seasons” is another example of Watkins’ thorough musical education, as she incorporates parallel thirteenth chords and experimental tonalities.<sup>93</sup>

Kay Gardner, Alix Dobkin, Linda Tillery, and Mary Watkins all took vastly different musical paths during and after the women’s music movement. Dobkin resonated with folk revivalists, while Gardner set out on a journey of healing through music. Tillery and Watkins collaborated on several projects, but were equally as successful in their solo endeavors. All four women continued to produce music long after many of the first generation of artists had moved into other fields. Tillery found success with the Cultural Heritage Chorus. Watkins has gone on to produce operas and symphonic works. Gardner founded the New England Women’s Symphony, while Dobkin continued to record new albums of original songs and tour around the world.

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<sup>92</sup> Helen Walker-Hill, “Mary Watkins,” *From Spirituals to Symphonies: African-American Women Composers and Their Music* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 299.

<sup>93</sup> Helen Walker-Hill, “Mary Watkins,” 300.

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## Conclusion

I would listen to Meg Christian and Alix Dobkin, and I would see these women standing up, saying, “Yeah, I’m queer, and I’m singing, and everyone’s lovin’ it.” I was inspired.

-Melissa Etheridge, *Alix Dobkin: My Red Blood*

In the summer of 1986, twenty-two-year-old Tracy Chapman performed her original song “For My Lover” at the Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival. Chapman was not signed to a major label, and her debut album would not be released for another two years. She was relatively unknown, and MichFest offered her an opportunity to perform for an audience of women-loving-women who would likely appreciate Chapman’s style and subject matter. Although Chapman eventually signed to Elektra Records and became an international celebrity, MichFest was an appropriate start for this sexually ambiguous star.

There have been a number of openly gay women celebrated in popular music in the years following the first generation of women’s music artists. Women such as Melissa Etheridge, k.d. lang, the Indigo Girls, Tegan and Sara, Mary Lambert, and Chely Wright have all seen commercial success as out lesbians. Lambert became a familiar name in 2013 with the hit “Same Love.” The piece was recorded by hip-hop artist Macklemore, and featured Lambert on the chorus:

And I can't change, even if I tried  
Even if I wanted to  
And I can't change, even if I tried  
Even if I wanted to  
My love, my love, my love  
She keeps me warm (x3)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Haggerty, Ryan Lewis, Mary Lambert, “Same Love,” *The Heist*, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis LLC, 2012, CD.

“Same Love” was the first song discussing same-sex marriage to reach the Top 40 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart. It rose to No. 28 on June 26, 2013, the same day the Supreme Court struck down section three of the Defense of Marriage Act, which denied benefits and protections to same-sex couples.<sup>2</sup>

Country legend Chely Wright came out in 2010, becoming the first openly gay commercial country artist.<sup>3</sup> Her decision to come out led many artists in the country music community to publicly condemn her. Wright’s record sales plummeted, and she received countless death threats. Additionally, Wright was not invited back to the Grand Ole Opry, where she was once a frequent guest.<sup>4</sup> Wright continued to record, releasing her seventh album, *Lifted Off the Ground*, in 2010. The album featured a number of songs openly discussing her coming out story, her new love interest, and other LGBTQ-affirming lyrics. The song “Like Me” is a vulnerable expression of affection for another woman. The chorus poses a series of questions to the protagonist’s love interest:

And who’s gonna end up holdin’ your hand-  
A beautiful woman or a tall, handsome man?  
There’s no doubt they’ll love you, but it’s yet to be seen:  
Will anyone ever know you like me?<sup>5</sup>

Wright has recently released a Christmas album, featuring brand new holiday tunes. She published her autobiography in 2010, *Like Me: Confessions of a Heartland Country Singer*, and a documentary following the aftermath of her coming out was released in 2011. Since Wright came out, other country artists have felt empowered to do the same.

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<sup>2</sup> James C. McKinley, Jr., “Stars Align for a Gay Marriage Anthem,” *The New York Times* (June 30, 2013), <https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/01/arts/music/stars-align-for-a-gay-marriage-anthem.html>.

<sup>3</sup> k.d. lang came out publicly in 1992, but is not considered strictly a country artist. Her career has spanned four decades, and included hits in genres of country, pop, folk, and jazz.

<sup>4</sup> Adam Gold, “Chely Wright Fan Launches Petition to Get Openly Gay Country Star Invited Back to the Opry,” *Nashville Scene* (October 9, 2013), <https://www.nashvillescene.com/music/article/13050886/chely-wright-fan-launches-petition-to-get-openly-gay-country-star-invited-back-to-the-opry>. Previously, Wright had averaged a performance at the Opry every ten weeks.

<sup>5</sup> Chely Wright, “Like Me,” *Lifted Off the Ground*, Vanguard 78081-2, 2010, CD.

In 2014, Billy Gilman and Ty Herndon both came out as gay men. Herndon announced his sexuality in an interview with *People* magazine, while Gilman posted a video on YouTube.<sup>6</sup> The two credited artists such as Wright in their decision to come out, noting her courage to do so in an industry that is often unwilling to accept homosexuality.

Twin sisters Tegan and Sara have never hidden their sexual orientation from their audience. The music videos for “Closer,” “I Was a Fool,” “Boyfriend,” and “BWU” feature Tegan and Sara interacting with female love interests. In the 2016 single “Boyfriend,” the duo describes the frustration and pain of a same-sex relationship in which their partner is unwilling to acknowledge the intimate dynamic:

You treat me like your boyfriend  
And trust me like a like a very best friend  
You kiss me like your boyfriend  
You call me up like you want your best friend  
You turn me on like you want your boyfriend  
But I don't want to be your secret anymore<sup>7</sup>

The aversion to fully commit to the relationship and recognize one's feelings for someone of the same sex is a theme that undoubtedly resonates with many of the sisters' fans.

The music video for “BWU” features Sara proposing to several women, with numerous rejections. As the video comes to a close, Sara proposes a final time and is met with a warm embrace. Although Sara describes the piece as an “anti-wedding song,” the freedom to express her desire to commit to another woman is worthy of admiration and

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<sup>6</sup> Jeff Nelson, “Country Star Ty Herndon: ‘I’m an Out, Proud and Happy Gay Man’,” in *People* (November 20, 2014). Accessed 8 February 2019. <https://people.com/country/country-star-ty-herndon-comes-out-as-gay/>. Billy Gilman's video has been taken down from YouTube since his original post in 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Greg Kurstin, Tegan Quin, and Sara Quin, “Boyfriend,” *Love You to Death*, Vapor Records 553726-2, 2016, CD.

can be considered a true representation of the progress made since the first songs released in the women's music movement over four decades ago.<sup>8</sup>

Other female artists have been empowered by the women's music movement as they push for equal participation in the music industry. Nicki Minaj, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Sara Bareilles, Katy Perry, and Taylor Swift have all insisted on greater control of their music. Several have become savvy businesswomen and entrepreneurs in addition to successful pop stars. Swift, Minaj, Beyoncé, and Lady Gaga are self-proclaimed feminists, often evoking an equal amount of adoration and criticism for their advocacy. Powerful women executives have also begun to dominate the music industry. The Chairman and COO of Atlantic Records is Julie Greenwald, who led Atlantic on a two-year hot streak from 2015-2017, earning her a *Billboard's* 2017 Women in Music Executive of the Year award. Greenwald and one hundred other women who have become powerful figures in the industry were profiled by the magazine in a November 2017 article. From label executives, artist managers, agents, publishers, to marketing and branding, women are increasingly involved at all levels of the music industry.<sup>9</sup>

While women are becoming a stronger presence in some aspects of the industry, there is still progress to be made. In 2018, *Billboard* and *The New York Times* published articles on the disproportionate representation of women in the music industry, specifically in areas of songwriting, production and performance, as reflected by the

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<sup>8</sup> Ryan Reed, "Watch Tegan and Sara Propose Without Rings in 'BWU' Video," *Rolling Stone* (July 22, 2016), <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/watch-tegan-and-sara-propose-without-rings-in-bwu-video-119983/>.

<sup>9</sup> Billboard Staff, "Women in Music 2017: The Most Powerful Executives in the Industry," *Billboard* (November 30, 2017), <https://www.billboard.com/articles/events/women-in-music/8053923/women-in-music-2017-most-powerful-executives>.

relatively few Grammy nominations for women.<sup>10</sup> The articles reported that in 2017, only 16.8% of artists were women. Additionally, women comprise only 12.3% of songwriters, and a measly two percent of producers.<sup>11</sup>

While a new generation of artists and industry executives are associated with women's music, many of the founding mothers are still active. In November 2017, Cris Williamson released her thirtieth studio album. The record, *Motherland*, is a collection of songs by artists who have inspired Williamson and shaped her style. In July 2018, Holly Near released her latest album, *2018*, which features brand new material, in addition to covers from the musical *The Fantastiks* and Leonard Cohen. Mary Watkins' ninth studio album, *Music of the African Diaspora: Five Movements in Color*, was released in 2009. Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir produced an album as recently as 2010. Sweet Honey in the Rock is an a capella group founded in 1973 by Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon. Dr. Reagon established the significance of a capella singing as a member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. She led Sweet Honey in the Rock until her departure in 2004, but the group has continued to perform and record. Their most recent record was the 2016 *#LoveInEvolution*.<sup>12</sup>

While similar documents have been devoted to the social and cultural impact of the women's music movement, it is equally important to acknowledge the music that defined the period from 1969 to 1985. This first generation of artists was eclectic in style.

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<sup>10</sup> Ben Sisario, "Gender Diversity in the Music Industry? The Numbers Are Grim," *The New York Times* (January 25, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/25/arts/music/music-industry-gender-study-women-artists-producers.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Nicole Pajer, "New Report Shows Major Lack of Representation by Women in the Music Industry," *Billboard* (January 25, 2018), <https://www.billboard.com/articles/news/8096196/new-report-shows-major-lack-representation-women-music-industry>.

<sup>12</sup> Kim Ruehl, "We Who Believe in Freedom Shall Not Rest: Sweet Honey In The Rock's Four Decades Of Music And Freedom," *NPR* (January 16, 2018), <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/16/577690049/we-who-believe-in-freedom-shall-not-rest>.

They came together from diverse backgrounds, varying social and economic classes, and a multitude of geographic locations. Some had been trained classically through private instruction or in university music programs, while others learned by listening to and imitating previous generations of artists. The only thing these women shared was their desire to create music for women, by women, and about women in a space that was completely their own. This document is hopefully the first step in examining the music of these women, whose works became the soundtrack of women's marches, women's festivals, and the women's movement. Continued research will hopefully illuminate the subsequent generations of female artists and their music in comparison to the founding mothers.



	Mile By Mile	DRR1003CD00 2008 (CD)
<b>EarthBeat! Records</b>		
Ferron	Phantom Center	9425762 1995 (CD)
	Driver	9425642 1994 (LP, CD, tape)
Sweet Honey in the Rock	In This Land	942522 1992 (CD)
	Sacred Ground	9425802 1995 (CD)
	The Women Gather	R273829 2003 (CD)
Tillery, Linda & The Cultural Heritage Choir	Front Porch Music	R272881 1997 (CD, tape)
<b>Even Keel Records</b>		
Gardner, Kay	Moods & Rituals	EKR39 1980 (tape)
		EKR39LT 1980 (LP)
	Fishers Daughter	EKR44C/LP 1986 (tape)
<b>Flying Fish</b>		
Sweet Honey in the Rock	Sweet Honey in the Rock	FF90022 1976 (tape)
		FF022 1976 (LP)
		FF70022 2015 (CD)
	Good News	FF245 1981 (LP)
	We All Everyone of Us	FF90317 1983 (tape)
	The Other Side	FF90366 1985 (tape)
		FF366 1985 (LP)
	Feel Something Drawing Me On	FF90375 1985 (tape)
<b>Icebergg Records</b>		
Casselberry-DuPreé	Casselberry-DuPreé	ICE211C 1985 (tape)
	City Down	ICE215 1986 (LP, tape)
<b>Ladyslipper Records</b>		
Casselberry-DuPreé	Hot Corn In The Fire	LR204CS 1994 (tape)
		LR204CD 1994 (CD)
	City Down	LR203CD 1994 (CD)
Christian, Meg (Shambhavi)	Whatever It Takes	SYD530 1995 (CD)
	Just Love	SYD286 1998 (CD)
	Good Night Wish: Lullabies for Children	SYD632 2000 (CD)
Dobkin, Alix	Living with Lavender Jane	WWWA001/2 1997 (CD)
Ferron	Girl On A Road	CW2011CD000 2011 (CD)
	Impressionistic Ferron	FLV810CD 2014 (CD)
Fink, Sue	Big Promise	LRC201 1985 (tape)
Fure, Tret & Cris	Radio Quiet	WOMO65402 1998 (CD)
Williamson	Back Home	CDBY7509363 2001 (CD)
	My Shoes	TMBG81302 2003(CD)
Gardner, Kay	Rainbow Path	LRC103 1984 (LP, tape)
		LRCD103 1984 (CD)
	Avalon	LRC106 1988 (tape)
	Sounding The Inner	LR109CS 1990 (tape)



	Landscape	
	Amazon	LR111CS 1992 (tape) LR111CD 1992 (CD)
	Ouroboros:	LR115CS 1994 (tape)
	Seasons of Life-Women's Passages	LR115CD 1994 (CD)
	My Mother's Garden	LR119CD 1999 (CD)
Gardner, Kay & Nurudafina	One Spirit	LR113CS 1993 (tape)
Pili Abena		LR115CD 1993 (CD)
Gardener, Kay & Sunwomyn Ensemble	Garden of Ecstasy	LR107CS 1989 (tape) LR107CD 1989 (CD)
Gilbert, Ronnie & Holly	Lifeline Extended	CALT11CD 2002 (CD)
Near Harp	Time To Sing	CALT1054CD 2001 (CD)
Higbie, Barbara	Best of Barbara Higbie	SLOW2218 2005 (CD)
	Variations on a Happy Ending	SLOW2214 2005 (CD)
	Alive In Berkeley	SLOW2220 2007 (CD)
	Winter Joy	SLOW7564 2012 (CD)
Libana	Fire Within	LR108CS 1990 (tape) LR108CD 1990 (CD)
	Borderland	CDBY144252 1993 (CD)
	Night Passage	SPN3 2000 (CD)
	Out of this World	SPN6 2004 (CD)
McCalla, Deidre	With a Little Luck	CDBY7269830 2003 (CD)
	Playing For Keeps	CDBY7269832 2003 (CD)
Near, Holly	Edge	CALT4 2000 (CD)
	Simply Love	CALT3 2000 (CD)
	And Still We Sing	CALT5 2002 (CD)
	Crushed: The Love Song Collection	CALT6 2002 (CD)
	Show Up	CALT7 2006 (CD)
	Early Warnings	CALT1056 2002 (CD)
Near, Holly, Judith Casselberry, & Toshi Reagan	Amazon Thirty-Five	LHES1CD0000 2010 (CD)
Simmons, Woody	Banjo Rama	CDBY86135 2005 (CD)
Sweet Honey in the Rock	Breaths	PROU70105 1988 (CD)
	Selections 1976-88	PROU667 1997 (CD)
	Twenty Five	RKY10451 1998 (CD)
	Live at Carnegie Hall	PROU70106 1998 (CD)
	Still the Same Me	PROU618100 2000 (CD)
	Experience 101	APPL1104 2007 (CD)
	Tribute-Live! Jazz at Lincoln Center	APPL1134 2013 (CD)
Tillery, Linda & The	Say Yo' Business	UFVH76762 2001 (CD)

Cultural Heritage Choir	Still We Sing, Still We Rise	TUM2010CD00 2010 (CD)
Trull, Teresa & Cris Williamson	Country Blessed	WOMO22013 1994 (CD)
Trull, Teresa & Barbara Higbie	Playtime	SLOW2212 2005 (CD)
Watkins, Mary	Dancing Souls	LR120CD 2000 (CD)
Williamson, Cris	Circle Of Friends	WOMO963 1993 (CD)
	Wolf Moon	CDBY48156 2005 (CD)
	Ashes	CDBY7258413 2008 (CD)
	Replay	CDBY7258416 2008 (CD)
	Strange Paradise	CDBY7258414 2008 (CD)
	Lumière	CDBY7258415 2008 (CD)
	Blue Rider	CDBY7258419 2008 (CD)
	Prairie Fire	CDBY7258418 2008 (CD)
<b>Lucy Records</b>		
Ferron	Ferron	None listed 1977 (LP)
	Backed Up	LR3106 1978 (LP)
	Shadows on a Dime	LR004 1984 (LP, tape)
<b>Olivia Records</b>		
Adam, Margie	Best of Margie Adam	ORCD961 1990 (CD, tape)
Be Be K'Roche	Be Be K'Roche	LF906 1976 (LP)
Christian, Meg	I Know You Know	LC902 1974 (LP, tape)
	Face The Music	LC913 1977 (LP, tape)
	Turning It Over	LF925 1981 (LP)
		LC925 1981 (tape)
	From The Heart	LC937 1984 (LP, tape)
	Scrapbook	LF945 1986 (LP)
	Best of Meg Christian	LC957 1990 (tape)
McCalla, Deidre	Don't Doubt It	LC939 1985 (LP, tape)
	With a Little Luck	LC953 1987 (tape)
		OLIA953 2001 (CD)
	Everyday Heroes & Heroines	LC965 1992 (tape)
Tillery, Linda	Linda Tillery	ORCD965 1992 (CD)
Tremblay, Lucie Blue	Lucie Blue Tremblay	BLF917 1977 (LP)
		LC947 1986 (tape)
		LF947 1986 (LP)
		ORCD947 1986 (CD)
	Tendresse	LC955 1989 (tape)
		LF955 1989 (LP)
		ORCD955 1989 (CD)
	Transformations	ORLC967 1992 (tape)
		ORCD967 1992 (CD)
Trull, Teresa	The Ways A Woman Can Be	LF910 1977 (LP)
	Let It Be Known	LF923 1980 (LP)
		LC923 1980 (tape)

Various Artists	Lesbian Concentrate: A Lesbianthology of Songs and Poems	LF915 1977 (LP)
Vogl, Nancy	Fight Like The Dancer	LF949 1986 (LP) LC949 1986 (tape)
Watkins, Mary	Something Moving	BLF919 1978 (LP)
Williamson, Cris	Changer And The Changed	LF904 1975 (LP) LC904 1975 (tape) ORCD904 1993 (CD)
	Strange Paradise	LF921 1980 (LP) LC921 1980 (tape)
	Cris Williamson Blue Rider	LC927 1981 (tape) LF931 1982 (LP) LC931 1982 (tape)
	Portrait	LC935 1983 (tape)
	Prairie Fire	LC941 1985 (LP, tape)
	Snow Angel	LF943 1985 (LP) LC943 1985 (tape)
	Wolf Moon	LF951 1987 (LP) LC951 1987 (tape) ORCD951 1987 (CD)
	Best of Cris Williamson	LC959 1990 (tape)
	Circle Of Friends	LC963 1991 (tape) ORCD963 1991 (CD)
	Best Of 1975-89	OLIA959 1993 (CD)
Williamson, Cris & Tret Fure	Postcards From Paradise	ORLC971 1993 (tape) ORCD971 1994 (CD)
Williamson, Cris, Jackie Robbins & June Millington	Live Dream	OLIAD3 1978 (LP)
<b>Pleiades Records</b>		
Adam, Margie	Songwriter	HB2747 1976 (LP, tape) HB2747 1976 2015 (CD)
	Naked Keys	HB2748 1980 (LP, tape) HB2748 2016 (CD)
	We Shall Go Forth!	HB2749 1982 (LP, tape)
	Here is a Love Song	HB2750 1983 (LP, tape)
	Soon and Again	YB2752 1995 (CD, tape)
	Avalon	YB2753 2001 (CD)
	Portal	DF2754 2005 (CD)
<b>Redwood Records</b>		
Alive!	Call It Jazz	RR8484 1981 (LP)
Allen, Lillian	Revolutionary Tea Party	RR8807 1985 (tape) RR8807 1988 (LP)
	Condition Critical	RR8802 1987 (tape) RR8802 1988 (LP)

Altazor	Nothing But a Hero	RR9202 1991 (tape)
	Altazor	RRC8904 1989 (tape, CD)
	Concurrencia	RRCD9302 1993(tape,CD)
Davis, Hunter	Harmony	RR8601 1986 (LP, tape)
	Torn	RRC8803 1988 (LP, tape)
Harp	Harp	RR409 1985 (LP, tape)
MacNeil, Rita	Flying on Your Own	RMC1001 1988 (tape)
Near, Holly	Hang In There	RRS3800 1973 (LP, tape)
	A Live Album	RRS3700 1974 (LP, tape)
	Imagine My Surprise!	RR401 1978 (LP, tape)
	Once or Twice No Loss of Pride	RR503 1981 (LP)
	Fire in the Rain	RR402 1981 (LP, tape)
	Speed of Light	RR403 1982 (LP)
	Watch Out!	RR406 1984 (LP, tape)
	Don't Hold Back	RRC413 1987 (LP, tape)
	Sky Dances	RRC8902 1989 (tape)
	Musical Highlights from the Play "Fire in the Rain"	RR9303C 1993 (tape)
Near, Holly & Jeff Langley	You Can Know All I Am	RR3600 1976 (LP, tape)
Near, Holly & Ronni Gilbert	Lifeline	RR404 1983 (LP); 1988 (tape)
	Singing With You	RRCD404 1983 (CD)
		RR410 1986 (LP)
		RRC410 1986 (tape)
Near, Holly & Inti-Illimani	Sing to Me the Dream	RR407 1984 (LP, tape)
Sotavento	Cuicani	RR8801 1988 (tape)
		RRCD8801 1988 (CD)
	Desvios	RRC9001 1990 (tape)
		RRCD9001 1990 (CD)
	El Siete	RRC9301 1993 (tape)
		RRCD9301 1993 (CD)
Sweet Honey in the Rock	B'lieve I'll Run on...See What the End's Gonna Be	RR3500 1984 (LP, tape)
	Step Away	RRCD3500 1984 (CD)
Trull, Teresa	Something To Go On	RR412 1986 (LP, tape)
Vogl, Nancy	Redwood Collection: Selected Music from Redwood Records	RR3000 1984 (LP)
Various Artists	Spirit Song	RR411 1986 (LP)
	Made in Mango	RR8506 1985 (tape)
Watkins, Mary		RR9402CD 1994 (CD)
Wild Mango		RR9402C 1994 (tape)
<b>Reprise Records</b>		
Fanny	Fanny	RS6416 1970 (LP)
	Charity Ball	RS6456 1971 (LP)
	Fanny Hill	REPM52058 1972 (LP)
	Mother's Pride	MS2137 1973 (LP)

**Second Wave Records**

Christian, Meg & Cris Williamson	Meg and Cris at Carnegie Hall	LC933 1983 (tape) CD933 1983 (CD) LF933 1983 (LP)
Fure, Tret	Terminal Hold	LC22003 1984 (tape) LP22003 1984 (LP)
	Edges of the Heart	LC2209 1986 (tape) LP2209 1986 (LP)
	Time Turns the Moon	LC22015 1990 (tape) CD22015 1990 (CD)
Trull, Teresa & Barbara Higbie	Unexpected	LC22001 1983 (tape) LP22001 1983 (LP)
Williamson, Cris & Teresa Trull	Country Blessed	LC22013 1989 (tape) CD22013 1989 (CD) LP22013 1989 (LP)

**Slowbaby Records**

Higbie, Barbara	Best of Barbara Higbie Alive In Berkeley Winter Joy Scenes From Life	SLB82218CD0 2005 (CD) SLB2220CD00 2007 (CD) SLB7564CD00 2012 (CD) SLB2014CD00 2014 (CD)
Higbie, Barbara & Teresa Trull	Playtime	CD822122 1997 (CD)
Higbie, Barbara, Laurie Lewis, & Linda Tillery	Hills To Hollers: Live!	SLB2014CD00 2012 (CD)

**Spinning Records**

Libana	Handed Down	SRC001 1985 (tape) SR001 1985 (LP)
	A Circle Is Cast	SRC002 1986 (tape) SRCD002 1986 (CD)
	Out of this World	SPN006CD000 2004 (CD)
	Turning: Songs of Earth Reverence & Peace	SPN007CD000 2009 (CD)
	Instrument Of Peace	SPN2013CD00 2013 (CD)

**Sweet Alliance Music**

Culver, Casse	Songs and Other Dreams	SAM-102C 1982 (LP, tape)
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**Tomboy Girl**

Fure, Tret	Anytime, Anywhere True Compass The Horizon A Piece of the Sky Rembrandt Afternoons	TGR83103CD0 2005 (CD) TGR83104CD0 2007 (CD) TGR83105CD0 2010 (CD) TGR2013CD00 2013 (CD) TGR2015CD00 2015 (CD)
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**Tuzier Music**

Tillery, Linda	Secrets	TUM746 2002 (CD)
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**Urana Records**

Gardner, Kay	Mooncircles	CWWE80 1975 (tape) STWWE80 1975 (LP)
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	Emerging	CWWE83 1978 (tape) STWWE83 1978 (LP) STWWE84 1979 (LP)
Alive!	Alive!	
<b>Windbag Records</b>		
Berkeley Women's Music Collective	Berkeley Women's Music Collective Tryin' To Survive	HA8181 1976 (LP) H0815 1978 (LP)
<b>Wise Women Enterprises, Inc.</b>		
Culver, Casse Gardner, Kay	3 Gypsies Ocean Moon	STWWE81 1976 (LP) WWE85CD 1991 (CD)
<b>Wolf Moon Records</b>		
Williamson, Cris & Tret Fure Williamson, Cris	Between The Covers Radio Quiet Real Deal Changer and the Changed: 30th Anniversary Limited Edition The Essential Cris Williamson Fringe Winter Hearts Gift Horse Pray Tell Motherland	65401 1996 (CD, tape) 65402 1998 (CD) WM5406CD000 2005 (CD) WM5408CD000 2005 (CD) WM5407CD000 2005 (CD) WMR96457 2007 (CD) WM2009CD000 2009 (CD) WM2011CD000 2010 (CD) WM2013CD000 2013 (CD) WM2017CD000 2017 (CD)
<b>Women's Wax Works</b>		
Dobkin, Alix	Lavender Jane Loves Women Living With Lesbians XX Alix Never Been Better These Women Never Been Better Yahoo Australia!: Alix Live from Sydney Love & Politics: A 30 Year Saga	WWWA001 1975 (LP, tape) WWWA002 1976 (LP, tape) WWWA003 1980 (tape) WWWA004 1985 (LP) WWWA005 1986 (LP, tape) WWWA006 1990 (CD, tape) WWWA007 1992 (CD, tape)
<b>Galaxia Women Enterprises</b>		
Feldman, Maxine <b>Blue Elan Records</b>	Closet Sale	GAL003 (LP, tape)
Fanny	Fanny Walked the Earth	BER1071 2018 (CD) BER1071LP 2018 (LP)
<b>Slick Music, Inc.</b>		
Fanny <b>Philo Records</b>	Live	SM006 1998 (CD)

Ferron	Testimony	PH1074 1980 (LP)
<b>Fair and Loving Music</b>		
Ferron	Boulder Thunder & Lighten-ing	SHR2008CD00 2008 (CD) SHR2013DVCD 2013 (CD/DVD)
<b>Frostfire Records</b>		
Fink, Sue	True Life Adventure	FFCD101 1988 (CD)
<b>Frauen Offensive</b>		
Flying Lesbians	Flying Lesbians	F03V4 1975 (LP)
<b>Palo Alto Records</b>		
Watkins, Mary	Winds Of Change	PA8030 1981 (LP)
<b>Wenefil</b>		
Watkins, Mary	The Soul Knows	1992 (CD, tape)
<b>Hide Tide Music</b>		
Watkins, Mary	Song for My Mother Who Has Not Been Touched	1999 (CD) 2004 (CD)
<b>Albany Records</b>		
Watkins, Mary	Music of the African Diaspora: Five Movements in Color	2009 (CD)
<b>Dream Machine</b>		
Williamson, Cris	Live Dream	D3 1978 (LP)
<b>Pacific Cascade Records</b>		
Williamson, Cris	Lumière	LPL7035 1982 (LP)
<b>H&amp;C Records</b>		
Williamson, Cris & Holly Near	Cris And Holly	HC6201 2003 (CD)

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