

# GLSG Newsletter

For the Gay & Lesbian Study Group  
of the American Musicological Society  
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## introduction

Welcome to the spring issue of the Newsletter of the Gay & Lesbian Study Group of the American Musicological Society (AMS). The GLSG is a recognised special interest group of the AMS. A list of GLSG officers and their addresses appears at the end of this issue.

Our objectives include promoting communication among lesbian & gay music scholars, increasing awareness of issues in sexuality and music in the academic community, and establishing a forum for the presentation of lesbian & gay music studies. We also intend to provide an environment in which to examine the process of coming out in academia, and to contribute to a positive political climate for gay & lesbian affirmative action and curricula.

*Subscriptions & Contributions:* Issues appear twice a year in March and October. We ask (US) \$10 per year for subscribing individuals, \$20 for institutions, \$15 for couples, and \$7 for the unwaged. Subscribers outside North America should add \$2 to the appropriate category. Subscriptions cover the calendar year; we supply sample or back issues on request. Please make cheques out to *GLSG--Mario Champagne* and mail to the address listed at the end of this issue. If you need a receipt (in addition to your cancelled cheque) please say so.

The financial burden of producing this Newsletter is not eased by any institution or grant. We welcome contributions in any amount. A Supporting Member subscription is \$25, which goes toward production of the Newsletter.

*Mailing List:* We encourage you to send names for the mailing list to Mario Champagne at the address listed at the end of this issue. Names and addresses of your colleagues are welcome, as well as addresses of lesbian & gay musical institutions. The GLSG mailing list is not offered to any other organization.

*Announcements & Articles* should be sent to Martha Mockus or Stephen McClatchie, co-editors, by 15 February and 15 September of each year. E-mail submissions are preferred, if possible. We welcome news items, announcements of conferences, concerts, and workshops, special bibliographies, syllabi, suggestions, and letters (even complaints).

*Photocopying:* Libraries are authorized to photocopy materials in this Newsletter for the purposes of course reserve reading at the rate of one copy for every fifteen students, and may reuse copies for other courses or for the same course offered subsequently.

*Gentle Readers:* As the new co-editor of the Newsletter, I am very conscious of the big shoes that I have to fill. Chip Whitesell has done a marvelous job as co-editor these last few years (amid frequent changes of address!) and I am sure that the membership joins Martha and me in thanking him for all his hard work.

We would also like to thank all of the contributors to this issue, which includes reports and reviews from England, Germany, and Sweden. Quite an international flavour! As always, we encourage your comments and suggestions.

[SMc]

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## upcoming conferences

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*forms of desire*, the Seventh Annual Queer Graduate Studies Conference, 3-6 April 1997, sponsored by the City University of New York Graduate School and University Center.

*forms of desire* intends to spark interest in diverse forms of sexuality in history, philosophy, literature, art, *music*, theater,

film and performance, architecture and public space, psychology and identities, nations, politics and public policy, classrooms and communities, in theory and practice, and invites multiple and varied scholarly methods and ideas. To draw attention to and take advantage of the vital connections between the Academy and the City's Queer communities, *forms of desire* will feature keynote speakers, social activities at art and performance spaces throughout the city, workshops on research & the job market, roundtable discussions, and more than sixty student panels. For more information contact: forms of desire, c/o CLAGS, 33 West 42nd Street, Room 404N, New York, NY 10036.

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*Britpop: Towards a Musicological Perspective*. A one-day symposium on definitions, traditions, regions, style, genre, intertextuality, gender, sexuality, and class. Held on 9 April 1997 in the Department of Music at the University of Leeds in association with *Sonus: the Internet Journal of Critical Musicology*. For more information contact: Steve Sweeney-Turner, Department of Music, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, England; e-mail: s.sweeney-turner@leeds.ac.uk; telephone: 0113-233-2582.

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*Cultural Cartographies III: Negotiating the Vanishing Borders*. Third Annual Graduate Student Conference at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC, April 18-20, 1997.

Contemporary society is witnessing the erasure of the traditional distinctions between high and mass culture. How is T.S. Eliot perceived by a culture that values both surfing the net and body piercing? As the once rigid distinction between high and low culture fades and the appreciation for folk and mass cultures increases, how do we negotiate the vanishing borders of our cultural landscapes?

*Cultural Cartographies III* will examine the protean relations between mass culture and aesthetic production. This conference encourages submissions from various disciplines and theoretical and creative perspectives. It invites speculation on this topic in aesthetic, social, ethnic, sexual, political, and historical terms. Pertinent subjects include reception, the place of high art in contemporary culture, appropriation/ parody/ subversion of high art, Third World negotiations of the concept of art, the politics of publishing, and the study of subcultures, leisure, consumerism and economics, ethnicity and multiculturalism, architecture, *music*, Internet, and the media.

The conference will feature Laura Kipnis, Associate Professor of Radio/TV/Film, Northwestern University, and Fred Pfeil, Professor of English, Trinity College. Kipnis has written articles and books on multimedia such as *Bound and Gagged: Pornography and the Politics of Fantasy in America* and has written, produced, and directed *A Man's Woman* and *Marx: The Video*. Pfeil has written extensively on popular culture and is the author of *White Guys: Studies in Postmodern Domination and Difference* and *Another Tale*

*to Tell: Politics and Narrative in Postmodern Culture*.

For more information contact: David Cudar and Lee Capps, English Department, Tompkins Hall, Box 8105, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-8105.

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*DisChord: A Conference on Contemporary Popular Music*, May 9-11, 1997, at the University of California, Los Angeles. Sponsored by Susan McClary and Robert Walser (Musicology, UCLA), the conference aims to bring disparate communities together in order to examine the social, cultural, and political issues at work in contemporary popular music. This conference will encourage musicians, academics, and journalists to engage with their work unconventionally--disrupting boundaries between genres, disciplines, and professions so as to interrogate the interdisciplinary as well as cross-cultural impact of popular music studies and culture at the present moment. For further information, contact Daphne Brooks and Sonnet Retman in the English Department at UCLA, (310) 825-4173.

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*Cross-Cultural Poetics*, 26-29 June 1997, University of Minnesota.

Despite artificial disciplinary barriers, ethnographers and poets have in recent years come to realize how similar their projects are. *Cross-Cultural Poetics* seeks to address the increasingly untenable boundaries between poetic and ethnographic practices. The conference will focus on the role of poetry in the on-going discourses of multiculturalism, ethnography, and literary theory and practice. While recent years have seen a debate in "how culture is written (about)" and most of these debates make extensive use of the term "poetics," poetic discourse itself has not been foregrounded as a significant measure and critique-mechanism in the matrix of cultural writings. Construing the term "poetry" fairly broadly, this conference will feature poets and scholars working in a broad range of fields: anthropology, urban studies, ethnic studies, folklore, literature and literary theory, sociology, history, publishing, film, American studies, performance studies, ethnomusicology, cultural studies. The following areas are among the topics to be addressed: Ethnography as Poetry/Poetry as Ethnography, Ethnic, Folkloric & Vernacular Poetics, Issues in Cultural Translation, Poetry & Other Media (Song Lyrics, Music, Film, Movement, Visual Arts), Close Readings of and/or Listeners to Ethnographic Documents, The Act of Inscription: Fieldnotes and Notebooks.

For more information contact: Professor Maria Damon, English Department, 207 Lind Hall, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis MN 55455.

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*Music Studies and Cultural Difference*, presented by The Open University Musics and Cultures Research Group in association with the British Forum for Ethnomusicology (BFE), Critical Musicology, and the International Association

for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM). Conference will be held on Wednesday 2 July 1997 at the Open University Conference Centre, Grays Inn Road, London.

*Music Studies and Cultural Difference* is an interdisciplinary conference, arranged to establish dialogue between different branches of Music Studies (including Ethnomusicology, Popular Music Studies, and Historical Musicology), Anthropology, Cultural Theory and any other relevant academic fields. It will explore approaches to cultural difference in different disciplines, and ways in which we can learn from each other's methods and findings. "Cultural difference" will be interpreted flexibly, so that it can be thought of as applying within or across national boundaries: the differences may be (for instance) between cultures, between subcultures, between social classes or between genders. The day will comprise four sessions: the first three will take the form of 30-minute papers followed by shorter responses and open discussion; the last will be a round table discussion. For more information contact: Dr Martin Clayton, Faculty of Arts, Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA; m.r.l.clayton@open.ac.uk; OR Dr Richard Middleton, Open University, Eldon House, Regent Centre, Gosforth, Newcastle NE3 3PW; r.middleton@open.ac.uk

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*Body Projects: Incarnations, Inscriptions, Adhesions, Invasions*, at the University of Saskatchewan, 18-20 September 1997.

This is the first of an annual series of events designed to promote traditional, interdisciplinary, and anti-disciplinary work in the variously inflected (and infected) sites of human embodiment. Keynote speakers include Roy Porter of the Wellcome Institute, George Rousseau of the Thomas Reid Institute, and leading feminist authorities on Body Theory and Performativity. There will be a wide range of fora and modes of representation.

For further information contact: Len Findlay, Director, Humanities Research Unit, c/o Department of English, University of Saskatchewan, College of Arts and Science, 9 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK, Canada S7N 5A5. Tel.: (306) 966-5517 or 5506; FAX: (306) 966-5951; E-mail: humanities.research@usask.ca; Website: http://www.usask.ca/hru

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*The Society for Ethnomusicology* will meet jointly with the Society for Popular Music, Pittsburg, 23-26 October 1997. One of the themes of this year's conference is queer theory.

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*calls for submissions*

For a collection of essays on music and modern transitional

'queer' identities. Submissions may focus on composers, performers, repertoires, venues or specific works. The proposed historical period is 1880-1930, but we are very open to widening the scope. We seek essays representing a wide range of national and cultural contexts.

Submissions may take a number of different approaches:

- 1) HISTORICAL. Recovering forgotten or closeted life stories or gathering places. Historical 'evidence' will no doubt be fragile in many cases; interpretation highly speculative. We welcome creative and sensitive solutions to these problems.
- 2) THEORETICAL. Discovering the identity categories (invert, dandy, enigma) improvised by queer folks in pre-WWII society; the relation of subcultural life to larger cultures; the intersections of personal transition/crisis and the aesthetic crisis of modernism.
- 3) ANALYTICAL. Uncovering the connections between dissident identity and musical style, strategies, or personae. We would like to include a strong emphasis on musical analysis.

Especially encouraged are essays on early jazz and other African-American contexts, Nadia Boulanger and her circle, and perspectives that cross national or cultural boundaries.

FFI: Please contact:

Chip Whitesell  
Dept of Music  
SUNY  
Stony Brook NY 11794-5475  
516-632-7330  
Lwhitesell@ccmail.sunysb.edu

OR

Sophie Fuller  
Dept of Music  
University of Reading  
35 Upper Redlands Rd  
Reading RG1 5JE  
UK  
sophie@full.demon.co.uk

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*Women In Jazz: Nice Work If You Can Get It*. The Guelph Jazz Festival in association with The Centre for Cultural Studies/Centre d'etudes sur la culture and Women's Studies presents a colloquium on September 5, 1997 at the University of Guelph. While we invite proposals on any topic that fits this theme, possible topics might include: feminist rethinking of jazz musicology and historiography; the role of women in jazz history; the gendering of genres, instruments, and jazz styles; gender roles and innovation in jazz; hipness as a masculine discourse; gender, race, and cultural authenticity; gender, promotion, and the music industry; and queering jazz discourse.

Please submit a 300-500 word abstract by April 30, 1997 to Gillian Siddall, Department of English, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario N1G 2W1 (fax 519-766-0844; email gsiddall@uoguelph.ca).

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*Film and Popular Music*

We are seeking essays on film and popular music for a new anthology which Duke University Press has provisionally agreed to publish. Our goal is to compile a reader on film and popular music that will be useful for undergraduate and graduate classes in film and/or popular music, and that could appeal to trade audiences as well. For the purposes of this volume, "popular" will mean primarily sung music, including Tin Pan Alley, disco, rock, pop, jazz and easy listening. Within this rubric, we will consider music written specifically for films, prereleased/prerecorded music on film, diegetic music and nondiegetic music. We are interested in a variety of uses of popular music, encompassing a range of genres (musicals, documentary, avant-garde, short films, etc.), national cinemas, directors, musical performers, and formal and ideological issues.

Possible topics might include but are not limited to: questions of race, ethnicity, sex, and gender in relation to the use of popular music in film; the circulation of film music outside the film text and the relationship between film and records/CDS, including marketing soundtracks, the Best Song Category at the Academy Awards, "covers" and "quotation" with regard to film soundtracks; popular music and memory/nostalgia/postmodernism; representations of recording, performing, buying, listening to popular music; new theories of the sound/image relation, including the slippery distinction between diegetic and nondiegetic music in film, fidelity of the sound, lipsynching ("visible" and "invisible"), music as "wallpaper", etc.; new theories of the musical and essays on "new" musicals (*Everybody Says I Love You, Evita, The Adventures of Priscilla*, etc.)

Send abstracts or papers to BOTH:

Pamela Robertson	Arthur Knight
Department of English	American Studies Program
University of Newcastle	College of William and Mary
Callaghan, Newcastle	P.O. Box 8795
NSW 2308	Williamsburg VA
AUSTRALIA	23187-8795

For more information, write to elpr@cc.newcastle.edu.au  
Deadline: 31 May 1997.

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Submissions are invited for proposals of articles, to be collected into a volume, that address the relationship between popular culture and opera. The papers might explore the work(s) of a particular composer; an aspect of opera's role in the popular culture of the nineteenth century; or an occurrence of opera in contemporary culture. All articles should be written for a general reader, rather than for a specialized, academic reader. Though we welcome papers

informed by recent academic concerns and theoretical models, we prefer that papers avoid excessive use of theoretical language. Topics for articles include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- opera in other media of popular culture (movies, pop music, television shows, animation or comics, commercials, magazines)
- opera and fashion
- opera and gay culture
- opera and gender
- pop culture in contemporary opera
- opera and (off) Broadway musicals
- the twentieth-century diva or tenor (superstars and marketing techniques)
- European opera and changing views of ethnicity, colour, nationality
- opera and social issues

Please send two copies of detailed proposals (about 4 pages) to either Grace Kehler or Gyllian Phillips by May 1, 1997. For further information, please contact Grace or Gyllian at one of the following addresses: Department of English, University of Western Ontario, London ON, N6A 3K7, Canada; gkehler@bosshog.arts.uwo.ca; gphillip@bosshog.arts.uwo.ca

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*Queer Theory and the Dancing Body*. Edited by Jane Desmond, sponsored by the Society of Dance History Scholars in conjunction with Wesleyan University Press.

The goal of this work is to bring into generative contact the tremendous amount of new work in gay/lesbian studies and queer theory with the similarly burgeoning critical work in dance studies. Scholars located either in dance studies or primarily in sexuality studies are invited to submit unpublished articles or proposals (3 pages plus C.V.) for consideration. Articles should exhibit both a familiarity with queer theory and/or gay/lesbian studies, and a deep understanding of dance practices. The collection will emphasize two time periods in the U.S.: late-nineteenth through early-twentieth century, and the post-stonewall era. Although several authors are already committed, more are needed. Desired topics include but are not limited to:

- 1)"Gay/Lesbian dance criticism": Is there a gay/lesbian criticism, and if so, what specific issues does it raise and what forms does it take? What are its potential influences on choreography, on audiences, and on the writing of dance history?
- 2)"Dance and social identity in gay/lesbian communities": This might include theoretical and/or historical studies of dancing in gay bars, of gay/lesbian generated dance forms that "cross-over" to become more generally popular, or gay/lesbian fandom of popular forms, like musicals.
- 3)"Lesbian sexuality and social or theatrical dance":

Considerations of lesbian practitioners, lesbian spectatorship, and choreography that acknowledges lesbian relationships and desires, and the theoretical implications of the above.

Send Finished Articles Or Proposals by May 1st, 1997:

Jane Desmond, Assoc. Prof.  
American Studies/Women's Studies  
202 Jefferson Bldg. University of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA 52242  
Phone: (319) 335-0320  
Fax: (319) 339-9935  
Email: jane-desmond@uiowa.edu

Final Versions of Selected Articles Due: November 1, 1997

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The Women's Philharmonic announces a call for scores for our 1997-98 New Music Reading Sessions. All American women composers (no age limit) are invited to submit their orchestral works (instrumentation limited to 2222 2220 Pn, Hp, 2 Perc, Strings) which have never been performed by any professional orchestra before the reading. For an application, write, phone, or fax: The Women's Philharmonic, 44 Page Street, Suite 604D, San Francisco, CA 94102. Telephone: (415) 437-0123 Fax: (415) 437-0121

Two to four composers will be selected by a panel of distinguished musicians to have their orchestral works read by The Women's Philharmonic in the 1997-98 season. Two guest conductors will conduct the selected works. The sessions will be digitally recorded by a professional engineer, and each composer will receive cassette copies of her reading. Composers may apply for partial financial aid to cover travel expenses to San Francisco.

Score submission deadline: May 15, 1997

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Constructions of the Human: Conflicts in Culture, Identity, Technology: First Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference, California State University, Stanislaus, October 17-19, 1997.

We invite participants to explore "Constructions of the Human" in American, British, and/or World literature from any disciplinary perspective. Applicants working in such areas as Literature, Philosophy, History, Sociology, Psychology, Law, the Sciences, and the Fine Arts should submit abstracts of approximately 250 words for papers of 15 minutes.

Students might consider some aspect of the Human in relation to Cyborg Theory, Film Theory, Technology and the Machine, Images of the City, Identity, Gender/Sexuality, Reproductive Technology, The Monstrous, Alterity, Class, Labor and Leisure, Authority, Childhood, the Sentimental, Ethnicity, Personal/Public, and Literary vs. Nonliterary.

Panels are especially welcome.

A volume of essays arising from this conference is planned for virtual publication.

Conference Location: CSU, Stanislaus, in Northern California, is situated midway between San Francisco and Yosemite. A day trip to Yosemite for participants is planned.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: April 18, 1997.

Send abstracts to:  
Interdisciplinary Conference Committee  
English Department  
c/o The Graduate Journal  
California State University, Stanislaus  
801 W. Monte Vista Avenue  
Turlock, CA 95382

Please direct questions and inquiries to:

e-mail: gradjou@toto.csustan.edu  
fax: (209) 667-3720  
voice: (209) 667-3361

Susan Campbell-Hartzell <schartze@toto.csustan.edu>  
Kristi Isaeff <kisaeff@toto.csustan.edu>  
Kimberly Merenda <kmerenda@toto.csustan.edu>  
Christy North <cnorth@toto.csustan.edu>

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*Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*  
<http://www.echonyc.com/~women>

This is the electronic version of a print magazine of the same name published through New York University's Department of Performance Studies. It features essays, scripts, interviews, and articles on performance from interdisciplinary feminist perspectives. We encourage dialogue between varied fields of performance scholarship (ethnography, dance and theatre history and criticism, performance studies, cinema studies, cultural studies), and explore emerging feminist critiques of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, technology and nation. Articles are full-text and each issue focuses on a different broad topic. The December 1996 issue is entitled "Sexuality and Cyberspace" and includes articles and interviews. Also included on this web site are the "Feminist Yellow Pages," providing links to sites related to women's issues broken down by category for easy browsing. Back issues are available upon request and for a small fee. Email: women@echonyc.com

*report of the co-chairs*

As all of you know who were able to attend the GLSG meeting at AMS-Baltimore this past November, the GLSG

Board has undergone some significant changes. Lydia Hamessley has stepped down as female Co-Chair after a long and fabulous tenure: she was the first female Co-Chair elected, and has been a wonder at planning, maintaining, and reviewing the activities of our group. *Mille baci* and thanks! The composition of the GLSG Board has shifted as well, with Kelley Harness and J. Peter Burkholder joining as Members-at-Large and Stephen McClatchie taking on the role of male Co-Editor for the Newsletter. Once again, we thank Bill Meredith and J. Michele Edwards for their work as Board members (and for agreeing to continue in their additional roles as head of the Philip Brett Award and Newsletter Bibliographer, respectively), and we thank Chip Whitesell for his wonderful skill and patience as male Co-Editor of the Newsletter.

Mitchell says: I make many bows to our new female Co-Chair, the phenomenal Suzanne G. Cusick, who will now write a few words.

Suzanne says: As a brand new Co-Chair, I have nothing to report yet, so I'll use my few words otherwise...to say it's a tremendous honor, but also daunting and humbling, to succeed Lydia, whose energy, eloquence, and profoundly centered good sense have so inspired us all. It's also thrilling to contemplate working with such imaginative, dedicated, and *funny* people on the production of panels, parties, and politics (burrowing from within the ambivalent bosom of the AMS). Thank you all for the opportunity.

Now for an informative miscellany:

We would like to remind you of the upcoming conference *Feminist Theory and Music 4*, to be held at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, June 5-8. We can expect interesting papers, the presence of many fun people, and the chance to break assorted state laws just by being ourselves. (Suzanne says: In fact, although the Virginia sodomy statutes are constantly revised to reflect--and outlaw--all the most up-to-date trends in sexual practice, being ourselves is *not* in itself illegal. Depending on how you "be," of course. Seriously, you all can expect to be warmly welcomed in Charlottesville! Fred Maus and I hope to schedule a wonderful program amid some of the most beautiful academic architecture anywhere. And as an aside I can direct you to the grave of Jefferson's boyhood beloved...)

The Board is still deciding on plans for the program of the GLSG meeting at AMS 1997 in Phoenix this year. Although we haven't got everything worked out, we still hope we may be able to offer the membership a cool speaker as a surprise. Stay tuned for details.

The Society for Ethnomusicology has announced Queer Theory as a priority in its call for papers issued by '97 program chair Ellen Koskoff. Although the deadline for abstracts will have passed by the time this sees print, the upcoming SEM program will thus be well worth looking out for. The meeting, by the way, is scheduled to take place in

Pittsburg this year.

Please remember that the Philip Brett award is scheduled to be given this year. Details of the award, including the directions for submissions, can be found in the newest AMS Directory. We encourage further contributions to the award fund (we have raised enough for the first award, but want to build up a real fund) as well as applications for the award itself.

Your humble servants,  
Suzanne Cusick & Mitchell Morris

#### conference reports

#### **Report on the 1996 Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society.** Baltimore, 7-11 November 1996.

Writing this report has proven a more daunting task than I anticipated when I agreed to do it. Clearly no one person can attend even a fourth of the paper sessions and special programs presented each year at AMS. So here are my impressions of the 1996 annual meeting—impressions formed by the papers I heard and programs I attended, as well as by the published abstracts.

My first observation is that, compared to recent AMS meetings, lesbian and gay topics seemed to inform the subjects of fewer papers this year. Very few authors (only one, by my count) dealt with topics in which homosexuality was a central or peripheral issue. But several other papers, and in some cases, entire sessions, examined a variety of topics using techniques important to those interested in queer musicology, such as the interplay between signifiers of licit and illicit sexuality, or the manipulation of cultural boundaries by a member of a marginal group (in this case, a nun) in her attempt to create an acceptable means of self-presentation.

My recent rereading of the published abstracts has confirmed another of my impressions of the 1996 meeting: the Society's members are beginning to employ an ever-widening array of tools toward the understanding of musicological problems. Alongside those I've described above, many other very good papers dealt with subjects that have occupied a central place within the discipline of musicology, and their authors employed traditional methods of dealing with these topics, including archival research, formal analysis, and the examination of contemporaneous historical and political events.

After some reflection, I feel as though I witnessed a "kinder, gentler" AMS, with very few instances of the kinds of verbal attacks I've observed at previous AMS meetings. Are we maybe just a little bit more open to the varying approaches that can inform our analyses of music and music making? Or have we just created separate denominations, each of which

preaches to the converted? I don't know.

[Kelley Harness]

### Report on the 1996 Program of the AMS Gay and Lesbian Study Group

The Gay and Lesbian Study Group's program for 1996 was "Teaching Gay and Lesbian Topics." Luke Jensen, the panel's second speaker, emphasized his belief in the efficacy of personal biography as an approach to this topic, and his words seemed to resonate with the rest of the panel, many of whom related their own experiences as lesbian or gay students or professors. Others dealt more specifically with the ways in one might raise queer issues in the classroom. Many of the suggestions were concrete and usable, for example, through individual works, as suggested by Suzanne Cusick, or their contexts, offered by Michele Edwards. Judith Peraino described the ways in which she had introduced her class to gay and lesbian issues as part of larger concepts, such as social constructionism or identity politics. Bill Meredith offered a sampling of the topics and readings that he might assign to graduate musicology students as part of a larger seminar on New Musicology. Both Todd Borgerding and Luke Jensen concentrated on personal issues facing out lesbian and gay faculty and students, a theme that ran throughout the program, as members of the panel and the audience wrestled with the intersections of personality, U.S. geography, and the closet.

[Kelley Harness]

### Gender and Musicology Conference in Germany

It nearly bowled me over when the DVSM (Dachverband der Studierenden der Musikwissenschaft = German Association of Music Students in Musicology), decided in 1996 to entitle their annual conference from 2-5 October 1996 "Gender roles and their significance for musicology". As someone who has been trying to establish a contact between the feminist-musicological worlds in Germany and the USA for some years, and as an open lesbian (I participated in a TV-film on lesbians in the 1970s which was broadcast by the so-called First Programme throughout West Germany), I attended the conference with mixed feelings. Of course, the students' conference is not representative of traditional musicological studies, but rather of a more experimental, progressive outlook. In the German academic scene, any kind of infrastructure is missing. There is no professorship for feminist musicology or even for musicological cultural studies in Germany. Students from all over Germany write to my colleague Freia Hoffmann (University of Oldenburg) and me (University of Bremen), asking for information on literature and other subjects concerning gender studies in musicology, as many professors do not think highly of such subjects and consequently avoid them. On the other hand, in 1995 three colleagues (Professors Freia Hoffmann, Sabine Schutte, and Mechthild von Schoenebeck) and I founded the section "Frauen- und Musikforschung" in the conservative Gesellschaft für Musikforschung (GfM) which is an

equivalent to the AMS. But up to now, not a single paper on gender issues has been presented at the annual conference of the GfM. I preferred to write an overview article on the subject, which--what a surprise!--was actually published in the official journal of the GfM, *Die Musikforschung*. So far there has been no official reaction, but some colleagues told me that the article had been "of essential importance" in that feminist musicology had leapt a step towards official recognition. Let's hope they are right!

Why are Germans so behind the times? It has to do with the history of the discipline, its canonic practices, hierarchies and traditions. Musicologists such as Carl Dahlhaus, one of the last who claimed to have a universalist approach while at the same time reproducing the West European White Man's ideology, influenced musicological discussions in Germany for many years. Musicologists prefer to concern themselves more with written music which can be analysed endlessly, and less with the cultural issues or reception of music. Popular music is still regarded as trivial, and the tradition of the *Geistigkeit* (spirituality) of German music is held in high regard and combined with nationalistic tendencies. As can be shown by the frustrating discussion on the exclusion of women and foreigners from the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, this way of thinking is still to be found. The work which has been done in the USA is mostly ignored or not taken seriously; this too has to do with the conviction that German musicology still is at the forefront of the discipline. Many students and scholars who are forced to work their way through endless amounts of medieval music in university courses are dissatisfied with the state of things and long for a paradigm shift that challenges dominant discourses. Gay/lesbian studies are even farther off the mark. Books such as *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* (1994) or *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera* (1995) could not have been written in Germany, and it is most surprising that Wayne Koestenbaum's *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Sexuality and the Mystery of Desire* (1993) was translated into German so promptly (*Königin der Nacht. Oper, Homosexualität und Begehren* [1996]). Unfortunately, Koestenbaum's book is the least scholarly of the three and therefore left hardly an impact on traditional musicology.

Some of the papers at the conference concentrated on women's history. For instance, Margaret Myers from Gothenburg in Sweden, who has written a book on Ladies' Orchestras, gave a paper entitled "European Ladies' Orchestras 1850-1920" in which she criticised the absence of these orchestras from musicological discourse. As Myers deplored, "they were so anomalous, so 'Other', that they fell through the 'cracks' of all existing theoretical blueprints." Janina Klassen (Technical University, Berlin) discussed the issue of women in church music and concentrated on the report of the Aquitaine pilgrim, Aetheria, on church singing in Jerusalem in the fourth century. Other papers were concerned with theoretical questions. Alan Stanbridge (Carleton University, Ottawa) stated that a "feminist" or "gay and lesbian" musicology is not required and suggested a

"critical musicology thoroughly informed by the radical insights of feminist approaches, as well as gay and lesbian studies, popular music studies, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, and a wide range of contemporary disciplines in which a similar range of questions are being addressed." As a lesbian feminist I feel somewhat intimidated by such a large catalogue which puts "critical musicology" at the top and sees feminist research merely as a branch. Of course, we need to include a broader social and cultural sphere in our work, but I still find the gender issue so important and elementary in the construction of culture that I would rather not agree to Stanbridge's hierarchical model, as I fear that women's interests might once again--and all too often in history--be pushed aside.

In her paper "Gender as music-cultural performance--transformations of 'sexual difference' through androgynous images of women in popular music," Monika Bloss gave a fascinating overview of the liberation of cultural forms from dominant structures. She dwelt on the many representations of androgyny in popular music, and stated that while they were just another variant in playing with the multiple meanings that constructions of gender can create, they should not be underestimated in the impact they have on the larger society. She showed videos of pop singers, pointing to "feminine" traits in clothing and bodily movement by Elvis Presley, Mick Jagger, k.d. lang, Annie Lennox and others, and demonstrated how the public reacted differently for historical reasons. I found myself wishing that a book like *Cruising the Performative* (1995) had been translated already, as it would have placed the ensuing discussion on a more sophisticated level.

Birthe Schwarz' paper on "Playing with gender-roles: castratos and prima donnas in 18th-century opera" focused on the erotic attraction of cross-dressing in Baroque opera but did not contribute anything new to the discussion. For readers of this Newsletter, Billy Vaughn's paper "Parsifal's Sexuality: Inverse Readings of Performance in Imperial Germany and the Postmodern Academy" might be of interest (perhaps it is characteristic that he comes from the USA--Vaughan is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago). He compared two divergent homosexual readings of the opera, the first from a book published in 1906 entitled *Wagner und die Homosexualität* by Hans Fuchs, in which Parsifal is seen as a positive representation of homosexual identity. The second reading, a scholarly paper by Mitchell Morris (also an American), interprets Parsifal as a negative representation of homosexuality through the lens of the "opera queen." For Vaughan, this contradiction not only points to the ephemeral meanings of social categories, but also to the role music plays as part of a social discourse.

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<sup>1</sup>Mitchell Morris, "Reading as an Opera Queen," in *Musicology and Difference*, ed. Ruth Solie (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 184-200.

A great deal of rigorous historical and critical analyses, historicised arguments, and archival research are necessary if we want to be taken seriously in academic discourse. Yet this particular conference was a success in that many issues were discussed which were obviously new for many students, and they will now go back to their universities and address these issues. Hopefully, in the interest of pursuing scholarly research, some of them will demand that their libraries acquire relevant literature on the subject of gender and music. Although it may be too much to expect them to embark on lesbian/gay studies, at least a crucial step has been taken towards that goal.

[Eva Rieger]

### Music, Gender, and Pedagogics Conference in Sweden

The International Conference on Music, Gender and Pedagogics was held at the School of Music and Musicology, Goteborg University in Goteborg, Sweden, 26-28 April 1996. This review begins with a list of papers presented and concludes with a conversation between three participants in the conference. In addition to the academic papers, various concerts and recitals of music by women comprised an important part of the conference.

- Susan Borwick (Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, USA): "Rethinking 'Quality' in Analytical Pedagogy"
- Marcia J. Citron (Rice University, Houston, USA): "Gender and Analysis: Cecile Chaminade's Piano Sonata, op. 21"
- Barbara Coeyman (West Virginia University, USA): "Feminist Pedagogy as Process: Applications to Undergraduate Music History"
- Beverly Diamond (University of York, Toronto, Canada): "Feminism in the Music School: Strategies for Confronting our Critics"
- David J Hargreaves (University of Goteborg, Sweden): "Gender and Computers in Music Education: an Anglo-Swedish Study"
- Marcia Herndon (University of Maryland, College Park, USA): "Basic Assumptions: Canon or Cauldron?"
- Regina M. E. Himmelbauer (Conservatory in Eisenstadt, Austria): "Education as a Means of Gender Politics: a Call for Action"
- Jarna Knuutila (University of Joensuu, Finland): "Reproduction of the Gender Hierarchy in the Case of Amateur All-Girl Rockbands in Finland"
- Ellen Koskoff (Eastman School of Music, Rochester, USA): "Is Female to Male as Postmodern is to Modern?: Implications for Ethnomusicology"
- Roberta Lamb (Queen's University, Kingston, Canada): "'To Be The Woman That I Am'/You Are Not Your Own Self: Women's Contradictory Experiences of Mentor/ Apprentice Pedagogy in Music"
- Richard Leppert (University of Minnesota, USA): "The Sonoric Body: Socio-Sexual Harmony - Acts of Vengeance"
- Sarah Maidlow (Oxford Brookes University, UK): "The Experiences, Attitudes and Expectations of Student Musicians from a Feminist Perspective"
- Helen Metzelaar (Amsterdam School of Music, Netherlands):



"Women and Class in the Netherlands in the Nineteenth Century"

Pirkko Moisala (University of Turku, Finland): "Gender, Music Education, and Music Experience"

Mary Natvig (Bowling Green State University, USA): "Towards a Feminist Pedagogy of Music History"

Karin Pendle (University of Cincinnati, USA): "Other Others: An Approach to the Music of Modern African-American Women"

Eva Rieger (University of Bremen): "Music and Gender in Hollywood Film"

Natalie Sarrazin (University of Maryland, College Park, USA): "The Order of Things 'Teachable': Music, Method, Canons, Gender and the Shaping of Western Pedagogical Thought"

Margaret Lucy Wilkins (University of Huddersfield): "There are no women composers, there never have been any and possibly there never will be" (Sir Thomas Beecham)

Charlene A. Morton (OISE, Toronto, Canada): "Music Educators as 'Housekeepers of Emotion': The Gender Politics of School Music's Feminized Location"

Three of us talked a bit about our experiences at the conference: Kristin Norderval, an opera singer and composer living in NYC; Boden Sandstrom, a doctoral candidate in ethnomusicology, University of Maryland; and Roberta Lamb, Assistant Professor of music and music education at Queen's University in Canada.

*Kristin:* I didn't know what to expect from the conference because I had never attended a gender and music conference before--or a musicology or pedagogy conference for that matter. Even awareness of the "new musicology" and the subject of gender and music was a recent one. I had read Susan McClary's *Feminine Endings* close to when it was published, and Catherine Clément's *Opera, or the Undoing of Women* shortly after that, but everything else was fairly new to me. I devoured all the gender and music texts that I could get my hands on in the three months before the conference, and I looked forward to meeting some of the people whose writings I enjoyed so much.

*Roberta:* I was looking forward to meeting people in the field, too, although my experience is very different from Kristin's. While Kristin is an opera singer my primary role in music has been as a music educator--and one who has been asking questions about gender in music for many years. What I hoped to find in Sweden were people from outside of North America who were questioning gender in music.

*Boden:* My background approaching the conference was also quite different. My area of concentration in ethnomusicology is gender studies, specifically women's music in the US. I have participated in the last three Gender and Music Study Group meetings of the ICTM and so have been immersed in how ethnomusicologists approach this area of study. I have been an active feminist since the early 1970s in the US, and through my women's studies courses (my minor) I was inspired to read feminist criticism in music. I was thrilled to

have the opportunity to attend a conference of music educators interested in gender and had very little idea of what to expect, considering I have had little exposure to the educators' world.

*Kristin:* This conference came at a turning point for me as a performer, and I arrived with a tremendous number of questions that had been fermenting for years. For example, why is the performance of gender so conservative in opera? Why are we always enacting such traditionalist notions of masculine and feminine? What does it mean to be a lesbian opera singer portraying heterosexual women in works by (primarily) heterosexual men? What is the role of performer vs the creator? Where do I find my own identity represented? Where is the counterpart to alternative theatre/dance in opera or music-theater?, etc., etc. All kinds of questions which basically revolved around the issue of what stories/rituals/music are we enacting for whom, and why.

My response to the conference was also a kind of turning point for me, because I realized how fragmented I had previously felt in performance situations. This was the first time I found myself among people with a background in both feminist theory and music--and it was amazing to me. I felt it was the first time that both my feminist analysis and my performing were honored and appreciated in one place by the same group of people. Actually, I would venture to say that it was one of the first times I felt appreciated for both my intellect and my performing, because there is such a discouragement of displaying intelligence, or simply asking questions, for performers--and especially for female singers. I left the conference realizing that I wanted to find ways to recreate those conditions for future performance environments.

*Roberta:* I remember watching your performance and seeing you transform from an "ordinary" woman, wearing sweatshirt and jeans, into that lesbian opera singer, with no props or costumes, only the power of your voice and movement. To me, you seemed to integrate theory and practice quite comfortably! I had no idea that this experience of bringing feminist analysis and performance together in a location where it was appreciated was unique for you.

*Boden:* I was very moved by your performance and your willingness to rework and reinterpret musical works from a lesbian feminist point of view. It emphasized for me how little discussion there was during the conference about performance, both concerning the context and content of them and the dynamics that occur because of gender differences.

*Kristin:* Yes, I also felt that there wasn't much discussion about performance, and the gender issues that can come up with it. I was struck by the fact that although there were several concerts daily during the conference, as far as I could see none of the other performers came to listen to the papers, and none of the open discussions dealt with the concerts. The performances seemed to be a separate part of the

conference with the general focus of presenting mainly women composers' works, but without questioning performance dynamics. I remember listening to the performance of Margaret Lucy Wilkins' *Witch Music* and having a discussion after the concert with two other lesbians about how we would have liked to have seen the piece interpreted. We all felt the singer had played on the usual stereotypes of witches and had thus trivialized the work. As a feminist and a lesbian with a certain awareness of women's history, I would have played it differently.

*Boden:* Roberta, you raised this performance issue at the conference by explaining to us how you enacted a gender role at another conference that you attended.

*Roberta:* Yeah, I had just presented a performance piece/academic paper at the MENC in Kansas City the week prior. It was the first time anything on identity, let alone sexual orientation, had been presented at that music education conference. After I got to Goteborg and saw how many lesbians were a part of this conference I wished I had switched papers. You would have appreciated the black leather!

*Kristin:* I wish I had seen it!

*Boden:* Anyway, at this Sweden conference gender was understood only as a person's biological sex; that is, male or female rather than a gender continuum which includes gay and lesbian. The only paper that really discussed gender was Pirkko Moisala's paper on musical gender. (I will talk more about this later).

*Kristin:* Yes, there were some interesting dynamics during the discussions between various participants which revealed tensions between different understandings and expectations of what gender, feminist, and/or women's studies all meant and how they intersected or differed. But overall I felt the atmosphere was pretty open.

*Roberta:* I guess the biggest disappointment I felt was the domination of the conference by North American presenters--many presenters were people I had met at other feminist music conferences. It distressed me that many times Swedish and Finnish participants said something like, "You North Americans are much further along in this work than we are," because it seems to me that, especially in the area of pedagogy, so little work has been done to uncover and make sense of the issues surrounding gender, gendered identities, and music. I was also uncomfortable with these exchanges because I wanted to learn about something outside of my North American experience, yet I felt to be in a rather imperialist position.

I also became aware of the dominant presence of the English language, and yet, often I forgot and spoke quickly, as if "we" were all anglophones. It was too easy to be imperialist without realizing what one had done--that invisible, silent characteristic of dominance.

*Boden:* English has definitely become the international language, for conferences anyway. At the Gender and Music Study group meetings I am always so impressed by presenters' abilities to write and speak English. At those conferences there usually are more people from other countries than North America and they are quite vocal about the rest of us slowing down and speaking more clearly. North Americans, feminists in particular, sometimes seem to have a great difficulty in grasping that gender does not mean male/female/lesbian/gay period.

*Roberta:* In terms of the program itself, there were no lesbian or queer topics among the papers, but there was a lot of dyke talk bubbling to the surface in question periods and later discussions. At one point, a straight participant expressed concern that lesbians had been left off the programme, yet I didn't feel we were ignored, or silenced or really invisible, perhaps because there were so many of us--we were everywhere! On the other hand, it did perplex me that two male presenters were the bookends to the conference: first and last, \*alpha\* and \*omega,\* David Hargreaves and Richard Leppert. And yet these two men hardly participated in the discussions and interpersonal aspects of the conference! In fact, at one point, Leppert attempted to tell us how to engage in feminist research in music!

*Boden:* We were everywhere, but I think there still is homophobia in this field which contributed to the lack of participation on the program or more incorporation of a broader gender concept in the papers that we heard. I was unhappy with the decision to bookend the conference with males. I know Margaret Myers, the conference organizer, had some semi-humorous reason for this, but I didn't agree with the logic. I think we should have been more vocal about their aloofness, because men need to enter the discussion of gender for it to be truly a gender discussion. How do they feel and what do they think about their gender role(s)?

*Roberta:* OK, so maybe we should talk about some papers?

*Boden:* There were two papers that moved me, well maybe three. Pirkko Moisala's paper (which I have already mentioned) examined differences in the ways men and women study, make, and consume music and describe their musical experiences, with an emphasis on music education. Her paper examined how in the performance of music one can establish and negotiate a musical gender. This was one of those papers that made me go "Wow! That explains me and my life!" I wrote to her about how her concept affected me. In a nutshell, I realized as a child my gender identity did not "fit," and I redefined myself through my music--first as a trumpet/french horn player (an instrument that allowed me to express myself as no other female role that I knew of then would, and I could play with boys with no restrictions). Second, I learned how to be a sound engineer and run my own sound company where I not only played with the boys, but came into my own in the lesbian community and in my experiences with ethnic communities and minorities. It was a type of gender neutrality that allowed

me to participate in different events and cultures that otherwise I would have had no access to, particularly as a female.

The other paper which moved me was Ellen Koskoff's "Is Female to Male as Postmodern is to Modern? Implications for Ethnomusicology", since I am an old feminist and tended to agree with some of her analysis. Koskoff was concerned with the devaluation of feminist theory in postmodern thought even though feminism may have been an initial and primary catalyst for postmodern approaches. She asks the question "What has happened to real men and women and music?" She advocates for the teaching of a new ethno/musicology that combines the endearing qualities of postmodernism, with the political stance of early feminism.

The last paper I want to comment on moved me in a negative way. I found Jarna Knuuttila's "Reproduction of Gender Hierarchy in the Case of Amateur All-Girl Rockbands in Finland," to be incredibly simplistic and stereotyped, and did not deal with gender issues in any depth.

*Roberta:* It seemed that there were several purposes for the conference that sometimes clashed, and that could be the reason for the inclusion of papers like the one on rockbands. On the one hand, the conference was to have a focus on pedagogy (with many definitions coming from many locations, geographic or otherwise). On the other, it was to make an argument for feminist scholarship at that particular university, consequently the need for work that seemed to be more "traditional musicology" in focus and to include papers by their graduate students.

For myself, there were some papers that were very helpful to my thinking about how we teach music. Like you, Boden, I resonated with both Pirkko's and Ellen's papers. I learned a lot from Regina Himmelbauer's paper which examined her pedagogical practices, the politics, frustrations and successes of addressing gender issues in conservatory music education in Austria. Beverly Diamond's ideas for strategies which can be used (and taught) to confront the marginalisation of feminist approaches in music faculties had possibilities.

For the most part, I found the discussions to be more interesting than the papers. This was where people got into the really difficult issues of inclusion/exclusion, gendered identities, problematics of "race" or ethnicity, globalisation, power, and so forth.

*Kristin:* I also enjoyed the discussions immensely; I noticed it was a time when presenters often elaborated about background details that brought an immediacy and real-life perspective to the papers. Personally I identified with and was most moved by your paper, Roberta, on musical mentoring. I heard many of my experiences echoed in the words of the women you had interviewed, especially in the ambivalences towards and questioning of the power that master teachers have been traditionally given, and the exposure of abuses that can result.

I also liked Pirkko's concept of musical gender identity, but that is a bit more of a stretch for a singer than an instrumentalist, since you can't choose your voice type. But it did make me think about the possibility of flexible gendered choices in what people do with their voices, whether it's an instrumental voice, compositional voice or a singing voice. All in all a very stimulating conference!

[Roberta Lamb, Kristin Norderval, Boden Sandstrom]

opera review

### **Condensed Milk: A review of the opera *Harvey Milk* (San Francisco Opera, Orpheum Theatre, November 9-30, 1996)**

"I've concluded that *Harvey Milk* is not an opera--it's a pageant," quipped a gay acquaintance of mine. This remark only whetted my appetite all the more to see the much anticipated opera by Stewart Wallace (music) and Michael Korie (libretto). *Harvey Milk* finally arrived in San Francisco after its 1995 premiere in Houston (of all places!) and following runs in New York and Dortmund, Germany. The opera is based on the life of San Francisco's legendary gay activist and local politician Harvey Milk, who was assassinated along with San Francisco Mayor George Moscone in 1978--eleven months after Milk's historic election to public office as a City Supervisor. Why wait so long to bring this opera "home"? No doubt Wallace and Korie wanted to work out the kinks in their opera/pageant before bringing the thing to a San Francisco audience--an audience who most keenly feels the memory and impact of Harvey Milk's political and community achievements.

#### **Life as Opera; Opera as Life**

Harvey Milk was an opera queen. Indeed, his biographer Randy Shilts, in *The Mayor of Castro Street*, describes how Milk went alone to the opera as a young teenager (travelling from Long Island to Manhattan) and there found his first gay community--a community where sexual innuendo and musical appreciation deliciously mingled. The biography relates how Milk's excursions to the opera fostered both his budding sexuality and aesthetic sensibility. As the program notes to San Francisco's production of *Harvey Milk* pointed out, it is thus entirely fitting that the story of Harvey Milk should be celebrated in operatic form.

Opera has a huge mystique--a mixture of high society glamour, pageantry, artistry, escapism, and melodrama. The immense expense of production and the few new successful operas add to this mystique. I am not a big opera fan, and I admit that I wasn't going to see *Harvey Milk* until my gay/lesbian community conscience guilted me into spending the money. But once I had invested, even I (a medievalist by day, a rock fan by night) began to have heroic operatic visions. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Stewart Wallace's

*Harvey Milk* was a new masterwork inducted into the canon of contemporary opera, like John Adam's *Nixon in China*? Wouldn't it be wonderful if *Harvey Milk, The Opera*, could be a new revolutionary and revitalizing force in opera, just as Harvey Milk the political activist invigorated and galvanized the gay community! My expectations grew with each approaching day. If someone wrote an opera about Harvey Milk, it must be good, right? Why go through all the trouble and expense to put on a bad opera?

### No Glamour, and No Glory!

"I am going to review *Harvey Milk*," I told the founder of the Harvey Milk Institute in San Francisco. We were walking in the eighteenth yearly candle-light march commemorating Milk's death. "Oh, that's hard" he replied, "cause you want to do right by the community, know what I mean?" I knew what he meant. I had seen the opera a week earlier, and had just that afternoon seen the Academy-Award-winning documentary *The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, a far more dramatic and moving presentation of Harvey Milk's story as told through interviews with friends. But walking among a disappointingly small crowd of marchers, I wondered whether the community had the time or wherewithal to notice that "their opera"--an important cultural acknowledgement of a true martyr to the cause of gay rights--was a stinker. The mystique of opera *qua* opera should not be a crutch for musical and dramatic quality. Like the myriad ballot initiatives that flood the elections in California, *Harvey Milk* offered a lot of hot air with little substance and no effect. To continue the metaphor of ballot initiatives, one has to ask whether this mediocre attempt might not have set a dangerously low standard and killed the chances for the creation of truly praiseworthy treatment of this or similar subjects.

Wallace and Korie seemed to exploit rather than appreciate an understanding that an opera with a central character who is gay taps into bigger issues of visibility and acknowledgement within status quo (high-brow) culture of the role of gays and lesbians in the arts. Crowds flocked to see the opera because of the subject matter, but the three-hour event (!) could not live up to past or present historical significance. In at least one case, the opera occasioned a dangerous misrepresentation of Harvey Milk's importance. Michael Walsh of *Time Magazine* wrote:

In Korie's treatment, Milk becomes a combination of Elie Wiesel, Oscar Wilde and Moses. He likens America's treatment of gays to the Holocaust and, in an embarrassing coda, leads his rambunctious flock to the gates of sexual and political freedom . . . The truth is somewhat different: Milk was an engaging if slightly goofy pol whose defining moment to most San Franciscans was his televised illustration of how to obey the pooper-scooper law. While the Milk legend may not be justified, Korie does use it

to create a narrative that pulls the listener along.<sup>1</sup>

If Walsh had seen *The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, or read *The Mayor of Castro Street*, he would have encountered two moving and impressive portrayals of the lengths to which Harvey Milk went to fight for gay visibility and build city coalitions. The evening of Milk's death, thousands of mourners marched down Market Street with lit candles, creating a river of light that stretched several miles. His effect on San Francisco was justifiably legendary.

### Cans of Milk

At this point you might ask what specific complaints do I have? Enough with the high horse--what's wrong with the thing? Well, first of all the opera is LONG--three hours as I have mentioned--and if an opera is long, it had better be engaging, either musically or dramatically. Walsh admitted to finding the narrative engaging, but I got the distinct impression he had no familiarity with San Francisco, and so the opera was interesting in a sort of *National Geographic* way. For my part, the opera managed a paradoxical feat--condensing the complex life and psychology of a man into a tedious "cartoon" (here I will agree with Walsh). All dramatic energy is snuffed out at the very beginning when the opera opens with the murder scene and a taped voice-over of Dianne Feinstein announcing to the press that Milk and Moscone have been shot by the suspect Dan White. Thus we watch and hear the "chilling" climax with absolutely no "chill"--no emotional or aesthetic investment, no means of judging the artistry or continuity. If this were an operatic version of a murder mystery, I could understand the logic; but Milk's murder presented no mystery.

So why begin with Milk's death? Perhaps Wallace and Korie believed that most people in the nation knew little or nothing about Milk until that particular event, and thus to start with the murder would be to "begin at the beginning" in the eyes of the nation (with the exception of San Francisco, of course)--to begin with the event that really put Milk in the public eye, not the event of his election, which should have put Milk in the public eye. The sensationalism of a murder scene quickly (and cheaply in my opinion) draws the audience into the opera in the way that we are drawn in by a canned television show, as if we had just turned the channel of our TV and happened to catch the last twenty-minutes of a police drama. We are sudden voyeurs without understanding: a man is being shot, should we change the channel?

*Harvey Milk* is an opera, however, and we are made acutely aware of this by a number of heavy-handed staging decisions. For example, throughout the opera there appears an odd, silent character, called "Messenger" in the program--a sort of ghost-of-Christmas-past figure who staggered around the stage in a white smock, as if he were in some Wagnerian

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<sup>1</sup>*Time*, 145/7 (February 13, 1995): 79.

drama instead of a modern-day story of gay pride, politics, and murder. I never quite understood his role in the dramaturgy, except that he lent to the opera a particularly operatic body language. Projecting an air of gloom and foreboding, the Messenger was completely gratuitous and superfluous, especially given the fact that the audience witnesses the murder scene before any other action.

The staging was minimal yet overripe with symbolism. The single set consisted of a skewed-perspective room reminiscent of the set for the German expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. One wall appeared appropriately covered with doors--closet doors, of course--that "open" and "shut" as the symbolism of the scene required. A second wall contained an enormous window that also doubled as a stage and "icon holder". Let me explain. During the office scenes, huge shutters filled the window; during the political rallies, the politicians stood in the window-now-stage; during the opera scenes, a enormous head of Maria Callas filled this same space. All these effects were delightful at first, but they were all used at least twice in the opera--even the enormous head of Maria Callas.

Wallace's music attempted to be both challenging and accessible; a sort of romantic post-Schoenbergian tonality with dramatically appropriate nuances of popular music that ranged from African and Caribbean drumming, to can-can numbers, to barbershop quartets. The net result was a white-washed, characterless sound with few memorable moments and no musical intensity or momentum. Several reviewers have mentioned the second-act duet sung by Milk and his lover Scott Smith as a highlight, at least partially because of its unabashed portrayal of gay male intimacy: they sing while lying in bed together, half naked. Yet I found the duet disappointing. The music never seemed to achieve a much-needed lyrical expansiveness, nor was the part writing particularly evocative of emotional intimacy and physical closeness. In the scene, Harvey frets over the loss of an election and Scott attempts to soothe and convince him to cut his pony-tailed hair. This doesn't make for the most emotionally engaging material to set to music.

Indeed, Wallace and Korie seem to shy away from expressing truly intimate and powerful moments in Milk's life in favor of a "bells and whistles" approach--condensing and conflating major events in Milk's life with those in the evolution of gay and lesbian political consciousness. Here's an example: in the opera, Milk, a Wall Street banker, meets Scott Smith, a hippie activist, on the night of the Stonewall riots. The two fall in love amidst the rioting crowd. This was not at all the case, according to Milk's biography. By the time Milk met Smith in the early 1970s, he was himself an activist hippie working as stage manager for the fledgling productions of *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The two fell in love because of a powerful affinity for one another, not the attraction of opposites that Wallace and Korie chose to present. And neither took part in the Stonewall riots.

Of course opera is supposed to be fantastical, but I object to

the heavy reliance on crowd scenes as the primary device to galvanize the emotions of the audience, rather than fleshing out a complex gay character and the complicated emotions of coming out. Oddly enough, Wallace and Korie did choose to flesh out Dan White, Milk's killer, portraying him with surprising sympathy as a man fraught with psychological conflict concerning the demise of his Irish neighborhood, the Castro, and his financial sacrifice to become a city supervisor. This would have been an interesting enhancement to the story had not the real-life jury also felt more sympathy with the killer than the victims. Dan White was let off with an incredibly light sentence of seven years in prison for the cold-blooded, premeditated murder of two men.

The most salient and impressive aspect of *Harvey Milk* was its detailed visual representation of real people, which had the curious effect of turning them into political cartoon characters. The singers playing Dan White, George Moscone, and Dianne Feinstein presented eerie likenesses to their real-life counterparts, and in the third act a power-hungry, stiff-haired Dianne Feinstein stole the show. The opera chorus, however, presented the most curious and visually stunning moments. Wallace and Korie took advantage of the ample crowd opportunities provided by the Stonewall riots, Castro street scenes, campaign volunteers, and a gay pride parade, to depict a variety of colorful gay and lesbian lifestyles--drag queens, leather queens, butch dykes, white-T-shirt-and-mustache clones, bath-house clients (wrapped in towels!), uniform and cowboy fanatics (etc.). I must admit that these crowd scenes with opera chorus members in drag and half-naked put an interesting spin on this high-brow art form.

As a lesbian viewer, I am always moved when I see crowds of lesbians and gay men, and I got the distinct feeling that this opera was a mighty catharsis for many of the singers who were at long last able to have their personal and professional lives coalesce. For me, the vision of these crowds remedies a deep childhood scar of feeling terribly alone in a hostile world. Nevertheless, seeing an operatic representation of the San Francisco Gay Pride parade put me in the curious position of a voyeur to a freakish and unreal world. The opera framed and objectified that colorful crowd as pure spectacle--a condensed and canned version of a stunningly rich and moving event. Furthermore, by the time we saw the parade scene at the end of Act II, the "gay crowd" and gay stereotypes had been overused so that the spectacle lost its impact.

What exactly did I want from *Harvey Milk*? Simply put, I wanted a masterpiece; I wanted *Boris Godunov* and *Falstaff* rolled into one, I wanted *Death in Venice* and *Turn of the Screw* without the closet. I wanted great psychological drama and shattering tragedy. At the end of the opera, having seen Milk's murder twice, I shrugged my shoulders and thought about the next train back to the East Bay. After seeing *The Life and Times of Harvey Milk*, which only consisted of news clips and interviews, I felt devastated and emerged red-eyed and sniffing with the rest of the Castro crowd who still

mourning the death of their champion eighteen years later.

[Judith A. Peraino]

book reviews

Kevin Kopelson. *Beethoven's Kiss: Pianism, Perversion, and the Mastery of Desire*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Kevin Kopelson's new book is a collection of Barthesian essays on the mystique of the piano and its mutual implications with sexual identity. (Barthesian by way of Wayne Koestenbaum, for whom the book was conceived as a "love letter.") It contains chapters titled "Pianist Envy," "Funérailles," "The Sexual Virtuoso," exploring such themes as pedagogy, death, and posturing. Kopelson continues the fruitful study of the links between music, performance and identity; unfortunately, the book is very uneven, and at times not very likable.

The squirm factor is way high, with a continued focus on embarrassing moments in Kopelson's life, details of his sexual preferences, movie preferences, etc. Granted that this kind of stuff is somehow germane to identity formation: it's still a delicate matter to make one's own minutiae palatable to the public. Especially hard to take are some of the Interludes between chapters--biographical vignettes detailing sexual encounters and reflecting on the less noble of the writer's psychological motivations.

There is a danger in this kind of criticism: how can we reveal quirky personal shames and tastes without risking the shameless or tasteless? How do we suture private abjection into public discourse? Kopelson blunders on through with little sense of tact. (Koestenbaum in general has navigated this fine line more successfully, although he reached his own low point in the essay/poem "The Aryan Boy who Pissed on my Father's Head," in *Confronting Masculinity*, ed. Maurice Berger, et al. [New York: Routledge, 1995], 49-56.)

Even aside from matters of taste, there is a problem of overkill: why should we the readers be so rivetted by an inventory of the author's indiscretions? Instead of taking time to charm us, he assumes that we are as enrapt as he seems to be. Even self-reflexive details about his writing process are sprinkled throughout the argument. Kopelson is attempting a very daring mixture of *haute* theory, poetic musing, and kitschy self-consciousness, as D.A. Miller was able to pull off so dazzlingly in *Bringing Out Roland Barthes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). One misstep makes for a bad batch of trifle.

This is all the more frustrating because of the many rewarding passages in the book. Consider the following:

I've an amateurish and therefore faulty sense of Schumannian structure -- Schumann coheres for me

not because he's coherent, but because he's familiar. But isn't all sense of structure amateurish? Barthes would say so. He'd say that nothing really coheres, but some things seem (unbearably) familiar. He'd say, in other words, that discursive structures and piano virtuosos have a lot in common. They're both too damn perfect. (p. 33)

Unfortunately, the following passage is more typical:

I was nine when I first fell for Dichter. I was at a youth concert, and Dichter was playing a Brahms Concerto under Michael Tilson Thomas. (I knew even then, Bob having told me, that Thomas had had an affair with Leonard Bernstein.) But what if I hadn't already known I'd never be a great pianist? And what if I'd had a slightly different--less performative but equally pianistic--introduction to sexual virtuosity? In other words, what if, instead of *The Red Shoes*, I'd been taken to see *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, another women's film made in 1948. (Yes, it's a strange rhetorical turn, but Koestenbaum--"Chopin...remind[s] me of movies I haven't seen"--would appreciate it.) (p. 85)

It's simply too hard to wade through the banal or offputting passages to find the rewarding ones.

As Biddy Martin has urged, we need to balance the subjective and the objective in their complex braiding with each other.<sup>1</sup> We need to distinguish among different uses of autobiography; extreme subjectifications are inadequate as theories of reality. Martin is attracted

not by what Gayatri Spivak would call the "personalist" pleasure of seeing one's identity reflected in ways that make it unassailable but by the cognitive and emotional pleasures of expanded knowledge and perspectives. Seeing something of one's experience rendered valuable and complex can lead to more-capacious rather than more-identitarian approaches to the world and self (p. 15).

Caveat homo.

[Chip Whitesell]

### Queer Thoughts from the UK: Lucy O'Brien's *She Bop*

As an avid fan of popular culture and insatiable consumer of popular music, I spent two hours the other night glued to my TV watching the Brits--the UK music industry's annual back-slapping, award-giving ceremony. The presentation of awards was interspersed with performances from a range of

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<sup>1</sup>"Teaching Literature, Changing Cultures," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 112 (January 1997): 7-25.

musicians including the Fugees, The Artist, Diana Ross (totally outshone in her duet with Jason Kay from Jamiroquai) and the more home-grown talents of the ubiquitous Spice Girls, Mark Morrison, The Manic Street Preachers and loud London indie band Skunk Anansie. Skunk Anansie are fronted by singer Skin--a tall shaven-headed Black dyke who threw her all into a raucous version of "Teenage Kicks," belting out to an audience of the industry's great and good (and millions of viewers at home): "I want to hold her tight and get teenage kicks throughout the night..."

Skunk Anansie didn't win anything but gave one of the most powerful performances of the evening. They left me thinking how much things have changed in the last few years--how unlikely it would have seemed even in the 1980s that such an out musician could be up on stage at a high profile, main-stream industry event singing about sex with another woman. We've come a long way from the coyly unspecified "yous" of Melissa Etheridge or k.d. lang.

I also started wondering why it matters so much to me. There are lesbian musicians and lesbian fans everywhere. Lesbian musicians can make all sorts of music without anyone knowing that they are lesbians. Lesbians listen to and enjoy every imaginable kind of music. But where is the articulation or presence of queer experience in popular music? If fans look for some kind of reflection of themselves, some kind of reassurance of their own validity in the music that they listen to, what's around for lesbians? To be honest, Skunk Anansie's songs aren't high on my list of must-have music. Along with my CD player, I'd actually rather listen to The Artist or The Fugees. But I am always particularly gripped by performances that speak queerly: Ani DiFranco, Lucy Ray, Me'Shell NdegéOcello...

As someone obsessed with analysing the world around me and with the written word, I also want to read about women who have somehow expressed queerness or lesbianism in their music. I want to understand the many ways--over the ages and across continents--in which they have challenged the white, straight, male face of the music industry. Up against what is often denial of their very existence, how do these women articulate that existence through music? And if they don't, why not?

Lucy O'Brien's *She Bop: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul* came out in 1995, a bumper year for British books about women in popular music. Virago Press issued two collections of interviews with women musicians, hot on the heels of Pandora Press's similar collection of the previous year. All three books--Karen O'Brien, *Hymn to Her: Women Musicians Talk* (London: Virago, 1995); Amy Raphael, *Never Mind the Bollocks: Women Rewrite Rock*, forward by Deborah Harry (London: Virago, 1995) and Liz Evans, *Women, Sex and Rock'n Roll: In Their Own Words* (London, Pandora: 1994)--were compiled by music journalists and with varying degrees of intensity and success cover the music, life stories, careers, attitudes, ideas and dreams of different musicians. Liz Evans talked to 13

women--mostly from the indie rock world--and all are defiantly straight. Karen O'Brien's interviewees span the widest range of musics (including Sheila Chandra, Evelyn Glennie, Angelique Kidjo and Yoko Ono as well as women from more mainstream musical genres). She leaves less emphasis on husbands and boyfriends than Evans but only Janis Ian (the last interviewee in the book) talks about being a lesbian and how her coming out affected attitudes towards her within the music business. In contrast, queerness runs as a thread throughout Amy Raphael's book which includes interviews with two very out musicians: Ellyott Dragon of queercore band Sister George and Debbie Smith of Echobelly.

*She Bop* is, of course, a very different book, courageously sub-titled *The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul*. Lucy O'Brien has been a music journalist for nearly 15 years and has a wealth of material and experience on which to build--starting from her own brief teen-age foray into the empowering world of guitars and gigs with an all-girl band, movingly described in the prologue. In her introduction, O'Brien draws threads and themes together and provides a memorable image of the process of producing such a work: "As I was writing this book I envisaged a shimmering stave, a grid, a network, with women's voices weaving in and out--some angry, some sad, some self-pitying, some defiant--till *She Bop* became as much an expression of themselves, their own manifesto" (3).

*She Bop*, although often engagingly personal, is generally more argued and insightful than American writer Gillian Gaar's *She's A Rebel: The History of Women in Rock and Roll*, preface by Yoko Ono (Seattle: Seal Press, 1992) which came out in the UK a couple of years previously and with which comparison is almost inevitable. O'Brien, while providing less minute detail of careers and lives, is much more inclusive of British music and musicians and has an interesting chapter on women in what she calls "world music" (an area that Gaar doesn't really cover). In O'Brien's own words, *She Bop* is "not a straightforward chronological history; rather I have examined themes, trends and genres" (1). These range from women's contribution to disco, rap and reggae or protest music to women's opportunities for power within the music industry or their manipulation of image. In this way *She Bop* echoes Sue Steward's and Sheryl Garratt's 1984 British classic *Signed, Sealed and Delivered: True Life Stories of Women in Pop*.

So where are the queers in *She Bop*? The immediate answer may seem to be in chapter 8: "She Wears the Trousers: Artistry, Androgyny and the Lesbian Question." But, as the heading suggests, this is a strange conflation (or sometimes even confusion) of lesbianism and androgyny (although O'Brien is careful to point out that "androgyny doesn't necessarily mean a performer is gay" [248]). After opening with the influence of Mae West and Marlene Dietrich on Madonna, O'Brien moves on to the androgyny (defined as "both Jungian qualities of masculine and feminine"[243]) and cross-dressing of stars such as Little Richard, Michael

Jackson and David Bowie. She then turns briefly to two out lesbian musicians of the 1960s and early '70s: Polly Perkins and Dusty Springfield (whose biography O'Brien published in 1989). This leads her into the American wimmin's music of Olivia Records and Cris Williamson which, later in the chapter, is rather harshly described as "a drippy, hated orthodoxy to the younger generation" (265).

After discussing the androgyny of Grace Jones, Annie Lennox and other gender benders of the 1980s such as Boy George who, unlike Jones and Lennox, was of course gay although not admitting it at the time, O'Brien moves back to the problems that lesbian musicians have in coming out as gay. But she herself plays into the atmosphere of secrecy and fear by quoting two sources left anonymous but described as "prominent gay female singers" (257-58). After building up to a section on k.d. lang by means of Phranc, Two Nice Girls and the ambiguity of Michelle Shocked, O'Brien ends the chapter with a cursory mention of queercore bands such as Tribe 8 and Sister George.

I find this chapter ultimately unsatisfactory. The "lesbian question" is surely about more than the homophobia of the industry, or whether a woman is a lesbian or not (bisexuality anyone?) and if so whether she feels herself to be in a position where she can brave coming out. In her lengthy discussion of k.d. lang (which focuses on the primary androgyny theme of the chapter), O'Brien doesn't explore the total lack of lesbian content in any of lang's songs or any of the coded subtexts that can be read into such apparently straight lyrics. Nor does she look at the position of lesbian fans--a key issue in lang studies and in the strange phenomenon of the lesbian appropriation of country music (as discussed by Martha Mockus in her contribution to *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology* [Routledge, 1994] and Rosa Ainley and Sarah Cooper in their contribution to *The Good, The Bad and The Georgeous: Popular Culture's Romance With Lesbianism* [Pandora, 1994]). It's not that fans are entirely absent from *She Bop*--gay male fans manage to make a brief appearance in O'Brien's chapter 9, "I Wanna Dance with Somebody: Deconstructing the Disco Diva."

Some of the most interesting queer artists are simply not to be found in *She Bop*. Ani DiFranco doesn't get a mention although she is an important example of a woman who has taken complete control of her career and whose bisexuality makes its way into many of her lyrics. DiFranco's fiercely protective lesbian fans are also a subject worthy of discussion. O'Brien also ignores Debbie Smith who has long been a stalwart of the UK indie scene--playing guitar with the lesbian group Mouth Almighty and then with the highly successful bands Curve and Echobelly--and who refuses to conform to the stereotypes of Black or lesbian or Black lesbian music. In a 1991 interview in lesbian magazine *Quim*, Smith pointed out that "... just because a girl's got a guitar doesn't mean she has to jangle--she can growl like a bastard as well" and as becomes apparent from Amy Raphael's *Never Mind the Bollocks*, she has fascinating things to say about her

position as a Black dyke who plays what she describes as "generically, white, middle-class male music."<sup>1</sup>

Outside *She Bop*'s chapter on androgyny and the lesbian question, queer women are not identified as such. Me'shell NdegéOcello makes a brief appearance in another chapter but there is no discussion of her complex attitude towards her sexuality or how that might be heard in her music. There is no mention of the persistent rumours about Joan Armatrading's sexuality nor any hint of how this might have affected her career, although those surrounding Tracy Chapman and Whitney Houston are alluded to (and skirted over) in the "lesbian" chapter. The Indigo Girls disappear under a passing "country music" label. The queerness of riot grrl is ignored, as is the bisexuality of so many of the early twentieth-century American blues singers.

In many ways *She Bop* is an important book--much more than an anecdotal history of women's contributions to popular music. O'Brien sees intriguing patterns and common threads, such as the anti-feminism of cult heroines Patti Smith and Polly Harvey or the reasons behind song being identified as a "woman's" genre. But there are other threads and voices that are absent from her "shimmering stage." Queer women have always produced music of extraordinary diversity but O'Brien manages to reduce the "lesbian question" to whether it is possible to be out as a gay performer or whether the lesbian musician still has to "enter into an elaborate charade of disguise, bluff and counter-bluff."

The morning after the Brit awards, endless press, TV and radio reports were full of nothing but the Spice Girls and the apparent death of Britpop. The BBC's breakfast news ignored the fact that Black British singer Gabrielle had won the award for Best British Female (one of just two awards to go to Black artists) and the response to Skin's blisteringly queer performance was a resounding silence. *She Bop* is part of a culture that flirts with difference while never quite fully accepting its subversive implications.

[Sophie Fuller]

#### current bibliography

*Current Bibliography* is a regular list of books and articles on lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and queer meanings in music, focussing on recent publications. We encourage you to send us articles and entries for this list.

"1996: Year in Music." *Advocate*, issue 724/725 (21 January 1997): 84-85. [Reviews albums from 1996 by Extra Fancy (led by Brian Grillo; openly gay lyrics), Imperial Teen (led by openly gay Roddy Bottum), Ani DiFranco, Me'Shell NdegéOcello, Ashley MacIsaac (gay Canadian grunge fiddler), RuPaul.]

<sup>1</sup>Issy Trowler, "Growling like a bastard," [interview with Debbie Smith] *Quim* 2 (Summer 1991): 31.



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- \_\_\_\_\_. [Review]. "Michael Callen, *Legacy*." *Out*, no. 38 (November 1996): 75. [Recorded during Callen's final months and nominated for nine Gay and Lesbian American Music Awards.]
- \_\_\_\_\_. [Review]. "Original Cast, *In Trousers: The Marvin Songs*." *Out*, no. 41 (March 1997): 60. [William Finn's musical *Falsettos*, about a man who leaves his wife for a man.]
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- \_\_\_\_\_. "Nonblonde Ambition." *Advocate*, issue 716 (17 September 1996): 81-82. [Review of Linda Perry, *In Flight*.]
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Out of Steam." *Advocate*, issue 717 (1 October 1996): 61-62. [Review of R.E.M., *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*.]
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[Prepared by J. Michele Edwards and Faith Hareldson]

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*Judith A. Peraino* received her Ph.D. in musicology from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1995. She teaches courses in both the Music Department and the Lesbian and Gay Studies Department at the City College of San Francisco. *Faith Hareldson*, a research assistant, plans to fulfill pre-med requirements and a major in biology at Macalester College (99). She hopes to be a physician.

*Eva Rieger*, born in 1940 in an internment camp on the Isle of Man, worked for six years in the music archive of a West Berlin broadcasting company; then studied musicology and music pedagogy in Berlin. She taught at the universities of Goettingen and Hildesheim from 1978-1991, and obtained a professorship for musicology at the University of Bremen in 1991. She lives together with her partner Hiltrud Schroeder, a sociologist, and three cats in a village near Goettingen, Germany. She wrote *Frau, Musik und Männerherrschaft* in 1981. Her latest publications include *Frauen mit Flügel*, a collection of autobiographical texts by women pianists (Frankfurt 1996, together with Monica Steegmann), and *Alfred Hitchcock und die Musik* (Bielefeld 1996), an examination of the gender-specificity of the music of Hitchcock's films 1929-1976.

*Chip Whitesell* is former co-editor of the *GLSG Newsletter*, and is teaching this year at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

*in future issues*

We expect to have an article on gay French-Canadian composer Claude Vivier, a review-article on a slew of new Schubert biographies and their treatment of "the issue," as well as reviews of *En Travesti: Women, Gender Subversion, Opera*, the CRI Gay Composers disc, Ute Lemper's Berlin Cabaret Songs, and more. Also expect reports from the *Feminist Theory and Music 4* and *IMS* conferences (volunteers, anyone?), and information about AMS Phoenix. As always, we welcome your contributions and suggestions!

**Contributors:**

*Sophie Fuller* is the author of *The Pandora Guide to Women Composers: Britain and the United States, 1629–Present* (London: Pandora, 1995), and is lecturer in music at the University of Reading. She has been researching the lives, careers, and music of Victorian and Edwardian women in Britain for a long time, and, inspired by ani difranco, has just bought a guitar.