

RECORD

REVIEWS

The Berkeley Women's Music Collective has produced a thoroughly political album. Their songs grow out of the urban woman's struggles for identity and survival. The Collective makes strong music about strong women; their lyrics explore the conflicts that we all face between opportunities for "security" and "respectability" and our desire to stand in solidarity with our sisters. These conflicts are reflected in songs about jobs, parents, a chance to make it big in the music business, anger, friendship, menstruation, love lost and found.

The album's last cut is "Gay and Proud", a song about growing up a bastard, a foster child, and a lesbian. I first heard Debbie sing this song when she had come to give a concert at the college she had left some time before. The people in the audience were being a typical slightly rowdy college crowd. Suddenly Debbie put her instrument down and, in her strong, rich, deep woman's voice began to sing "Gay and Proud". The audience was silent. It was my first contact with the power of women's music and I could hardly believe how deep in my gut her song was reaching. When it was over, it was hard to remember to clap. That was five or six years ago; much has changed in all our lives and the change is reflected in our music. On the album, the song's last verse, an affirmation of the power of women together, is sung madrigal-style by all the members of the collective. Our struggle is not over but our isolation is. Musically, the album is a mixture of many styles, mostly country, rock, and blues. I especially liked the fine harmonica music by Susann Shanbaum and a great saxophone bit by Nancy Vogl. The group not only wrote and performed all of their own music, but produced and engineered the album as well.

Nancy Groschwitz
San Diego, Calif.

Both records are available at your local Olivia distributor or Olivia Records, Los Angeles, Ca. 90070, 6.05 and 5.00 respectively (+ 6% tax in Ca.).

Where Would I Be Without You? Poetry by Pat Parker and Judy Grahn.

How to review them? A sense of depth: they are people, it would take a long time to know them. They are real, these aren't just words, just poems, these are two women giving themselves.

These are poems of great strength. Poems that honor women, that are full of anger at the circumstances of our lives, full of respect for the strength with which we meet them, full of faith that we can change them.

To listen to the record is to feel the presence of two women, both strong and acutely aware of the world, willing to look at the actual circumstances of our lives but not crushed to despair by looking, able to find consolation, Pat in loving, Judy in enduring.

I feel Pat most strongly in my heart, surges of deep emotion, incredible the way she makes her life naked before me, shares her most intimate personal history, helps me know myself better by seeing our differences and similarities.

I feel Judy in my mind and my cunt. A powerful pelvic energy, strong like a karate stance, a thrust, and beautiful the way bones are, shaped for power. I feel her in my mind, her poems like puzzles sometimes, full of inversions and riddles and almost mathematical games.

If you want to be challenged to feel and think, to grow stronger, get this record and listen to it. It isn't passive entertainment, it's the voices of real women. You'll have to put out some energy to go and meet them. They're worth meeting.

River Malcolm
San Diego

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The fourth NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL will be June 28-July 3, 1977. For info: National Women's Music Festival; P.O. Box 2721, Sta A, Champaign, Ill., 61820, (217) 333-6443.

Califia Community will be offering three sessions at Camp de Benneville in the Angeles Forest: June 24-July 1, July 15-22, and August 1-8. Write: Califia Community, P.O. Box 39, Cardiff, Ca., 92007.

MAIDEN ROCK, a women's learning institute will hold one to five week sessions and weekend workshops on its Wisconsin farm July 18-August 19. For info: Maiden Rock, Women's Learning Center, Box 8587, Minneapolis, Minn., 55498, (612) 822-2241.

WE WANT THE MUSIC COLLECTIVE is producing a second women's music festival near Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, (August 25-28). For info: WWTMC, 1501 Lyons, Mt. Pleasant, Mich., 48858.

RITES OF WIMMIN lesbian feminist theatre collective is coming June 23-Sept 15 from Pittsburg through the Midwest to California then north up through Canada. For info: Rites of Wimmin, 826 Walton Ave., Phil., PA, 19143.

REDBIRD feminist collective in Central Vermont invites women to live and work together this summer (June 15-Sept 15.) For info: Redbird, 280 Manhattan Drive, Burlington, Vt., 05401.