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# WINTER/SPRING 1978 No. 3

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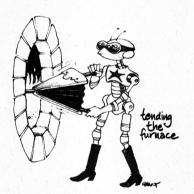
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# Dangerously Amateur

When Bill and I began plotting GPl, we complained frequently about the necessity of beginning a new magazine with a "first" issue: ""dhy can't we start with no.37 In first issues you always have to explain things. You have to tell people who you are and what you're doing and why you're doing it and god that's dull."

Well, we did start with no. 1; we got around all the explaining rather neatly, we think, and somehow here we are a year later finally at no. 3. . . and we're right back where we started (figuratively speaking), only this time it's a slightly different "us".

Grant: What exactly does a co-editor do?

Allyn: He contributes money.

Grant: That doesn't sound very exciting.

Allyn: He also writes editorials and does lots of artwork. (One of the advantages of getting a "virgin" is that they believe

almost anything you tell them.)

It all began last August when I spent an afternoon reading copies of a personalrine that Crant had done in 1972. (Ruddy fanattist writes better than I do!) We can't remember now who first suggested it, but somehow it was agreed that when CREME PLAT moved to San Francisco, Grant would co-edit. He was very enthusiastic. So was I.

Grant: [thumbing through a copy of GPI] My god, you mean I'm co-editing a serconzine?

We had planned for Grant to do an editorial for this issue, but professional commitments have kept him at the drawing board and away from the typewriter, and we decided not to wait any longer to go to press. Next issue will for sure feature a genuine Canfield editorial. The rest of the editorial co-operative remains more or less the same, at least for the time being. Bill has moved over to become our Official Man in Havana, offering advice from afar; Susan has maintained as our Official Jewish Mother; and John continues to fulfill admirably the duties of Official Silent Partner. I can tgive reasons for the move from Wancouver (because I don't really have any) other than to say that It Was Time. So here we are. GENNEP MAT. the expartroic Canadian genzine.

\* \* \*

"Now that you've been here a while," the Epitome of Bay Area Fandom said to me, swirling the ice cubes in his drink, "do you have any shilosophical observations about the City?"

"All the beggars have left Market Street," I replied after some thought. They used to stand outside every store, it seemed, the blind, the amputees, with their tin cups and their pencils and their awful neckties. I don't think they really expected to make any money selling pencils, but I always assumed that Market Street on a sunny day was probably a nicer place to be than a lonely room somewhere. People on their way to work inevitably stopped a moment to talk to them. The man I liked best was a double amputee and he sat on his cart in a doorway on Powell Street at the cable car turnaround. He seemed to know everyone who ever got on the cable car. and was caustically funny without ever being bitter. These "beggars" have mostly been replaced by street musicians (not as numerous or as talented as those in Vancouver) and street merchants. I miss the beggars. Someone suggested that they probably quit Market Street when the City started tearing it up to install BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit, our "subway" system that is about as rapid as a snail on a bad day). That was after I'd moved away. No one seems to know where they've gone though. Maybe to another city where the main street isn't constantly being torn up. There is one blind man who sits outside our building with his dog and s tin cup. On cold days the dog wears a hand-knit sweater.

Street people are harder to identify here than in other cities I've lived in. Maybe it's because I don't get out all that often or maybe it's because the police keep them shuffled around - police don't like vagrants. I kind of like street people. They give me a sense of security, like landmarks. You go for a walk, or a drive, and you know they'll be there. It makes the streets feel like a safe place to be when you know you can count on familiar faces.

There are three street people who are my current favourites (funny enough, I would never talk to these people, but I like them being there): three amiable drumks who sit at the corner of Divisidero and McAllister. There are two Mon & Pop grocery stores kitty-corner to each other at this intersection; in the mornings the three sit on the bench outside the Transfer Grocery and in the afternoons they move over to the bench outside the Sawe More Market. They sit a careful two feet apart but chatting cheerfully as if all's right wight beit world. In the volder men sit leaning back

against the bench, legs crossed at the knee both in the same direction, bottles in twisted brown paper bags on the seat beside them. The younger man has square granny glasses and wears a purple doublehnit suit that harmonizes nicely with the grey suits of his two friends. No holds himself a little apart from the other two, sitting with both feet firmly on the ground, albows on his knees, and clutching his bottle in his hands. One thing that amazes me about these three is that their socks always match.

People keep telling me that the City's changed a lot in the ten years I've been gone from it. (Why do people everywhere have this annoying habit of telling others things that are patently obvious: "The TransAmerica Pyramid wasn't here when you left;" I know that: "Grandma, Little Ernie's really grown since you last saw him 17 years ago. " shoving Little Ernie forward, who was five when Grandma last saw him.... Anyway.) Well, sure, some of the shops I used to frequent are gone, most of the places I used to live have metamorphosed into Bank of America buildings, and the financial district canyons have grown deeper as the ten- and 15storey buildings have been replaced with 30- and 45-storey buildings. But these are superficial changes only. The essence of what makes San Francisco its own unique self is still here. There's something a bit magic about this town, an Aliveness, as if the City itself has a consciousness beyond and apart from the consciousness of the people who populate it. I used to say that you have to be a bit eccentric to live here, and I still think it's true; people who live in this city seem to be a bit more alive, or maybe I mean a bit more open, free (eccentric!), than people who live in other cities I've seen. In most places the people define the city; here I think the City defines its people.

Here I am sounding off like a San Francisco chauvinist ....

Well, Canada was nice to me, and it was a good place to spend ten years of my life, but I must admit that I do love this City, and am glad I came back to it.

The first time my brother saw San Francisco, we were riding a bus across the Golden Gate Bridge, and the City was spread out before us. "God," he said, "it's like coming home!" It is.

-Allun Cadogan





# "í thínk ím jast a writer"

# Allyn interviews Kate Wilhelm

Kate Withelm is a marll, stender feminine woman who does not conclude of writing the things whe does, 80m in Toledo in 1913, one of six children, she has worked since she was in kigh school, and at various times has been a department stone clerk, insurance underwriter, and photographer's model. She began writing in 1956, and sold her fixet stony, "The Witelong Spaceship," to astronoming. Since then she has published 19-100 stonics and 12 novels, many of them on psychological thems. Het hair has been white since she was a teenager; she used to due it, but doesn't anymore.

-Damon Knight

for the Westercon 30 program book

- Q. Katé, you've been writing for over twenty years now; you got your start in the science fiction field and continue to write science fiction, but are you a "science fiction writer"?
- WILHELM: Probably not. I think I'm just a writer. I think as soon as you say "sclence fiction writer" that limits what I feel I can do, and it limits what the readers expect of me in a way I don't want to be limited. By first novel was a mystery and my last novel was without any category attached to it, and I've done everything in between.
- Q: If you don't want to be classified as a science fiction writer, I'm interested in your commitment to the science fiction community. I'm referring to your work in the Clarion and Milford workshops. I'd like for you to talk about that and to tell us what fascination science fiction holds for you then.
- WILHELM: When I first began publishing I was writing everything. I wrote a play that was bad, I wrote aninstream fiction that was bad, I wrote science fiction that was bad. But I sold the science fiction. And of course this was rather positive feedback. I would have been a fool had I abandomed it at that particular point because I was selling it. I still think that science fiction will allow young writers to do things that they cannot possibly attempt in any other field. It allows all kinds of experimentation in a way that mainstream fiction simply

can't tolerate because those people who read it aren't interested in ideas. In the late 50's or early 60's I had an agent who told me I couldn't write mainstream slick fiction and to forget it and go into other things. What they wanted was a female "hero," under 30, who did not have problems, and solved them. I can't think in those terms. I do think that the people who are drawn to science fiction have strong ideas about society, about humanity, about the future, about the past, and these are all things that straight fiction can't tolerate. Mainstream readers don't want to fixink when they read. They want non-problems that can be solved.

- Q: You've been working intimately with Clarion and the Milford workshops for the past several years. You've recently had a book published, Canton SF, otherwise known as "Clarion 4." I've read about half of it and have been really impressed with the quality of the stories in that book. You told me you are very proud of it --
- WILHELM: Yes, this is the only book I've ever had published with my name on it that I can really truly brag about. And I'm 60 proud of it I think it's a marvelous book.
- Q: The stories are of a much better over-all quality than in the previous Clarion books and I'm wondering if it's bacause you're getting more talented writers coming to the workshops? Have the teaching methods improved? What's happening? How do you account for this?
- WILHERM: I think it's a combination of things. In the beginning Clarion had no Name, nobody had ever heard of it and the people who came weren't committed writers for the most part. After the books began appearing, people read them and they said, 'This is a writers' workshop; it's teaching people to write and be published.' And I think maybe not more talented but more committed people began applying to it. I think by now we have learned how to teach a little better, and there is a tradition to it now, there is continuity. This is Clarion's tenth year, and it now has the added stability of being held in one place from year to year. When Clarion was held at Michigan, there was a gamble of whether there'd be entered by the continuity of the property of the pr
- Q: Would you say that you writers learn things from Clarion?
- WILHELM: Absolutely! There's nothing like having to formulate what you think you know in order to find out what you know. As soon as you have to articulate it you realize your own ignorance. I've learned enormously since I've been associated with Clarion.
- Q: Okay, let's concentrate for a while on the science fiction you've written. As a writer who is not only a woman, but a woman who doesn't write traditional masculine science fiction, in other words, about gadgets and white male superheroes, but instead writes about the psychology of old women, old men, strong women and other "untraditional" people, have you had any trouble having your work accepted by editors or by readers or by mainstream critics?



WILHELM: It's a little hard to know about acceptance because a writer site down and does the writing, does the work, and sends it away to an agent who then sells it or not. So I don't have a whole lot of feedback about editorial reaction. The agent tells me they either took it or they didn't. In the beginning it wasn't like that. I was selling things myself. The first story I wrote was "The Mile Long Spaceship." It wasn't published first but that's the first one I wrote. I sent it off to John Campbell and he sent me a letter saying he liked the story very much, but attached to the letter was an afradavit that I had to have signed and notorized that I was Kate Wilhelm and that I had written that story and that it was original. So I did this and sent it back to him and he sent se a check.

That was my introduction into science fiction, andor remove a check.

That was my introduction into science fiction, andor remove the property of the science of the sc

I haven't been published in the magazines a lot - I've gone mostly to novels in the last few years - but in the beginning when I was writing for the science fiction magazines, the reviewers would say, "...Another Kate Wilhelm story with a strong woman and a stupid weak man..." They wouldn't dark say that today. You know this is taboo today; you can't talk that way anymore. Now they're saying, "...A @winisis Story by Kate Wilhelm." So the words change but

the reaction is still there, but I do get published.

Q: Nearly everything, if not everything, you write has a psychological theme to it. Would you mind talking about the place of the psychological novel in science fiction?

- WILHELM: Well, that's my ghound! That's what interests me in all fiction: the reactions of people to people, and the reactions of people to situations and place, and this of course is psychological. My kids ask me, 'Why did so and so do that?' and I always may I don't know. I don't know why anybody does anything. This is what I like to write about people who are leading very ordinary lives for the most part, up to a certain point of great tension and stress which is a testing point, really, and then see how they react, see what they do under stress. We all get moments of high stress sooner or later in our lives, and how would we react? I'm forever testing it out in fiction.
- Q: A lot of science fiction these days is moving into the realm of the "soft sciences" as opposed to the technological themes of the past --
- WIHELM: Oh, I think this is almost inevitable because, you know, if you read a novel about going to New York, and the character gets on the subway, do you want the author to sit down and tell you how the subway works? You know you want the character to get on the subway and go where they want to go and then do something. You don't want a whole dissertation on how the wheels turn and how the gears shift and all these things. And if you're going to assume space travel, to you really want to know how the space ship works? I don't, and I'm going to assume that if people get on it, it's going to go or they wouldn't have got on it. They would have waited for a space ship that would go.

We are getting so much technology now in magazines, newspapers, television news as straight reportage that the need for it in fiction seems to have diminished. Now it seems the most important part of it is what reporters don't or can't give us, and that is what does this mean? And as soon as you go for meaning, you are in the soft sciences, no longer in physics or biology.

- Q: Do you suppose this move into the soft sciences is directly, or even indirectly, related to the fact that there are more women writing science fiction nowadays?
- WINELM: I don't think it's primarily or even necessarily because more women are writing. I think it's because there are more people writing who are more aware of and appreciative of literary values. Many writers who enter the science fiction field now were English majors in school, or have a background in fields that are not science or engineering, and have not learned the entire history of science fiction through fandom or studying the works of the old masters of science fiction. They've brought a new way of looking at the same material because of their different backgrounds.



- I only read science fiction for two years before I began writing it, but in those two years I remember I read story after story where suddenly here was an author who was writing in fictional form about the things I had been thinking about, and these were things doing with philosophy, with the origin of life, the origin of the planetary systems, life after death, with what is mind, what is brain and so on. All these philosophical questions were being handled in science fiction and that's what attracted me. I remember skipping over all the long passages that had a lot of murky math and explanations of why the wheels turned because I didn't care about that. I wanted to find out about us, the origins, the contacts with other people. Even at a very early age I realized that I didn't understand my brothers, and if I didn't understand my brothers, I didn't understand my father or my mother or anybody else. I never understood anybody, and I thought, how could we understand aliens; how could we make that first contact? How do we know how the people of the past really did things? We see artifacts and relics and we assume that this is what they did. But what did they think? What were they really like inside? And I have no idea. I'm endlessly amazed and befuddled by people, about why they're doing what they're doing. This I think comes into the soft sciences why we are the way we are, what we're doing, why we're doing it, how we're doing it, and where we're going from here. And it isn't so much the technology, the physics, but the behavioral psychology, oh, the whole urban scene - all of this it needs exploration.
- Q: Three of the last four books you've had published, The Clewiston Test, Faultlines, and Ctty of Cath, have not been classified as science fiction. Now, you've told me that you leave it up to your publishers to classify your novels. Given that mainstream books will bring in more money than science fiction books, why do you allow your publishers to classify any of your books as science fiction?
- WILHERM: I wish I knew. It's very curious but I feel dishonest if I try to publish something that I feel definitely is science fiction under a mainstream label. Where left the Sweet Bilds Sing is by any definition science fiction, and I would have felt dishonest trying to pretend it wasn't. But things are changing so fest that the next science fiction novel I write I don't think I'll even give it a thought because anything is being published without the label anymore. It's no longer just a matter of honesty, it's a matter of publishing, packaging and all the rest of it. But I've never pretended I don't write some science fiction. I do. I like science fiction. I like a whole lot of it, and the science fiction I write I've yev interested in.



But what I write is mostly psychological. Even in Newco Hadda I was not so much interested in the technology of this future as what would happen to the people of today in various situations, social and cultural, and this is what I wanted to find out in the book. Because they are basically the same people throughout the book although they are many different generations. Under different cultural situations I think people do change, drastically, and their attitudes change, their morals change. That's really what I wanted to explore.

Q: When I read something, I tend to look for and to wonder how much of a book or a story's theme is a particular hobby horse of the author. I've noticed that in at least two

of your works, the short story "April Fool's Day Forever" and in Whêze Late the Sweet Birds Sang, you dealt with the idea that people lose their creative abilities when they eliminate the need for biological reproduction. It seems to me that there is a parallel here to something that Dr. Spock of Bady S Child Coxt same wrote in his book. This is a paraphrese: The reason men tend to be the creative geniuses in our society, not just in the arts, but in all fields, is that they don't have the ability to satisfy their creative needs through childbirth. You and Spock are both exploring the same idea, but reaching different conclusions. Would you care to comment?

WIHHELM: Well, that has so many different aspects; let's knock Spock down first. I think women have always had as much creativity as males, but women have also been handicapped. For instance, women writers were handicapped in that they were expected to write certain things and not other things. Some always broke through it of course. Women were always allowed to write poetry. This was a good thing for women to do. Women were not allowed to do so many things that men were allowed to do; they simply couldn't find a place, a stage, a podium where it was accepted. To say that women, because they weren't allowed a place to stand to show what they could do, couldn't do it, is a fallacy. I think Spock is all wet here.

About the rest of it, I think creativity is one of the things I understand least of all. I have three children of my own; I've been around children; I'm one of gix children, and why some grow up to become very creative people and others don't, from the same family even, is a mystery. I'm the only one in my family of six children who has gone into any of the creative arts; none of the others have done anything really creative. This has always made me wonder what it is about some people that allows this to happen, that makes this happen, and what is it missing in other people that prohibits it or stifles it? This is one of the things I'm really preoccupied with most of the time in my work. I get very involved in my children's school work, and I watch these little children, and can see the difference even in the first grade. There are some children who are drawing and sketching and writing, putting nice words together, and other children who are very laboriously copying out of books or tracing. Already whatever needs to have happened has happened to these children. This is one of those things that if I were granting a lot of money to do research, I would be putting up a lot of money to find out where it happened, before the first grade, to know just where, and I'm not sure it has anything to do with the biological function.

I was investigating this; I was exploring it. I think if we had immortality there wouldn't be the urge to be creative. It would be directed, I think, maybe in different ways, but not the way it is now. This is another of the things I don't know and I keep looking for the answer, and I keep writing. If I ever find the answer, maybe I'll not have to keep writing and looking that way. I don't know. I think everybody born is probably very creative and somewhere from birth through the first three or four years, some of them have something happen that makes them stifle it, makes them bury it or just not use it in some way. And that something is a mystery.

In Sweet Birds I was more interested in the idea that the loss of individuality, the self, would destroy the urge toward artistic creativity. It was less the loss of the biological reproduction ability than this other loss. You can't

have art by consensus, or committee.

q; Jeff Frame published an excellent interview with you in his fanzine EEDCEROC, and in that interview you said, "Any woman who is sware has to be a feminist." And yet you don't really define yourself as a Feminist, with a capital F. Would you care to elaborate on your statement?

WILHELM: Oh, this is one of those very touchy areas where the militant feminists say, 'You're either one of us or you're the enemy.' I can't make that statement. I have four brothers and three sons, and I love them all dearly. So I can't say I hate the male race because I don't. This has already put me one step away from the militant feminists who very easily can make the distinction; I cannot immediate.

ately separate male and female and say, 'They are the enemy.'

and I do not write to order. I can't. If I could maybe I would because people who can write to order ge very rich. I'm not very rich. If somebody comes to me and says, 'Write a feminist book,' you know, I feel totally blank. I don't know what they mean. I can't do it. And yet when I write, I write what people then say are feminist books. Cleukion Teat has been reviewed as a feminist statement right down the line, but when I was thinking of it and writing it, up until 1 began seeing it reviewed, I never thought of it as a feminist statement. It was just the way I saw this person in this situation and the way I felt about it. I can't do propagand about feminism, yet I think almost anything I write will have a strong feminist statement in it because it's just naturally, just basically, what I feel.

Q: I'd like you to talk about some of the personal difficulties of being a woman writer. It seems probably the most basic problem is whether it's necessary for a woman who wants to write to make the choice between writing and having a

family. You do write, and you have a family - how many children do you have?

WILHELM: Three. Three of my own, and Damon has three, and at one time or another all six have lived with us.

Q: So how do you cope with two careers?

WILHELM: Well, this is really the toughest thing of all, and this is the one question I'm asked everyplace I go. There are always women who want to write and feel they either have to postpone the family or postpone writing. They can't



do them both. I don't pretend it isn't hard. It is very hard. In fact, when I first began writing, my oldest child was six, and my youngest was two. and I never touched my typewriter until after nine at night. I never even thought about going to the typewriter. But this gave me something that I think is an advantage now. Throughout the day, you know when you're washing dishes and washing windows, your mind isn't very active. You can use your mind on other things. I trained myself, because I had to, to plot out everything, to visualize everything: I could see everything in my head before I put one word on paper. And I had all day to do it. I'd stand at the sink and wash dishes, and to all outward appearances I would be looking out in the back yard, and of course I wasn't seeing the back yard. I was seeing scenes out of whatever it was I was writing at the time. By the time I did get to my typewriter I never wasted a minute. I whipped in a piece of paper and I began typing because I'd been waiting all day to do it. So I got extremely good work habits. But it also meant I didn't sleep. I would go from nine or nine-thirty, whenever I got the younger child in bed, until I was so tired that I couldn't see what I was doing anymore. Then I'd fall into bed and at six-thirty or seven o'clock the next morning the two little darlings were up again. You have to give up something, and I gave up sleep for about four years. I don't recommend that. I got very, very thin in those days.

After the children got older and were in school, it wasn't a problem because I simply used the hours they were in school. When my youngest child was a baby, I hired a girl to come in from school every day. I put him to bed for his map and I knew she would come in at two-thirty and get him up and take care of him till three-thirty. So every day I had from twelve until three-thirty that I knew I wouldn't have to take care of the child. Those were my working hours. I very very rarely work more than three or four hours a day at the typewriter so that was fine. But it is a matter of manipulating life, manipulating family, manipulating posself. It's very difficult but it can be done, But you have to choose. Do you want to stay up all night and write, or do you want to watch television? That's some choice. And I made that choice.

That b bome choreer that a mast that

Q: Your husband, Damon Knight, is also a writer and an editor, and I'm wundering if two writers in the family makes it easier for you as a writer, or does it make it more difficult?

WILHELM: Well, I had a previous marriage with a non-writer that broke up. Damon and I were warned before we were married that two writers can't live together because of ago clashes. We haven't found that to be true at all. Of course, we're not competing, I few ever competing for the same marker, the same magazine, the same editor, the same everything, possibly there'd be a problem. I don't know. We've never been in an area where we've competed. As it is I think we are very supportive of one another. I happen to think that Damon's prose style is the best put on paper by anyone, and as a critic and editor, I think he's tops.

We don't show each other work in progress. I did it with one novel years ago and then it was a terrible thing; I wanted him to comment on it and yet if he said anything good I knew it was a lie, and if he said anything bad I knew I wouldn't finish it. I've never offered him another novel in progress. When something is done I'll show it, and when he has finished something he shows me,

but until then no comment. That works out very well.

It's very curious, when I sit at the typewriter, instantly I'm in that other world - great place to be - but then I get hungry and I have to come to the kitchen to get a peanut butter sandwich, and I don't want to leave that other world, break the spell. If I meet Danon I don't want that to talk to me - we just kind of smarl at each other - don't touch - we detour pretty wide, and we understand that. Now, other people might not, but he understands it. For days at

time if I'm writing - uh, weeks and months at a time if I'm working on a novel, I don't want to get into any deep philosophical discussions. I just want, 'Wes, the sum is shining,' and that's the extent of our conversation for a while. And if Damon does me that way. I understand that, too.

- Q: You must have some sort of unusual physical set-up in your house to accomodate
- WILHELM: We always have had separate offices. At one time, our offices were separated by a hallway. I didn't like that much because Damon mutters when he works. If I came to a pause when I wanted to think, I could hear this terrible muttering going on in the other room. That wasn't too happy. Now I'm on one side of the house and he's on the other and he can mutter and I don't care. I can't hear him. When we lived in Florida, he walked on the beach muttering, too. I know people thought he was a very strange man.
- Q: You didn't come into science fiction through fandom as so many other writers did.
  Tell me how you first started selling your science fiction.
- WILHELM: I began reading science fiction in the libraries in hardcover books and anthologies, and I had never heard of the magazines. I didn't know there were magazines! I lived in Louisville, Kentucky. At this time all pulp magazines were sold in a downtown store that was a front for a bookie, and they had a sign on their door, "No Women Allowed." And I never went in there. It wouldn't have occurred to me to go in there with that sign on the door. People in there were betting on horseraces and all the rest of it. I knew I didn't belong in there. That's where they sold the science fiction magazines, so I never saw them. When I began selling, the publishers didn't have the habit of sending a copy of the magazine to the author and so we never knew when we were published, or if we were published or anything else. We knew they sent us a check occasionally, but if they did anything beyond that it was hard for me to tell because I couldn't go into the bookie to find the magazines. It was many years before I began seeing the magazines and meanwhile I was submitting to magazines that had been defunct for years. I didn't know it! I'd read the anthology from the library and in the back or someplace they'd have a list of the sources, where the stories came from, all kinds of things, like Weird Tales. I don't know when Weird Tales stopped publishing, but it was before I started submitting. I was really very. very ignorant.
- Q: You once told me you tend to feel a little bit strange around fans, a little bit uncomfortable, because you feel they know so much more than you.
- WILHELM: Oh, they do! I always am at a great loss around fans because they know who published what when, you know, back to year one. And I don't know anything like that. They know what was on the covers of magazines from the beginning. You know, I don't recognize my OWN. The other thing that happened with me was that after I started to write, I read less and less. For about three or four years I was a voracious reader of science fiction, and it has tapered off more and more over the years. I have too much other reading I have to do to keep up, and I always feel the fans know more about what is current as well as what is historical in the field.
- q; Just in the last year or so you have really come into your own as a science fiction author, and I have been hearing you described nore and more frequently as the new science fiction superstar. Everybody knows and loves Kate Wilhelm now. How do you feel about this?

- WILHELM: Oh, I think that's a lot of malarky. I don't know where you get your information. I work harder today than I've ever worked. Writing doesn't get easier; it gets much harder for me. I hope it's because I want do do more and I want it to be better. I do want to be a good writer. This is my one ambition: I want to be a good writer. And I'm not yet. When people say they like this or that, sometimes they'll say they like something that was very, very early; they'll say, 'This was your best thing,' and it was something I did in year one. Oh! I haven't made any progress at all! in all these years! I should go back to writing what I was writing in year one! It's very mysterious to me. I never know what it is about any work that touches a person. I know what it is that affected me. I know what images that I had to write, but if these are the same things that affect my readers I have no way of knowing. There's an impossible gulf between the writer and the reader. I know what I'm trying to put into a work but if you're getting that out of it, I never know. If you are, it's working. Some of these are very nice images and I hope I'm sharing them with you. But a superstar - that's a lot of silliness. I don't feel at all like a star - I don't have a yacht yet.
- Q: It's interesting that you say your work is coming harder for you now. In this past year you've had, what, four or five novels out?
- WILHELM: The facts of publishing are not the same as the facts of writing. The Institute Box, Where Lette the Sweet Stadds Sung and The Cleukiston Text all came out in the same year. Honestly, they weren't all written in the same year. The stories in The Institute Box apread out over, I forget, six or eight or nine, ten years. The Cleukiton Text had a very strange history. The first editor who turned it down repeated almost word for word some of the language used by the husband in the novel complaining to his wife about her behavior. This struck me as very funny. After I hung up the phone, Damos said, "What was he mysing" was laughing like a mariac. He had opened the book and copied out sentences and phrases and used those to justify turning it down. The editor who finally did take the book took a long time to decide and had to have three or four readers do it and they had to decide if they wanted any changes, if maybe I had made some mistakes in it. They finally published it as I wrote it, which was a blessing.

  It just happened because of all that that it came out within the same time period



as Where Late the Sweet Birds Sang. But it had nothing to do with the writing chronology.

Q:Earlier, in response to another question, you said, "...if I ever find the answer, maybe I'll not have to keep writing..."
Do you "have to write"?

WILHELM: Yes, simply. We play a game sometimes that goes like this: If you were on a desert island with no hope of ever being rescued or of anyone ever finding the island itself, would you write? I think so. This shatters the idea that we are trying to communicate with others, of course. I thought abd finally decided I am not trying to tell anyone else anything, although it's nice when I feel I have communicated something. But first and

foremost I am trying to communicate with myself. Probably there are many ways to become whole or to work toward wholeness even if it can be achieved only in flashes now and then. I think any artistic creativity is working toward it although few ever accomplish that goal for more than a moment or two at a time. But when it happens, those moments that come and go so fast, it makes it worthwhile, and shows that it? spossible to find it. And being whole, however briefly, is a high that nothing else ever gave me. Finally, it seems, every motive is a selfish one.

\* \* \*

The bulk of this interview was conducted as part of the programming at Westercom 30 in Vancouver, British Columbia, where Kate was the Special Guest of Honor. After transcribing the tape of the interview, I sent a copy to her for additions and deletions and with some extra questions. I should also mention that the transcription was heavily edited, so if this sounds like a rather different interview from the one you may have heard at the convention, that it's why.

Kate is one of the best interview subjects I've ever worked with. She's remarkably patient as well as fascinating to talk to, and I'd like to thank her here for the help she gave me in my efforts to get this into print.

Thanks also to the Westercon 30 convention committee for releasing the tape for publication.





It has been stated, by those who ought to know better, that rural California has no distinct, regional cuisine. This is a bare-faced lie, perpetrated by those who have, quite simply, lacked the fortitude to extend their search into the more outre conners of the state.

Now, it is true that certain facets of California rural cuisine share a number of characteristics with rural cuisine in the rest of the United States. My grandmother, for example, is a maître at what I originally thought to be California Vegetables. These come in two colors, yellow or green, and are otherwise completely indistinguishable one from the other and each from library paste. Her kitchen secret. I have discovered, is quite simple: take a goodly amount of vegetable (corn. squash, spinach, green beans, pumpkin, lettuce, whatever), place in a kettle with half a cup of water and no salt, cover, and boil vigorously for eighty minutes exactly. Disinter and serve. My grandmother has also achieved renown for her Incredible Shrinking Hams, a culinary process of ecclesiastical mystery, during which a seven pound ham is transmuted into a three pound cannonball. It was with great dismay, however, that I discovered my grandmother's kitchen wizardry to be common throughout the country; not hers alone is Sawdust Turkey, Tapioca-Potato Surprise, and other well-remembered tastes of my childhood. Shocked as I was by this revelation of the commonplace. I nonetheless firmly believed that there is a California rural cuisine, and set out in search of same.

Oh, woe to those souls who have never looked further than their grandmothers' kitchess for backwash California cooking! Never, never will they savor Fresno Armenian Tacos, Petaluma Egg Cocktail, Truckee Cerlic Goulash, vintage Eureka wines, or. best of all. Johnsville Chicken.

Johnsville Chicken? You've never heard of Johnsville Chicken? Well, I am nothing if not kind. I would not wish that you be scoffed at and reviled when you come to California and admit to a base, uncultured ignorance about Johnsville Chicken.

## I will enlighten you.

In the northerm Mother Lode, east of Blairaden and north of Tabee, on A-14 off of California Route 89, there is a mountain named Eureka Peak (elevation 7490), which, back in the latter part of the 19th century, produced quantities of gold. A stamp mill was set up at the base of Eureka Peak and miners were imported to work the lode - which they did with such enthusiasm that Eureka Peak is now a veritable honeycomb of old mining tunnels, running up, down, sideways, backwards, forwards, and generally in any and all directions known to humanity, and some known only to chicken. Near the mining camp and stamp mill a small town syzens up. named Johnsville, and

populated with white-collar mine workers, shopkeepers, gamblers, whores, and other necessities of early California life. The first ski run in California was found on Eureka Peak, and the first skiing competitions in the west were held there yearly.

The mine petered out, as mines tend to do, and the mill, camp, and town were deserted. However, it's still fine sking territory, and a number of years back the August and Once-Sovereign State of California established Plumas-Eureks State Park on the site of the mill and camp. Outside of the park the town of Johnsville creaked to life again, its houses restaurants for the skines in the vinter and the campers in the summer.

One particular restaurant, along Johnsville's main, and only, road, boasts fine wooden interiors, stained glass windows, mining memorabilia, a mahogany bar brought (or so they say) round the Horn, and outside of the kitchen, by the back door, a chicken coop. In this chicken coop there rested a chicken of the male persuasion, that is to say, a cock. This cock was, of necessity, a cagy and inventive fellow, since each morning the cook would appear at the back door and fling into the coop whatever scraps were remaining from the previous night's dinners. Our cock soon grew to distinguish between the edible and inedible portions of this daily benefice, and waxed fat, and gleaming, and happy, with a glint in his eye and a shine in his comb. Tender. Plump. Delectable. In short, too good to live.



And, as must happen, one morning the cook appeared at the kitchen door carrying, not a bucket of scraps, but a butcher knife. The cock took one look at that gleaming blade and saw his fate writ thereon in letters of flaming chickenblood. and yea, his heart did shiver and his liver did kick up a fuss, whilst also did his gizzard pain him with a great pain, yea, verily. But our cock had not grown fat and happy on scraps alone; he had a brain in that pea-sized head of his. and when the cook opened the gate of that chicken coop and brandished his knife, our cock took out between the cook's legs and hot-footed it on up toward Eureka Peak, with that cook close behind, waving his knife and howling and clutching his tall white chef's hat with his free hand. Every so often the cock would take a breather and look back, to see the cook hot on his trail and gaining by the minute, and away they'd go again, higher and higher, as the air grew rarified and the morning grew late. The cock was not used to this form of invigorating exercise and, just as he felt that he could not flutter one pace further, he spotted the mouth of one of the old mining tunnels, and dove into it with a cry of relief. The cook saw him disappear into what seemed to be thick rock, but it took him only a moment to find the mouth of the tunnel, and in he went. too.

Well, friends, it was a long and terrible chase those two made. Up tunnels and down shafts, around round places and across straight places, over rocks and under beams and through roots and every which way, the cock cawing and running and the cock swiping at the air with his knife and howling curses. The cock lost his stil feathers. The cock lost his cap. The cock straight should be supported in the cock caraped a wing. The cock tripped his pants. The cock shouted insults in cock. The mountain shock and the old supporting timbers groaned, dust and rock fell in choking clouds, the sum set and the sum rose, and still those two chased each other, hell for leather, through the dusty, ancient mining tunnels of Eureka Peak.

Four days and three nights did that epic chase continue, until the cook was filthy and furfuous and the cock was skinny, knotted, tough, and exhausted. And then our cock made the wrong turn. Thinking to take a path he had taken before, he made an error of judgement and memory, and found himself in a blind alley, a dead end, a tunnel going nowhere, and the cock blocking the entrance thereto, rad eyes glaring and blade raised on high. And that cock advanced with earth-shaking steps, while the cock covered against the earther walls and begged for his life. Conceive the scene! Picture the terror, the anget, the sturm und dramg, the pathog and bathos of it all! Still that cook advanced incovably, and grabbed the cock by its feet, hoisted it in the air, and whack! hacked its head right off its pitiful, scrawny, bedraggled neck.

Then that cook stood in the dark, musty mining tunnel, and he shook the corpus of his enemy back and forth, splattering chicken blood all over, and he said, "You muthafoggin goddamed chicken, I've foggin chased you for four foggin days and three foggin nights and I'm foggin tired and foggin dirty and I lost my foggin cap and I'm foggin well going to get my foggin money's worth out of you!"

And he took the remains of that cock back out of the mining tunnels, and down gureka Peak and past the empty chicken coop, and into the kitchen of that Johnsville restaurant. And he hacked off that cock's battered feet and he wanked off his. feetfars and he whipped out his innards and he chopped up his stringy, emaciated body, and he tossed him in a pot of sour Thunderbird '68 and he threw in some rancid butter and he threw in some bad onions and he threw in some used paraley and he belied it for a few hours and he scooped that ex-chicken out of that pot and slapped him on a plate and sold him for eight dollars and seventy-five cents, without vegetable.

And I ate him.

# **BOOKS**



EERIE & WAYWARD MOOD PIECES

### DEVIEW BY DOUG BARROUR

J.G. Ballard. Low-Flying Aircraft. London: Jonathan Cape, 1976. 191pp. \$9.75, £3.50.

Low-Figing Aircoaff is J.G. Ballard's first collection of short fiction in quite a while, but it reveals that he's still capable of the kind of earts and usyward mood pieces he first showed us in The Day of Foreur and (best of all) Wormidion Sands. Yet there are some differences: a sense of acceptance that is almost comic in the philosophical sense pervades the best of these recent stories, and, indeed, Ballard creates some gaunninely fumy scenes in "The Ultimate City," the novella which is this collection's centrepiece, as well as some shaggy-story-jokes like "The Life and Death of God" and "The Greatest Television Show on Earth."

Ballard's vision of the future is much the same as before but somehow it's no longer quite so bleak. In the title story, something has brought about a precipitous decline in the world's population, yet the people as a whole have accepted their fate quietly. But is it a real decline. "In fact, bitrh-rates had soured, but almost all the offspring were seriously deformed." So humanity has been killing its young. "For thirty years they had been matter-of-factly slaughtering their children and closing down the western hemisphere like a group of circus workers dismantling their tents and killing their animals at the season's end."

That quotation is a quintessential example of the best writing in this collection: coolly, analytically ironic, the simile is exact and in its philosophical implications concerning the whole (act of Western civilization it is much more radical than may appear on first reading. Ballard's imagery is in fact both celling and witty. In the world of Two-Flying Aircraft' the population implosion has automatically allowed nature to clean herself up. Forrester notices a beach: "The immanculate sand ran down to the water, free at last of cigarette-ends and bottle-tops, as clean and soft as milled bone." That simile is chilling precisely because it calls the death-camps to mind: what western humanity has been doing to its mutated children is that bad, as Gould the doctor points out to Forrester. The decline of population is due to the slaughter, not because people can no longer have children. The story is pure sf in its implications: "Isn't it obvious that we were intended to embark on a large replacement programme, though sady the people we're replacing turn out to be ourselves." Ballard's way with this hoary sf theme is not only new, it's specifically and radically a 70 vision.

"My Dress of Plying to Wake Island" is typical Ballard, if there is such a thing, with its dream landscape full of rotting hulks of twentieth century technology and the twisted love his people have for them. "The Dead Astronaut" almost outdoes Barry Malzberg in its presentation of MASA fuckups, but once again it's a dangerous, fugal, necrophilis that predominates. And here love of the dead equals love of death in a most terrifyingly specific way. The rest of the short stories are light-weight fum in their ways: "God" asserts his primacy over television; Hemingway theatrics in choosing how to dis are thearted by a new children's crusade; the apostles return to earth as geniuses in a commant linkup; god is found only he's really no help whatsovert to anyone.

As I suggested earlier, the jewel of Low-Figing Airchaft is the nowella "The Ultrate City." It's important because although Ballard appears to be using the same old images of a decayed and self-destructive technological civilization, in fact, his vision has altered the materials of that vision in a radical manner. It begins for one thing as what I'll call a post-holocauch neo-pastoral. The survivors of the ruined city-culture are happy peaceful folk who, in their Garden City, have an immensely sophisticated technology of their own. But it's a technology of non-energy-waste - because there's no energy left to waste, at least of the non-renew-able kind.

So the old metropoli are dead. But it is to one such great wreck that Halloway goes, in quest of an excitement lacking in his civilization. There he finds olds, a machanical genius who was the victim of perhaps the last auto accident yet rebuilds cars and anything else if saked. There's Buckmaster, last of the great city architects, who now builds memorials to and of the energy-wasting artifacts of the lost past (he's working on a cathedral made of car parts during the story), and his flower-planting daughter Niranda. There's also Stillman, who so hates the loss of the City's criminal violence, he will do almost anything to get it back.

Ballard posits a positive Small is Beautiful life and then turns away and back from that vision to pay ironic homage to the energy-wasning technology and city-scapes of our own time. The huge city Balloway finds is a kind of garden, too, a garden of rusting but rare delights for the adventure-seeker, and soon Halloway fedesires to "switch on" the whole city, to reanimate the corpse. Of course he cannot, but he can turn on a small city within the City, and this he does, using the fuel left behind in abandende cars and tanks. The city he creates, with Stillman his Sathannas, is exhilarating, yes, but also violent - at first conically, then terrifyingly so. Others come from wardous other Areaddan cities to share in the

excitement of the "power-centre" Halloway has created but both his and Stillman's obseasions get out of hand. Not only a criminal gang, but finally a traffic murder bring Halloway's city to a shuddering stop. Meatly because Olds, who only wanted to learn to fly mowy anyway, stops servicing it and does fly off. What is truly interesting here is that although Ballard makes the single death truly horrifying - partly by showing us clearly how peaceful even such adventures as Halloway are in the new (if boring) Ben - he still keeps his story a comedy, a



Eden - he still keeps his story a comedy, a young man's story of seeking adventure and achieving great things in the world beyond his home.

But always the irony is there, and it bites:

In the space of only a few months he had managed to achieve what had taken this metropolis as a whole more than a hundred and fifty years to do. However, it had all been worthwhile. He knew now that he would never return to Garden City, with its pastoral calm.

No, he will set out to travel, having already "accomplished" more than any of his contemporaries. A true "hero" of his Gorgur") riches Hallowy will learn, no doubt, to build his own somment will be learn to plant gardens in the midst of those with buckmaster and Miranda watting complex of implications emerge from the behaviour meren Ballard has represented here concerning not only the maximal watture of Ballowy's "heroid" quest, but how that quest in its symbolic replay of our civilization's employed and provided the provided watter of Ballowy's "heroid" quest, but how that quest in its symbolic replay of our civilization's employ of some content plant and iffed-enjoying (or is it: it is so exciting - as the pastoral cities are not). At any rate the ending is as open as any comfo bidiumyAnomic could be, but is so in an invented world whose arbiguously ironic visions of the past serve to frame the action in a conceptually exciting manner.

Throughout "The Ultimate City," Ballard's touch is as sure as ever, even if the tone is new in its lightheartedness (and it's a deceptive lightheartedness: real but dependent upon the dark). In Vector 79, David Pringle suggested that Ballard, like Dylan, "is now past his best, which is to say his most revolutionary period" and then argued that "a new Dylan album, or a new Ballard collection, is to be judged more for its technique, its clever embroidery on past patterns, than for its scriptural value." Although Pringle's point is an interesting one, it tends to leave the poor artist at mid-life with nowhere really to go. True, Ballard is no longer perceived as quite so revolutionary, simply because the revolution he began has to a great extent been won. But, as I hope my discussion of his new tone, his more open vistas and the exquisite comedy of manners of "The Ultimate City" shows, Ballard is not standing still (and certainly his recent novels, Crash, Concrete Island and Highrise are not simply rewrites of his earlier work - he has continued to push into new areas). All artists, if they truly remain committed to their art, continually seek new directions in than art and keep pushing back the boundaries of what that art represents to them. Ballard is one of the few radical artistic talents in sf, and he continues to work at the borders. At any rate, Low-Flying Aircraft is a liberating book and a highly entertaining one. It is something special.

# IN THE GRAND TRADITION OF SPACE OPERA

## DEVIEW BY DEBBIE NOTKIN

The Forbidden Tower, by Marion Zimmer Bradley. New York: DAW Books, September, 1977. \$1.95. 364 pp. Cover by Richard Hescox.

The Fonbidden Towex is the newest Darkover novel, and another in the progression of Bradley's attempts at serious fiction about three-dimensional people, rather than the space opera of the early Darkover books. For Darkover fans, it takes place between The SpotL3 word and The Eboody Sum...except that it more or less negates the whole premise of The Eboody Sum to resolving the conflicts one generation earlier. While I find this disconfiting, it is completely in keeping with Bradley's ofterstated concern with each book as a unit, rather than the series as a consistent history, and is therefore a question of my personal taste conflicting with her author's prerosative.

The book is substantially longer than the other Darkover novels (even the two most recent ones) and seems to suffer from its length. It divides into two very visible parts, of perceptibly different quality. The first section focuses almost completely on two cuples: primarily, Andrew Craig, a ferram, and Callista of Arilina, a pai-force Keeper who remounces her vows of ceibbary to marry him; and secondarily, Callista's twin sister Ellemir and her husband Damon, who are much closer to Andrew and Callista than comprable couples would be in our own society. The two couples have adjoining apartments in the house of Ellemir and Callista's crippled father, shared responsibilities for running his fewdal household, as well as the shared memories of reacuing Callista from the Great Cat and a near-complete four-way telepathic link (sometimes as much of a burden as it is an advantage).

Andrew and Callists have some near-insurmountable problems. The yours of celibacy which Callists took so young have had not only strong enotional but also strong physical results, and she is literally incapable of consummating their marriage. While Andrew was warned of this, it was in guraded terms which he did not fully comprehend. In accordance with Darkovam custom, Callista expects and hopes that Andrew will sleep with Ellemir as a method of relieving his frustration (which she can, of course, sense); yet this is very difficult for Andrew to incorporate into his Terran conditioning. To complicate matters further, the one time Andrew and Callista dapproach breaking down Callista's barriers, they were telepathically linked with Damon and Ellemir, who were

telepathically linked with Damon and Ellemir, who were also making love. Again, this seems perfectly reasonable to the Darkovans, and rather slimy and disgusting to Andrew.

The portrayal of the two couples, the examination of both the cultural barriers and the personal entaglements, is some of the best writing Bradley has done. She has a tendency to preach a bit, but it isn't overwhelming. The reader gets incredibly caught up in the struggles of these people, the stress they are under, the seeming impossibility of resolution. This is the stuff of really fine fiction, and it rings true.



Unfortunately, there is another plot which is built up slightly in the first half and which occupies the majority of the second half. Callists and Ellemin's father, Dom Esteban Lanart-Alton, is raising a young man who is extremely bitter because Dom Esteban has never acknowledged him as a bastard son. In fact, we are told, no one knows whether he is Dom Esteban's son or not, as his mother indulged in the Darkovan sin of promiscuity at a festival party and never knew which man was the father of her child.

Young Desideric (known as Deri) behaves sometimes like an affectionate cousin and sometimes like a young tough. Considering the weight of bitterness which Bradley places on his shoulders, it is difficult to understand why he is obedient and good so much of the time (largely because she doesn't pay much attention to developing his character and fleshing out the outline of a revengeful relative). At any rate, beri, also a telepath, betrays his telepath's eath by trying to kill Andrew, and Damon steps in to take his matrix away which, to a telepath, is the functional equivalent of sensory deprivation. This deserved punishment seals Dari's enmity and he leaves the Lanart-Alton lands only to wreak havec against the Alton clan in the big city.

While Deri is temporarily out of the picture, Damon is finding more and more need (and desire) to emperiment with his telepathic gift — newer fully explored because he is male and men "cannot" become Keepers. As Callista struggles to overcome her Tower-training, Damon is the only one who can help her, and he must call up half-learned skills to do it. He is so highly motivated to save his sister-im-law and her marriage that he effectively rediscovers the long-lost telepathic technique of traveling in time, going back to consult a many-centuries earlier (male) Keeper who gives him some cryptic advice.

Damon is on his way to becoming a de facto Keeper, which threatens the telepathic elite power structure. Meanwhile, Dezi has brought matters to a crisis in Thendara, the seat of government, and Callista and Andrew (and Damon and Ellemir) are still under their own marital, interpersonal pressures, which Bradley has stopped focusing on, but has not yet resolved.

In the grand tradition of space opera, all crises are dealt with, all real conflicts are resolved, and the ordinary business of living can go on — all within two short chapters at the end. It is as if we had two books here — one pleasant, but disappointingly transparent adventure story and one novel of character and resection. Possibly, these types can be mixed to advantage, but Bradley has not succeeded in doing it this time. Instead of trying the mix again, she should, I think, concentrate more on the more complex aspects — we have lots of people around who can write satisfactory space opers.





# WOMANSONG

by Jessica Amanda Salmonson

# 1. INTRODUCTION: The Necessity of All-Women Music

Whether exhaulted or denigrated, whether as the governors or servitors, at all times in the development of civilization women have had biological and/or cultural bonds not shared with men. Any group of individuals with a commonality have the potential of developing art-forms and sub-cultures peculiar to their special needs and experiences.

Until fairly modern times, women have had their own forms of dance, music, art, oral traditions or literature, and health and childbirth customs - all of which were inviolate to men. Until the 6th or 7th century with the violent intervention of christian repressors, women even had their own religions and ideological codes, ethics, and secret rites. All aspects of women's culture were reflected in the songs our foremothers wrote and sang: the hymms, ceremonial chants and folksongs which are now mostly, and tragically, lost to us.

This wealth of musical heritage is lost because of a cultural impetus that is preferentially masculine. This impetue does not nerely deamed that women give their energy to men, as this never kept Armenian harem wives from constructing strong ties and traditions. In Vistorian times women could not so much as gaze upon their own flesh, and bathed specially clothed; it is not surprising that they should lose those traditions centered around health and childcare - giving themselves, as it were, into the hands of a totally male medical profession which believes to this day that women should lay prone and give birth uphill. Since many of the traditions of women's lives centered around childbirth, care and personal health, loss of power over their own bodies went far to destroy their oral traditions and songs. Additionally, women were denied education or intellectual and artistic outlet of any sort, save within convents where art and music persevered but with a partiarchally sprittual orientation

not always reflective of the needs of women. Most infamous of all: women were clostsered away from one another so that no new traditions could develop between them to fill this woid — no traditions suited to their changing needs and fearful station. In many ways that Victorian cloistering is still with us, as we are culturized to be competitors and to think of every women as our adversary. Further, too much of our potential artistic integrity is absorbed and negated by our making transent bits of art of our clothing and our faces, leaving posterity to our fathers and husbands; and this too is, of course, a culturized rather than personal preference on our part.

The opinion that women are inherently less artistic thun men may be a dying bit of propaganda against us, though still too commonly heard. If we accourt he book shelves long enough, built office over long lists of women accentists, an athematical common the still discover long lists of women accentists, an athematically compared, built-incompared, built-incompared to the still discover long lists of women accentists, an athematical compared to the still discover long lists of women accentions, which is the still discover long th

In about 600 B.C., the time of Sappho's life, women could still govern and hold be supported and the mysogny of the "Golden Age" was not yet firmly entrenched. Sappho herself was once named in the same breath as the author of the Illiand, for she was known as Homer's equal. Yet repeated burnings of pagam literature's and an increasing tendancy to disrespect and ultimately misplace the art and literature and scientific discoveries of women has, in the case of the example of Sappho, reduced her output to a few fragments and poems quoted by those men whose works and escays were more carefully preserved. There were women lyricists of this age whose work does not survive at all, 9 and unknown others whose very names are filtered from the record.

In the case of Renaissance painters and sculptors, the great women masters are beginning to gain some small notice by increasingly aware women and men. But as for music, well, such of it was sung mother to daughter, and when women's traditions began to crueble under the masculinist directions of a horribly changing society, the songs were not passed on, and unlike many paintings and some spared written literature, the songs are irretrievable.

The need for women's music has never ended. Perhaps, even in an ideally egalists as cociety, women vill still need music that is ours alone. The future cannot be definitely predicted, but of the present much can be discerned. Women are a distinct sexual casts with many valid parallels to ethnic or racial groups. We need trediscover, and build upon, our equivalent of an ethnic heritage, to rebuild our traditions in dance and song. We need to do so in a space separate from men, not for dislike of men, no, nothing here should imply that - but because our experiences in a classist society, maybe in any society, are unique to us, and our art should be unique to us as well.

It is to our growing fortune and awareness that women musicians and singers and singers and the state of finding one another and finding their audience. We live in a time of musical discovery, of hopeful invention, of budding tradition. In some ways we are starting from scratch - in others, we are merely extending our millenia-old heritage and rezaining our eternal spiritual strength in woman-positive woman-identified songs.

# II. REVIEWS: We Will Sing

Kay Gardner's Mooncircles (Wisewomen Enterprises, Inc./Urana Records, P.O. Box 297. W. Station, New York, NY 10014, or from Olivia Records).

The sound of Kay Gardner's music is described in a line from the cut Changing:
"Strong and soft and whole." The album Moonchicels is a work of art inside and out.
Front cover: remarkable photography by Altx Jeffy; back cover: illustration of a
mooncircle by Carol Clement, and Kirsten Grimsted's informative, well-written essay
on Kay, her music, and all-women's music as it has exploded into existance since
1973. But of course it is the record this jacket protects that astounds the senses
with restful, pleasant interpretations of woman's unique experience.

Lyrice have on many albums been the major factor distinguishing women's music from the mainstream of the musical industry. More than half of Kay's album, however, consists of instrumentation - in its way, a "mes" level to women's music. And it is a distinctly women-sound too, recapturing all-but-lost traditions. In Pagget to Aphondicic, inspired by the verse of Sappho, Kay chooses a mearly obsolete scale believed to be the invention of Sappho, and composed for the ancient lyre and future in order to conjure what Kirsten Crimsted aptly calls "the atmosphere of Lesbos 2500 years aso."

when Kay does use lyrics, they are neither complaining nor thetorical, but powerful and sweet. Scaul-figle Fakeful is a love song of any kind the listener wants it to be. Kay's rich voice grows dearer each time this album is played, until it seems it is for each one of us personally her love song. Wide Woment admits that women have known suffering and shame, but also loving and sharing, and ultimately she is saying, "I love life; it's my music."

The superb instrumental Moormude takes up nearly half of the second side, a gentle composition into which the listener can drift, feeling warmth and confort. Neg Christian's guttar traces a peaceful progression of wordless poetry. Kay's alto filute is a tool and a force by which she describes in melody her experience as a woman in a totally female atmosphere of friendship, trust, love and musical genius. The result reflects the needs and strengths of feminists at every level of awareness.

Margie Adam's Songwriter (Pleiades Records; Box D; Dixon, CA 95620, or from Olivia Distributors).

Performing in the background of the album Songwriter are familiar names from albums of their own: Kay Gardner



albums of their own: Kay Gardner on flute, Neg Christian and Chris Williamson's harmony and guitars, and a young performer only recently available on her own label, Woody Simmons, presently on tympany rather than her piano, guitar or ban-jo. Others pictured inside the folding sleeve include Linda "Tul' Tillery, a feminist blues singer also available on her own album, on Narghe's

album, Tul's drumming is veriously powerful and gentle to suit the varied moods of the individual cuts. Every stage of the production is engineered by women mixers, sleeved designer, etc. Photographer Holly Hartman's cover portrait of Margie Adam captures the joy and character of the voman whose composing and singing talents come to magnificent fruition with the energy of so many women beside her.

How can anyone adequately describe sound? This is a beautiful album. As with the greatest sercentage of moment of the service of some service with the recognition that what women are saying is important, unlike the doo-wah-baby-bumble-you contany off 99 of the way preased by "everyone else." Margie's ability as a poet is exciting. In The Uniconv. Sound she sings sweetly, with much between the lines:

When I was growing up my best filtered was the unicoun The others smiled at me and called me caazy But I was not upset by knowing I did not conform I adways thought their seeing myst be house The unicoun and I would wile away the house Playing, dancing and romancing in the wild flowers And we'd sing: Secing is believing in the things you had we'd sing: Secing is believing in the things you

Loving is believing in the ones you love.

Her words take us through the fantasy of Images and into the private, wonderful and often eerie corners of our minds while lost in Inner Space. The emotion of the album ranges from the anger of 1've Got a funy to the personal sorrow of a Beautiful Soul weary of such pain and anger - and the sheer love for a Sweet Ficiend of Mine. There is also a piano solo by Margie, called Rag Bag, and two more songe that frankly aren't as exciting as the rest of the cuts: SLeazy, capturing too well the meaning of the word; and Mould You Like To Tapdance on the Moon, a flippant love song, meant, perhaps as an interlude in Margie's serious compositions.

The quality of this album cannot be overstated. It is a thing still too rare in our lives: good sounding music, with words we don't have to block out for failing to project the changing, evolving lives of women. Margle Adam is not simply a songwriter, she's a minstrel of the sort we've always needed.

Willie Tyson's Debutante (Wisewoman Enterprises, Inc./ Urana).

Willola Calloway Tyson is an East Coast performer who at this writing has had but one West Coast tour, during which I had the extreme fortune of hearing her in Seattle. She's a woman's Lenny Bruce, a folkey Lily



Tomlin, but anecdotal comedy is an aspect of her showomanship unavailable on an album. She is primarily a singer. Her music, her full rich voice, and her lyrics present a complex composing personality which projects a solid alignment with women \* both personally and politically. Her humor and wit are evident on her second of two wer fine albums, this one citied @@dw.darde.

The title cut, besides simply sounding good, tells a humorous and pertinent story of a Southern gentleman's mix-up, accidentally dropping his daughter off at the cattle auction and taking his cow to the Pébutante Sall; the experience of both cow and daughter are hilariously thought provoking, and somehow the 'mistake' does not end up sounding impliantible. Willie's response to ultra-excit AM "classics" like Sig Sad Letoy Snown is the tale sung in Andendl, a tough bar wherein a man mamed Tank tries to steal a woman named Hank tries to steal a woman named Hairpin Handgrenade from a dude named Shotgum - unlike the Croche version, Shotgum is a running coward and Hairpin neatly takes care of herself, leaving the listener at once in laughter and appreciation. The album also features an outstanding version of Peggy Seeger's moving I'm Gonnd Se Ar EMGARREN, the only cut Willie didn't write herself.

Leve Blues reverses all the worst clichés of I'm-a-steam-roller-baby-gonnaroll-all-over-you school of blues, and it's about time. Feathist blues may well be a new "genre" of songwriting Willie is helping fashion. Steatin' Heart is a whissically serious blues allegory likening a broken heart to an old car: "Even the junk man won't take me for parts." It gets off some mighty clever lines. Other songs include two very short cuts, Exceptis 5 avm Backie Dawiels and Separatizit, as well as I Got A Feelin' and a commentary on the institution of marriage, Did You Saw love.

Many of Willie's lyrics stab the notion of feminists-have-no-sense-of-humor square in its glass jaw. But witty isn't Willie's only mood. Witching Hout has an appropriately haunting melody, with the refrain:

In the witching hour you come to your power You feel it deep inside you, its rising, RISING! And you think it's a dream until you hear yourself scream POWER to the witch, and to the woman, in me.

The sound of this album rests comfortably among folk, country and blues, reflecting the artist's Southern hertiage. It is honest music, sincere music, vry, serious and whimsical music. It is worth your while to find Debutanta and also Willie's earlier album from Lima Bean label, Full Count. You'll be pleased.

Chris Williamson's The Changer and the Changed (Olivia Records, Inc.; P.O. Box 70237; Los Angeles, CA 90070).

Chris Williamson has one of the purest, sweetest voices you're ever likely to hear, with a vocal range and professionalism that astounds. Recently commissioned to score the movie version of Rita Mae Brown's Rubyfauit Jungle, Chris' success in the upper exchelons of the musical industry seems certain.

The title of her own album, The Changer and the Changed, is from her superb composition Waterfall:

When you open up your life to the living all things come spilling on you had you're flowing like a river, the Changet and the Changed. You've got to spill some over, spill some over, spill some over, over all.