

# Near's music celebrates women



Holly Near and Mary Watkins appear next Wednesday, Oct. 19 at the Lane County Civic Center. Both Near and Watkins give "alternative" concerts - devoted to the celebration of being a woman.

## Watkins joins in Eugene concert

By KRISSEY KEEFER

Today's most accessible culture is commercial programming brought to us by multi-national corporations. It often insults us, pacifies us or alienates us. One way we can build alternatives is to create events that let us feel good about ourselves, help us grow, and encourages us to take control of our lives.

Holly Near and Mary Watkins are committed to creating events such as these. They are focused on increasing the network of political culture; in their upcoming concert they will be celebrating women through music. They are coming to Eugene as part of a 19-city tour that is intent on contributing to the process of building a diverse and conscious culture.

For the last six years Holly Near has spoken to the most broad definition of the Left. In 1971 Holly began working with the F.T.A. (Free the Army) show, composed of performing artists who spoke out against war and racism of the Vietnam era. On this tour she was able to explore the excitement of doing politically conscious work while retaining high artistic standards. Since that time she has re-

peatedly toured the United States, bringing to each concert a growing musical and political sophistication.

Holly has a voice and range that are easily equated to any great contemporary singer. Her styles include Broadway musical comedy, blues, jazz and audience participation-oriented "sing-alongs." She was raised on the music of the Weavers, Judy Garland, Edith Piaf, Aretha Franklin and the rich collection of songs and stories that sprang from the labor movement of working people in the United States.

The synthesis of these musical roots is evident in the deep social commitment she brings to her work. As Holly has become more women-identified, her music has become more focused on women's lives. Her songs speak to the joys and struggles that are familiar to women around the world. Holly's music encourages active political and personal response.

Mary Watkins was playing the piano before her feet could touch the peddles. Although she was encouraged to "read" music note-for-note, improvisation was

natural and exciting exploration for her. She continued to play music throughout her schooling and eventually studied professionally.

Mary graduated from Howard University in Washington, D.C. with a B.A. in Music Composition. She was the Musical Director and Composer-in-Residence for the Ebony Theatre Company in Washington, D.C. She has composed works for flute, woodwinds and single-reed ensembles.

Since then Mary has also played keyboard on Teresa Trull's album, *The Way a Woman Can Be*, which led to her full-time work with Olivia Records, a national women's recording company. Other work with Olivia will include co-producing Linda Tillery's upcoming album as well as doing writing and arranging for the project and playing on Meg Christian's new album. In 1978 she is scheduled to record her own album.

Holly and Mary's only Oregon concert will be Wednesday at the Lane County Civic Auditorium, located adjacent to the fairgrounds. The show will begin at 8 p.m. and child care will be available. Tickets can be purchased at Gertrude's Cafe, Mother Kali's Books, Book and Tea, Sun Shop and Andrea's. Prices are \$3 in advance and \$3.50 at the door. There will be no reserved seating.

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## Dead

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music, most of it written and recorded before 1973.

Jerry Garcia was really the star. Godchaux's piano simply couldn't be heard most of the time; the drums were a little off, especially Saturday (Hart rolled his car over a cliff this summer, and he hasn't come back from it completely) and while there were some bass solos, Lesh didn't stand out the way he has in the past.

All in all, Sunday's show was much better, with the Dead showing a bit of the reason Bill Graham introduces them as "the best rock and roll band in the world."



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