

Mother Nature and music alive and well in Michigan

Rain and floods, Holly and Rhiannon, a Girl Scout singalong and the Harmonic Convergence, were all parts of the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival.

BY E J WESTLAKE

Mother Nature paid a couple of special visits to some of the music festivals this year. There was a disproportionate amount of rain in Michigan which could have been best allocated to put out the forest fires that prevented the West Coast festival from happening. The precipitation at the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival did not dampen the spirits of the festi-goers, however, (although my friends from Indiana left two days early because their sleeping bags were wet), and the music, crafts, and workshops remained top quality.

I didn't arrive until Friday. I missed dinner, a relatively unimportant detail considering that I almost missed Tracy Chapman on the Night Stage. I'm not kidding, this woman is incredible. I've heard her compared to early Joan Armatrading and I've heard her compared to Ferron. She is very much a you-and-me-dressed-in-everyday-clothes sort of person, shy, alone with a six-stringed guitar, singing about something very real. I was disappointed about the behavior of the festi-goers (or "festi-comers" as they have elected to be called). Many were there to see Holly Near and were basically very rude and inattentive to Tracy.

There were some high points in Holly's set. (By the way, does anyone remember Holly's bit part in the movie *Slaughterhouse Five*?) She did "Crushed Out on You" with Alix Dobkin, Betsy Lippitt, and Toshi Reagon doing back-up vocals and later found herself improvising Rodgers and Hammerstein's "If I Loved You" with none other than Rhiannon.)

That night Mother Nature had an incredible performance with rain literally wiping out parts of Michigan and northern Illinois.

Heather Bishop gave an exciting performance at the Night Stage and a fun children's performance at the Day Stage. I didn't get to actually see *Jasmine*, but my work shift did put me in a place to hear them quite well. They sounded good. They blend well, their music is interesting. A friend of mine got to see them in St. Louis this summer and is now hopelessly in love.

Phranc was good, her puns were bad: "It's hard to stay level-headed in a downpour," she said of her hair. That's right up there with Alix playing the harmonica for the Harmonic Convergence: "I've never played one of these before so I guess you could say I'm a Harmonica Virgin." We got to sing "Happy Birthday" to Alix.

With the rain, I spent more time in the crafts area. Some outstanding crafts this year were scarves by Nomi Greenspun-Weaver of Chimayo, NM and jewelry by Two of a Kind from Mint Hill, NC (I bought one of the earrings).

I tried to make it a point to go to workshops and had a real good time at "Make New Friends..." a Girl Scout sing-along for all of us veteran Girl Scouts.

There were a lot of changes this year. The kitchen got moved very far away and the bees were causing a variety of entertaining avoid-the-bee dances by everyone. All part of the Harmonic Convergence, one would suppose. One thing hasn't changed, you can never run out of things to do. Even though this time I got it together enough to remember crucial things like a sleeping bag, eating utensils, and money for Hagen-Dazs. I was still overwhelmed by the fact that you just can't do everything. This caused some womyn to wander about listlessly asking where the nearest K-Mart is, or if there's a TV lounge on the land.

Women's music at Primary Domain

Nancy Vogl, June Millington and the long-awaited reunion of Sister Tomato.

BY KAMILA AL-NAJJAR

Primary Domain will be hosting some very talented women's music this month.

On October 8th at 8 p.m. acoustic guitarist and vocalist Nancy Vogl will be performing. Touring since 1973, Nancy has been acclaimed as bassist for Lynn Messinger at the First International Women's Rock Festival in West Berlin.

Nancy has recorded and toured with Holly Near, Barbara Higbie, Robin Flower, and Woody Simmons. She was also a founding member of one of the first feminist bands and was part of a national production system which showcased her in nearly every major folk club and university in the United States.

Her shows are filled with original work, stories, history and traditional tunes with a contemporary turn.

On October 18th a founding member of the rock band *Fanny* will perform vocals and guitar at the Primary Domain, June Millington.

Fanny was one of the first all-female rock bands in the 60's to achieve national prominence. They toured extensively throughout the United States and Europe and recorded four very successful albums with Warner Brothers.

June left *Fanny* in 1973 and moved to the country near Woodstock, N.Y. to concentrate on her songwriting and spiritual development. In 1975 she rejoined *Fanny* for one last tour, during which she was asked to play guitar on Cris Williamson's *The Changer and the Changed*. This led to a long and creative



alliance with both Cris and the emerging women's music scene.

In 1981 June began her solo career with the release of *Heartsong* on Fabulous Records. *Running*, her upbeat second solo effort, signals both a new departure and a long-awaited return to her rock roots.

October 29th will bring on the long-awaited reunion of *Sister Tomato*. Playing in Portland since 1981, *Sister Tomato* has not performed together since 1985.

The group will be playing a benefit for the Lesbian Community Project and encourages everyone to show up and "have a real good time."

The performance will feature original music by Paula Elliott, lead singer and song writer for the group. Also performing will be Judy Hylton on piano, Donna Donaif on bass, and Chris Perry playing drum.

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