

## Reflections on “Behind the Scenes in Women’s Music and Culture”

By Sylvia Larcamp Brown, 1939



I date my coming out from the third Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival in 1978. I’d heard my first women’s music performer a year or two before – Margie Adam at the NOW Convention in Washington, DC. With Lisa Vogel, co-creator of MichFest, and Margie as participants, it was something I couldn’t miss.

You know those women dressed in black and sneaking around the stage trying not to be seen, like Linda Wilson and Connie Lane? K.C. Cohen and Boden Sandstrom in that giant scaffolding structure at Michigan? Now I had faces and personalities attached to what had been just names on a program.

Most fascinating was hearing how women became part of creating these fledgling women’s music events. Some were theater students, anxious to be a part of this emerging women’s cultural movement. Perhaps more common: women just showed up, offered to help, then learned on the job. Performers’ representatives like Amy Horowitz and Tam Martin made sure potential concert producers in towns large and small were aware of the many talented feminist and Lesbian artists, not just folk music singer-songwriters, but instrumentalists and classical musicians.

Margie and Melanie DeMore did more than facilitate. They explained how the backstage staff was essential to make them look and sound good on stage.

Accessibility was a component from the beginning: providing childcare for mothers, creating paths for wheelchairs, and American Sign Language interpretation for the deaf. Laura Kolb described how ASL interpreters evolved an art form to enhance the concert experience.

It brought back memories of the small ways I had helped behind the scenes: doing box office and performer transport (Holly Near slept in my back seat) at Michigan, keeping the finances for music fests put on by Aradia in Grand Rapids, learning about our sound board, and helping set up a Tret Fure concert at the Pueblo in Arizona where I now live.

What a fabulous job Retts Scauzillo and the Zoom Crew did in assembling this program. If you missed it or like me want to see it again, check [oloc.org](http://oloc.org) under "Zoom Chronicles."