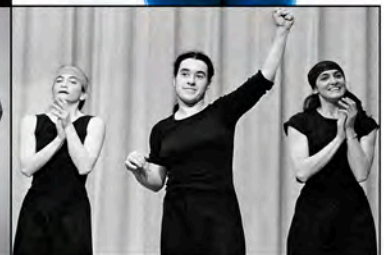




SOMETHING ABOUT THE WOMEN

FIVE DECADES OF SEEING BY IRENE YOUNG





“Feel this love
My brothers and sisters,
Feel the season turn,
She is the mother of time.
It’s not war,
It’s life she gives, and
that’s where mother’s spiritual lives.”
— Laura Nyro

Laura Nyro

PHOTOGRAPHER’S NOTE: Many of us who love and support women’s music, were deeply moved by Laura Nyro’s music. So, for any of you who came out listening to *Emmie*, this is for you. I photographed Laura for *Mother’s Spiritual*, an album project reflecting Laura’s passion for women’s rights. Below is a little story about my magical weekend with this divine musician:

My train pulled into Danbury, CT, and much to my surprise, Laura Nyro hadn’t sent anyone to pick me up. She, alone, was standing there waiting for me. I could feel her calm presence during our brief, gentle, nice-to-meet-you hug. Whatever conversation we had during the short ride to her house, I am sure was soft-spoken. I wasn’t feeling well, so before starting the photo session, I asked if I could lie down, put on a head-set, and listen to the music. She obliged, and with every track, I could feel my body taking in the healing. By the end, I was ready to grab my camera, and get to

work—if “work” is what one could call photographing an Angel.

There are three things I remember most about my time with Laura Nyro: her gliding across a room—rather than walking; being privy to hearing her sing her son to sleep; and witnessing her moon bathe in the middle of the night. What a privilege, an honor, a joy.

After the initial two days I spent with her, upon her request, I came back to review the work we had done. I treasure that she loved the photographs we created together. When I would attempt to narrow down the number of images she loved, she would say in a soft whisper, “Irene, (pause, breath), I’m just not ready to let go of that one yet.” Still to this day, my response to her passing is, “Laura, (pause, breath) none of us were ready to let go of you yet.”

— Irene Young

OPPOSITE PAGE: **Laura Nyro**, 1983





PHOTOGRAPHER'S NOTE: The first time I was hired by Holly was for a live show at the legendary NYC music venue, The Bottom Line. Those were the very early days of my career and I wanted to impress. I worked the first show, ran to my Bleecker St. darkroom during the break, developed the film, printed the contact sheets, and ran back to deliver the job before the end of the 2nd show.

From that day forward, we have worked together for various album covers and promotional photos, and I have enjoyed getting to know the twinkle in her eye. I have a wide appreciation for music, and Holly has written many of the songs that move me most. She's an ally to us all, and she makes the world a better place by her beautiful presence, her moving music, and her unwavering activism.

Holly generously consented to the use of *Something About the Women*, which is the title of her beloved song, and now, also, the title of this book.

Holly Near

I have always said that Holly's music gets into the cracks that are emerging in a person. A light would start to shine, and change would begin to unfold.

Perhaps you identified with the women's liberation movement of the early 70's, or you were an activist who gained strength and solace from Holly's outspoken leadership, as in her work with Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden.

We all loved her music with Ronnie Gilbert, with their mutual admiration and stunning harmonies. Each of Holly's many offerings bridged generations and political movements. "Singing For Our Lives," the song she created for Harvey Milk's memorial, is just one example of Holly's genius at bringing in the light in the midst of darkness.

Whether soulful folk, or raucous lesbian anthems, or standards she delivers with her soaring voice, Holly has captivated, inspired and enlightened us. Holly is truly a giant among giants in our movement, and a woman extraordinaire.

— *Krissy Keefer*
Artistic Director, Dance Mission Theater



1981



Cris Williamson

I do not know how many times I have photographed Cris Williamson, but suffice it to say, it is not possible to pick up her file with one hand. In certain circles, this infallible singer could follow suit with Bono, Beyoncé, or Cher, and just stop using her last name. She has an uncommon voice that places her in a league of her own. To me, her gift is the texture of her voice—the feel of her sound—as it enters the ear and heads for the heart. There is a healing power to how her voice vibrates in our bodies and simultaneously warms up the entire room. As within, so without.

Many of Cris' songs, over time, have become anthems, or theme songs for the nature of love or the love of nature.

Her talent is undeniable, and I know she treasures it, and takes seriously the guardianship of her rare gift.

— Irene Young





Linda Tillery

Linda Tillery is a vocal legend. Period. Her voice can be warm and silky and totally hypnotic or gravitate to such a strength and power that it can incite a fervor or literally just blow you down. She was singing at an early age with the famous Bay Area band *The Loading Zone*, sharing the stage with greats such as Janis Joplin. She went on to sing lead and supporting roles with Boz Scaggs, Santana, Bobby McFerrin and countless others.

I first met Linda when she produced my initial recording for *Olivia Records* in 1976. She was my mentor for many years and a great friend. As youngsters, Vicki Randle and I provided the supporting vocals for her band. All of the band members would wait for that moment in the night when at the tail end of a song, Linda would effortlessly improvise both melodically and lyrically, and so soulfully transfix the audience with an almost religious experience. Linda went on to produce and record many projects in the women's music community. Most recently Linda created the *Cultural Heritage Choir* which continues to explore the traditional roots of African American music. Linda Tillery is indeed a legend and I'm blessed to know her.

— Teresa Trull
Vocalist, Songwriter, Producer



Marga Gomez, 1992
Puerto Rican/Cuban-American
comedian, playwright, and humorist



Marga Gomez

Marga Gomez is known for being one of the nation's first out lesbians in comedy. Her television appearances include LOGO's *One Night Stand Up* and HBO's *Comic Relief*, by special invitation from Robin Williams who called Marga "amazing...a lesbian Lenny Bruce." She is also the writer/

performer of fourteen solo plays which have been presented Off-Broadway and internationally. Her acting credits include *The Vagina Monologues* with Rita Moreno and television's *Sense8* (Netflix). She has been honored with a *GLAAD Media Award* and a 2022 fellowship from United States Artists.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Bonnie Hayes, Teresa Trull, Vicki Randle, 1986

Teresa Trull

In 1976 a package arrived at the Olivia house in Los Angeles from our North Carolina distributors, Liz Brown and Scout Tomyris. They wanted us to consider recording Teresa Trull, a local musician, and they sent a cassette of one of her songs, *Grey Day*. Understand, women were always sending us cassettes of local musicians they thought we should record, and most of them were unimpressive. But this woman could sing, and the song was gorgeous.

Meg Christian was about to go East for a series of concerts, and we asked her to connect with Teresa, check her out in performance, and let us know what she thought. They did at least one show together and Meg was mightily impressed. The only thing was, Teresa was very shy on stage, mostly sat huddled over her guitar and barely looked at the audience. Teresa would later tell us that her favorite place to do her music was in the bathroom with the door closed. If you've seen her perform in the last 30 years, you know she got over her shyness.

Without waiting for an invitation, Teresa packed up her car with her guitar, her cat, her Great Dane and little else, and arrived at our doorstep. She really wanted to record and work with *Olivia Records*. What else was there to do but make room for her, and in 1977 we released her first *Olivia* album, *The Ways a Woman Can Be*. That was a great move on all our parts.

— Ginny Z Berson

Founding member, *Olivia Records*

Author of *Olivia on the Record*:

A Radical Experiment in Women's Music

RIGHT: Teresa Trull, 1986

American singer-songwriter and record producer from Durham, North Carolina now living in New Zealand.

A pioneer in *Women's Music* with her debut album *The Ways a Woman Can Be* on *Olivia Records* in 1977, and multiple albums throughout the years following.





June and Jean Millington
Olivia/New Wave Recording Artists
and Founding “Fanny” Members

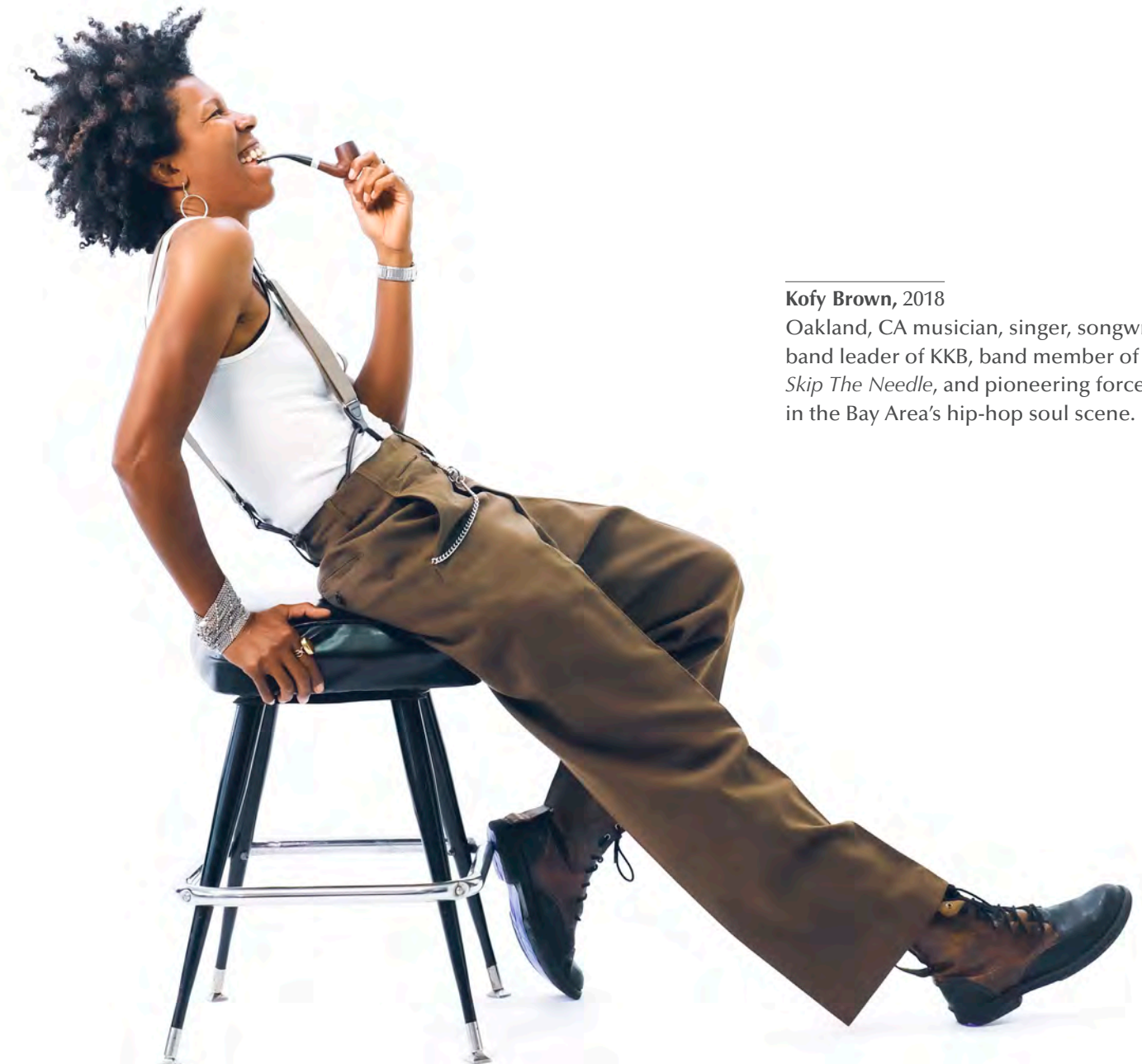
As a university professor who is also an archivist of feminist culture, I keep women’s music in my university office. Often, I’ve met with Filipina students who, hungry for feminist role models, are ecstatic to learn about June Millington’s career in music. When I play samples of June’s music and describe her career — from FANNY to Olivia to women’s festivals to IMA and now the documentary, *Fanny: the Right to Rock* — these students respond wistfully, “You know a Filipina rock star?” Or: “You mean there were women of color who sang about women?” Or: “Where can I get this music?” June Millington. Her reach is long.

— Bonnie Morris, Ph.D

Professor, Author, Speaker, Historian

PHOTOGRAPHER’S NOTE: FANNY was the first all-female rock act to sign a four-album contract with a major record label. They were four young women who were accomplished rock instrumentalists and singers...who never depended only on their sexuality to sell the music...who were self-described as being musicians first and women second. But the fact that they WERE women, and that they reached a level of success previously unheard of for a rock band composed solely of women, was a remarkable achievement.





Kofy Brown, 2018

Oakland, CA musician, singer, songwriter, band leader of KKB, band member of *Skip The Needle*, and pioneering force in the Bay Area's hip-hop soul scene.

Margaret Belton, 2021
Musician, Actress, Artist

Award-winning film, stage, and voice-over actress. In 2023 she celebrated her 10th annual *Today, Tomorrow & Forever*, a tribute of honor, story and song for the legendary singer, Patsy Cline.

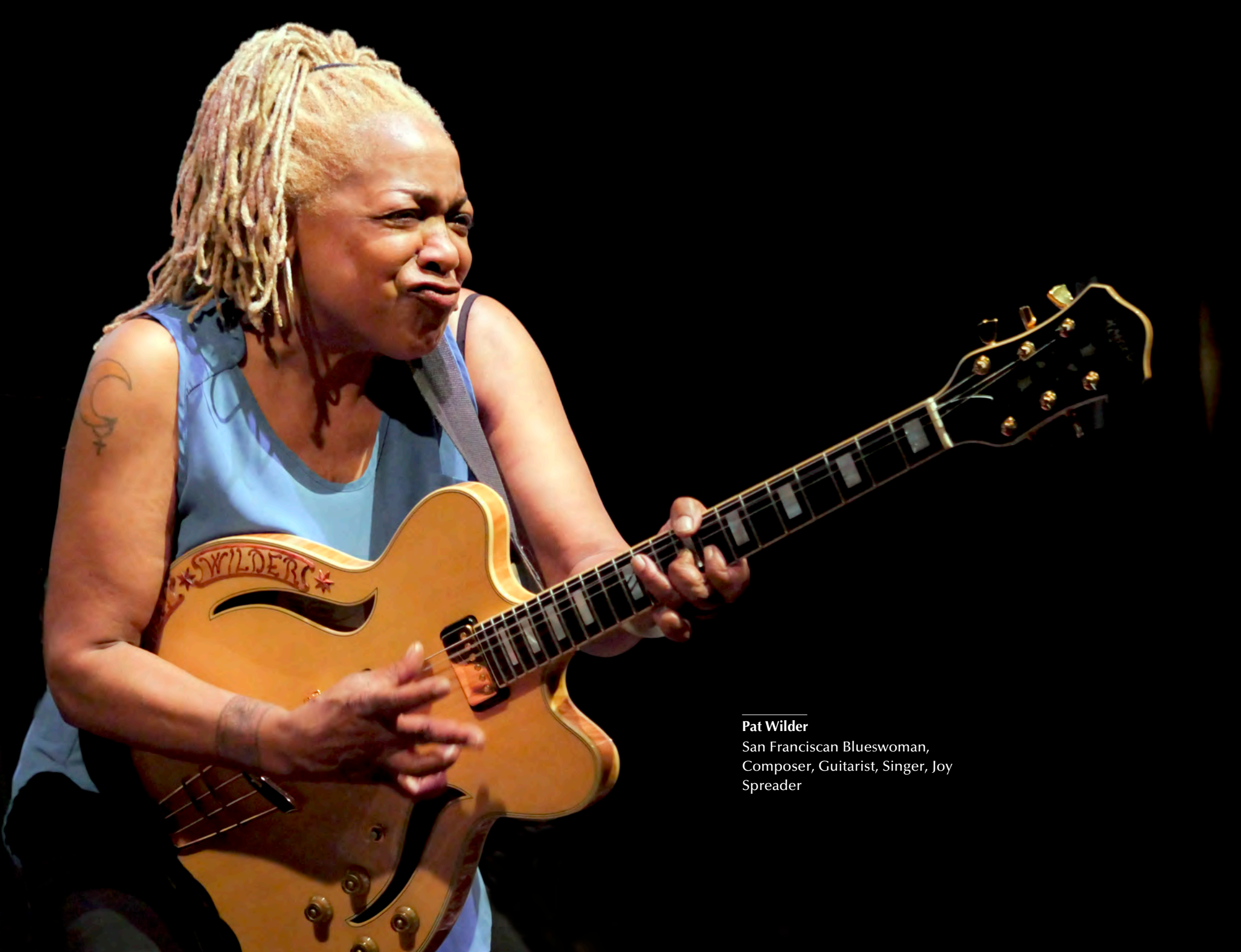




Sandra & Sharon Washington



Sharon & Sandra Washington



Pat Wilder
San Franciscan Blueswoman,
Composer, Guitarist, Singer, Joy
Spreader

Shelley Doty
Singer-Songwriter,
Lead Guitarist, Band Leader
Former Band: Jambay.
Current Bands: X-tet and Skip The Needle

Labeled "a future legend" by one reviewer and a
"guitar goddess" by another, Shelley Doty
is considered one of the best independent
performers in the business.

