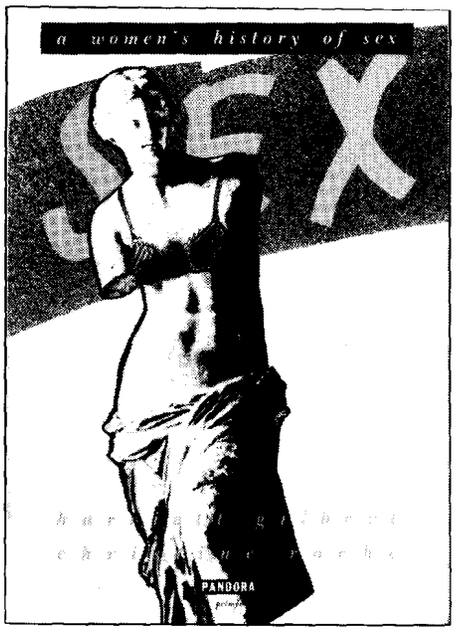
yny and the hypocrisies of times past and present. Historically women's sexuality has been subjugated in the interests of patriarchal political expediency. With the discovery of agriculture, for example, hunters returned to the domicile. Ideas of land and livestock ownership and of inheritance were developed; men soon wanted to ensure the 'legitimacy' of the paternal line. The result was an array of vile laws that brought an end to the relative sexual independence women had experienced up to the 2nd millennium BC. Like land and livestock, women became 'legal property.'

Wherever there is an historical example of women being duped in power relationships, there is a contemporary parallel. Gilbert is quick to illuminate these. She maligns the idea of a 1960s 'sexual revolution.' In the chapter "Brotherhood," dealing with the French Revolution, she writes:

> *Revolutions for the rights of men do tend to be just what they say. In the more recent turmoils of the 1960s, women who gave their brains, hearts and bodies to Civil Rights, anti-Vietnam, anti-Gaullist and other revolutionary movements also realized that their 'radical' brothers valued them only as envelope-addressers; or sex objects.*



Roche's illustrations, commissioned for Gilbert's text, are equally, if not more responsible for the hilarity. Roche's line has a spontaneous, unruly quality that is void of sleekness, and it's in this that the appeal and beauty of her work lie.

As Gilbert admits, this is not a comprehensive history. More precisely, it is a Western women's history of sex; even at that, the study is cursory. We are allowed only glimpses of the various epochs. A short bibliography is provided in which all directly quoted sources are listed, but there are no footnotes. This omission leaves the reader unable to pursue some of the more daring assertions, but it also reminds the reader that the work is intended primarily for fun.

In her final estimation, Gilbert optimistically asserts that we are "coming through" what has been a sexual history of repression and waste.

> *[We are] continuing to alter the social structures that cramp, hurt or do damage to us; continuing to assert our existence: our needs, our angers, our delights—it's things such as these that will determine whether the girls and women who follow us shrivel from the very mention of sex, or embrace it with mouths, breasts and thighs.*

COMPETITION: A Feminist Taboo?

Edited by Valerie Miner and Helen Longino. New York: The Feminist Press, 1987.

Teresa O'Brien

In our capitalist, individualist society, competition is an integral part of our learning, of our day-to-day realities, of our fight for feminist identity and achievement. For some, competition is a personal fight for grades, for a job, for love, for attention. For others, it involves more than the merely self-serving: it is a competitive battle with the powerful in the struggle for women's political, economic and social rights. Yet this in itself entails an assumption of a morally superior type of competition, belying the fact that such an assumption is itself competitive (that is, my brand of competitiveness is more authentic than yours). We are born into a competitive society and competition is fostered throughout our lives, through an educational system that all too often focuses on grades rather than learning, an economic system that focuses on material gain as an indication of worth. Competition exists, but must it be relegated as a rather suspect topic to the confines of mainstream ideology?

The writers in this book demonstrate that competition need not always be construed as a destructive phenomenon, based on internecine and structural rivalry. It may, they argue, be used to advantage since "competing brings experience and experience strengthens.... Appropriate competition encourages the experience, strength and confidence that nourish the cooperation that feminists prize." The book moves from vivid accounts of the role of competition in everyday life — personal, political, economic — to the ways in which competition might be used to transform our world. Is competition healthy, or is it an act of bad faith in our quest for sisterhood? Indeed, is such a quest doomed to failure since many sisters, including Cinderella, do not exactly set a fine example of a cooperative spirit?

I initially felt very uneasy about the tone of many parts of this book — especially the more self-analytical chapters. My uneasiness rested not on the idea that competition is a taboo subject, but on my feminist belief that psychological analyses of mother-daughter relationships or petty rivalries amongst females for the attention of men or the title of best-dressed or whatever, are not relevant to the more wide-ranging issues of class and gender. Yet obviously we must have an understanding of how we live our lives before we can implement change in those lives. Indeed, many of the contributors underline this when they point out the moral and political significance of competition and of how competition between women is not so much based on individualism but is instead a reflection of our positions *vis-à-vis* our race, colour and class. That competition may be used as a divide-and-conquer strategy is not a result of a patriarchal or a capitalist conspiracy, but is a reflection of those ideologies as they exist. One must, however, ask this: if a destructive form of competition is so endemic in our society, can we fight it

from within and hope to sabotage its negative effects? Can we use it to build a more cooperative and stronger association for all women? The contributors to this book certainly think so.

One of the problems in tackling this subject is that the term 'competition' conjures up so many different ideas (as, indeed, papers in this book illustrate). The book runs the gamut of discussions on competition as a game of one-up womanship to competition as a fight for scarce market resources. For some competition is rivalry; it is individualistic.

> *I happen to remember piano lessons. I was given them with a vengeance. Not to develop a love of music or a gratifying personal competence — but because 'you'll be so popular at parties if you can play piano for everybody.'* (Read: *and the other girls can't.*)

Letty Cottin Pogrebin sarcastically tells us this in the opening chapters as she caustically describes the ways in which little girls are taught to compete with each other. For others, the term is a motivation to write about the struggle for economic and political independence. The reasons for competing or disliking competition are argued through: as a reflection of unresolved conflicts in mother/daughter relationships; as a result of an identity crisis due to the internalization of patronizing attitudes; as a rationalization of one's successes or lack of them.

Many of the contributions present a view of women as bent on self-flagellation — yes, I know I am a success in university/business life but what a shambles my personal life is! — but many also focus on the structures that are the background to any discussion on women and competition. These focus on the poor representation of women in universities and in business, of the correspondingly high representation in low status jobs such as domestic work, on the women in developing countries who are shunted into ghettoized, marginal and poorly funded development projects. They point to the fact that our society encourages individualistic competition in order to discourage cooperation to such a point that even the most well meaning females fall into the trap of competing to impose their views on others, and that beneath the slogan that sisterhood is powerful there lies a multitude of complexities.

Myrna Kostash's very fine piece is a case in point of the well meaning feminist falling afoul of her own ideals. She describes the feelings of little sister status that many Canadians have with regard to their metaphorically big sisters in the US. Canadian feminists have, she says, idealized their American counterparts while they, on the other hand, are barely aware of us. Resenting the ethnocentrism of so many Americans, Kostash describes her visit to Greece, and her gradually-developed relationship with Greek feminists and with their rationalization about certain concessions to men. Kostash tells us "After six months of this, I began to believe I really was a representative of an 'advanced' form of feminism." In short, she adds, she had become that American she had always resented. While she argues generally for the separation of women's struggle for liberation from nationalist and left wing struggles, she concedes that this is itself, in a global sense, an imposition of a view that developed within a certain political framework. To impose this view on others is to assume a "feminist authenticity" that is inherently in competition with other views and ultimately assumes its own superiority.

That the most committed and well meaning occasionally fall into the use of an inauthentic form of competition is a cautionary tale to the editors' note of optimism when they argue that we can learn to use competition wisely. There may be among some feminists a taboo against competition, but for most of us sisterhood does not mean a blind adherence to one doctrine of total unity. One can support the broad ideals of feminism but recognize the legitimacy of adopting different methods.

THE MUSICAL WOMAN: An International Perspective, Volume II, 1984-1985

Edited by Judith Lang Zaimont (editor in chief), Catherine Overhauser and Jane Gottlieb (associate editors). Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1987.

Roberta Lamb

This second volume of *The Musical Woman*, a yearbook of women's musical achievements, both contemporary and historical, is impressive in its scope. The editors have retained the same format used in Volume I, facilitating use of the series as a reference. A substantially expanded Part I: Gazette features lists of performances, publications and so forth, documenting the activities of women musicians, 1983-1986. Part II: Essays include nineteen articles addressing such varied facets of music as musicology, music education, conferences on women in music, music criticism, orchestra management, concert promotion, conducting, and composition.

While *The Musical Woman* is a most welcome, needed, and useful resource for anyone interested in women in music, it is not without weaknesses. Perhaps one of its strengths, breadth of scope, is also its greatest weakness.

The subtitle indicates that an "international perspective" is represented in *The Musical Woman*, but that is clearly not the case. Only five of the nineteen articles are about women who are not Americans. The Gazette, though nearly twice the length of the same section in Volume I, clearly is dominated by American women. The editors acknowledge that "Even with all of these resources and the improved documentation of contemporary music in general, it is always impossible to be totally comprehensive;" but since only American sources are listed by name it is not possible to tell which worldwide sources were consulted. Hopefully, future volumes of *The Musical Woman* will be more international in perspective.

The quality of writing varies greatly throughout Part II: Essays. There are examples of fine feminist scholarship in music: "Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, Twentieth-Century Benefactress of Chamber Music" by Carol Neuls-Bates; "Arthur P. Schmidt, Music Publisher and Champion of American Women Composers" by Adrienne Fried Block; "Women Band Directors in American Higher Education" by Carol Ann Feather; "Germaine Tailleferre: Before, During, and After Les Six " by Laura Mitgang; "Tarquinia Molza (1542-1617): A Case Study of Women, Music, and Society in