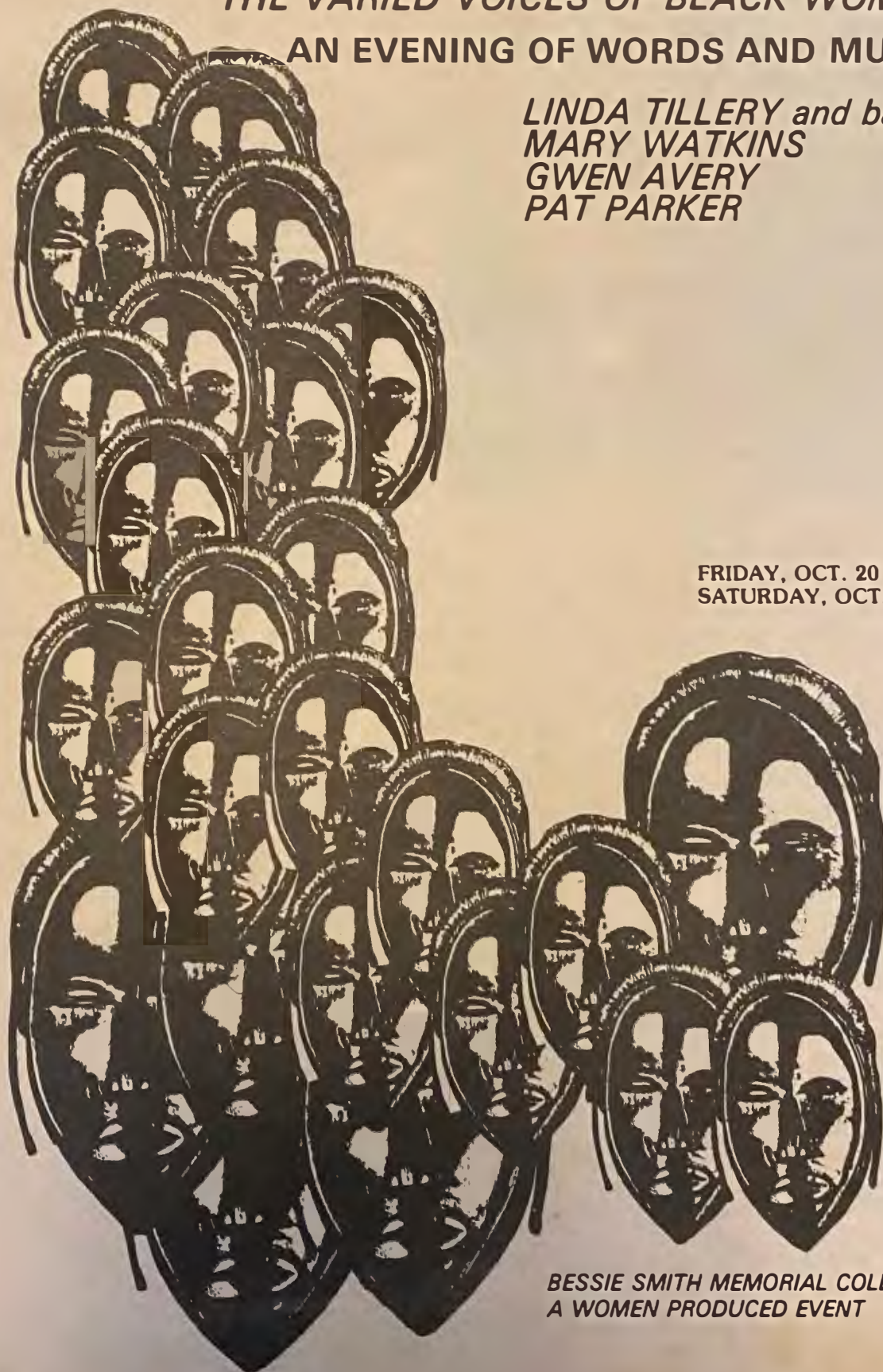


THE VARIED VOICES OF BLACK WOMEN
AN EVENING OF WORDS AND MUSIC

LINDA TILLERY and band
MARY WATKINS
GWEN AVERY
PAT PARKER

FRIDAY, OCT. 20
SATURDAY, OCT. 21



BESSIE SMITH MEMORIAL COLLECTIVE
A WOMEN PRODUCED EVENT



Bessie Smith. Photo from Oak Publications.

It is because of the existence of the Combahee River Collective, a black feminist organization which has been working in Boston since 1974, that the Bessie Smith Memorial Production Collective has been able to produce "The Varied Voices of Black Women". In five years of working in this city, the Combahee River Collective has joined with groups working on sterilization abuse, battered women, abortion rights, and facilitated workshops on racism. Because of this work, we have been able to form this coalition of Black, Third World and white women which is the Bessie Smith Memorial Production Collective.

We share a common vision: to see Black feminist music produced colorfully and with style. We see Black women's culture as a politically transforming force, long buried under white male rule but now beginning to thrive with the growth of a Black feminist movement and a consciously anti-racist women's movement.

We believe, by producing these concerts we have made a positive and vital effort as Black, Third World and white feminists working and creating together. We believe in the beauty, integrity and sensibilities of the music and the artists who create the music that emanates from their experiences as Black women in America. An important aspect of this music is its affirmation of women-loving-women and Lesbian identity. There have been Black Lesbians throughout history, both in Africa and America. Though totally unrecognized, Black Lesbians have made and continue to make significant contributions to our culture. We hope that the energy we have generated with the production of this concert will spark the imaginations of other women and open up dialogue among Black, Third World and white women, whether it be about women's culture, racism, or feminism.

We hope that by our working together to bring "The Varied Voices of Black Women" to Boston, the music of Third World women will be heard, will be appreciated, and will flourish.

The Bessie Smith Memorial Production Collective.

*The Bessie Smith Memorial
Production Collective*

Emily Blake
Tia Cross
Emily Culpepper
Demita Frazier
Ellie Johnson
Cheryl Jones
Polly Laurelchild
Barbara Nesto
Diane Sabin
Barbara Smith
Beverly Smith
Mercedes Tompkins
Betsy York

Drummers

Buffy Berg
Vivian Carlo
Liz Coleman
Jan Weathers

Piano Tuner

Dovida Goodman

Lights

Gloria Greenfield
Jane Meyers
Deborah Snow
Sherry Weingart

Stage Crew

Marsha Darling
Sarah Driscoll
Edna Feighner
Renee Franco
Adrienne Ingrum
Pat Johnson
Hillary Kay
Lisa Leghorn
Naomi Lippin
Jean MacRae
Nelissa Nussbaum
Karen Pavidas
Rita Sullivan
Kathy Travers
Kris Vaughan
Charlene Williams

Concert Graphic

Sanoe Tlaro-Woods

Spanish Translation

Lilly Piñero

Special Thanks To:

Barbara Boardway
Christine Bond
Sandra Bradley
Susan Brown
Elisa Buenaventura
Carol Buffi
Rachel Burger
Cambridge Women's Center
Cambridge YWCA
Juanita Colon
Sasha Curran
Linda DiRocco
Nancy Green
Patricia Green
Ellen Hill
Beth Hodges
Mary Howell
Joyce Kauffman
Hillary Kay
Marquise King
Margaret Lazarus
Rochelle Lee
Dan Moselle
Jeannette Muzima
Mary O'Brien
Allison Platt
Eric Rofes
Lynn Schreihofner
Renae Scott
Katie Stokley
Catherine Sullivan
Mary Tiseo
Judy Wallak
Alvene Williams

Donations

Anonymous Gift
Paula Bennett
Combahee River Collective
Paul Rosenkrantz

Ticket Sales and Distribution

Amaranth Restaurant
Linda Hamlyn
Little Karen
Molly McNeil
Marilyn Munich
New Words Bookstore
Nubian Notions
Margo Rey
Women's Community of Littleton
The Women's Exchange

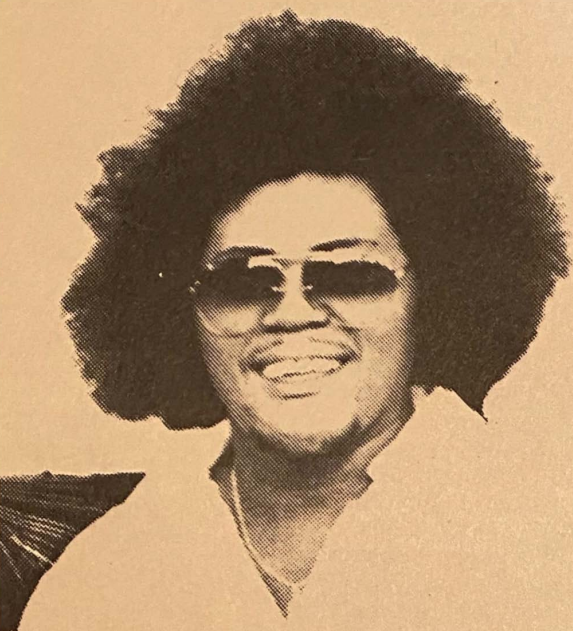
Nurse

Althea Smith

*They dreamed dreams that no one knew--not even themselves, in any coherent way
moving to music not yet written. And they waited. . .*

GWEN AVERY

Piano, Vocals

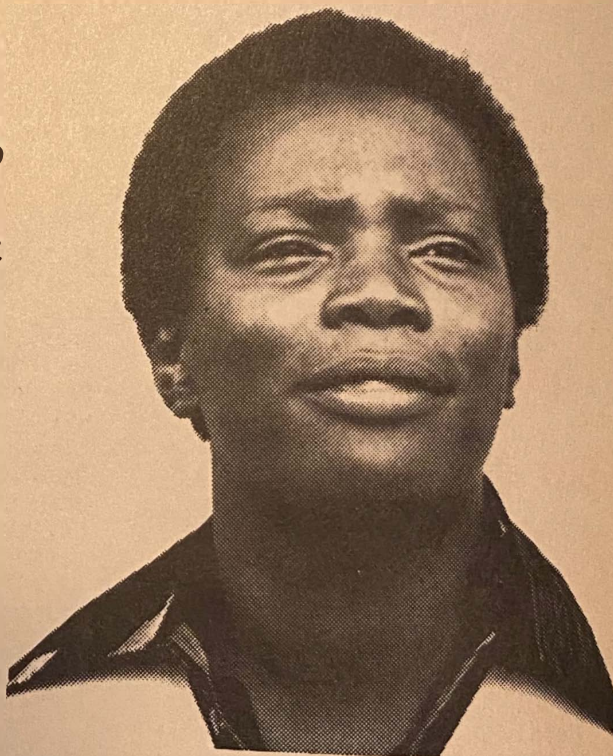


*Blues and gospel run neck and neck
in my music--I do best what is most
natural to me. I want women to use
my energy to motivate themselves.
I am concerned about anyone being put
upon--because it is only one short
step from me being put upon.*

PAT PARKER

Poet

*i, woman, i
can no longer claim
a mother of flesh
a father of marrow
I, Woman must be
the child of myself.
from "Child of Myself"*



Tour Production

Judy Dlugacz--manager
Rhonda Price--equipment manager
Lee Garlington--WomanSound
Jackie Washington--WomanSound
Roadworks--booking agent
Olivia Records

hion--and saw visions no one could understand. Our mothers and grandmothers:
Alice Walker "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens"

MARY WATKINS

Piano

My sweet sister
Let my heart tell you how
I know your fear
Of losing all that's dear
But trust your heart
Trust your heart to let you know
And to recognize a choice
Or the sound of your own voice...
from "No Hidin' Place"



LINDA TILLERY and band

Drums, Vocals

We are proud of our level of musicianship. We want to get it across that it is possible to produce high quality music. We are hoping that as a band we can present a different image, a way for women to see the needs of working together and supporting each other.

COLLEEN STEWART

Keyboards & Synthesizer

BARBARA COBB

Bass

VICKI RANDLE

Percussion & Vocals

JERENE JACKSON

Guitar

But above everything else tower black women's own voices, raised in resistance to death and slavery--of the body and spirit. It is an old song with many verses, but just one refrain: freedom.
--Michele Russell

Black women have a long tradition of bonding together in a Black women's community that has been a source of vital survival information, psychic and emotional support for us. We have a distinct Black woman-identified folk culture based on our experiences as Black women in this society: symbols, language and modes of expression specific to the realities of our lives as Black females in a dominant white/male culture. At the center of this Black female culture has always been Black women's musical expression in song. As Barbara and Beverly Smith state, "Because of our Black Female oppression, so much of our artistic and cultural energy was concentrated in music, particularly singing, it both appeared and was in fact the form in which we excelled."

Within the Black female musical tradition the blues has always been a vital focal point. Black female blues musicians and singers have established a special meaning and function for the blues within the Afro-American folk tradition. Blues singers such as Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holliday created a tradition in which the blues were used as a Black female autobiographical narrative form; one in which their painful experiences as Black women in a hostile racist and sexist society were both confronted and transcended through the creative medium of music and language. These women were singers of tales, not just songs, and their tales were grounded in the painful realities of the Black/female struggle for survival in America. The blues served for these female artists as one of the few creative forms available to them for not merely documenting the Black female experience, but also for offering up a vision of both the existing realities and the possibilities of Black women's lives.

There is an inherent Black woman-identification in the Black female musical tradition; in the concept of a Black woman singing anything positive about herself and her experiences as a Black woman. Such songs are typical of Black women's music because Black women have used singing as a way of capturing and praising the Black female experience in the face of an almost total neglect of the sexual/racial politics and realities of this experience on the part of white and Black male and white female musicians. The task of revealing these realities in the face of centuries of such neglect is what Linda Tillery and Mary Watkins speak of when they state, "If

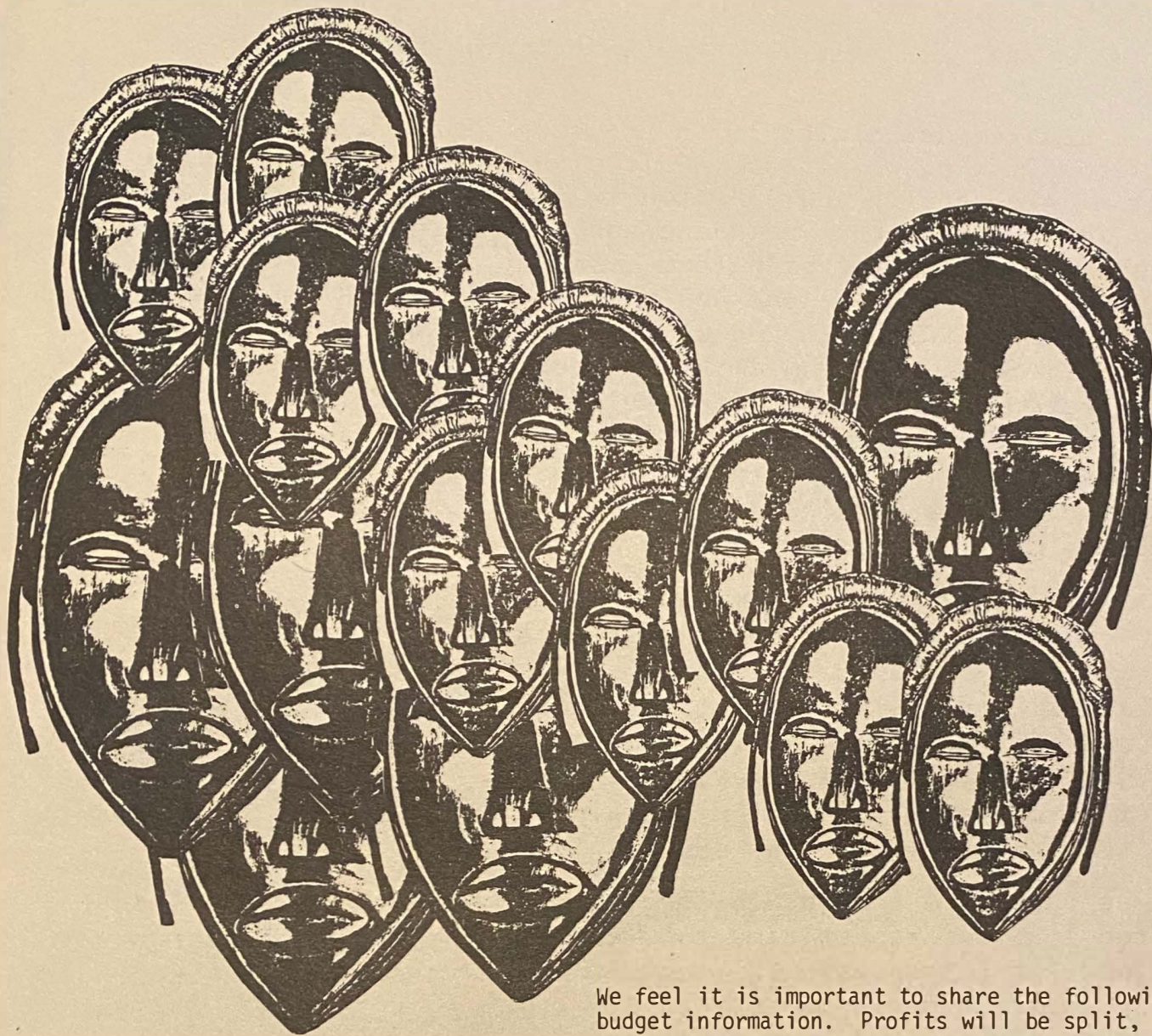
I could just tell you what it's really like/to live this life of triple jeopardy."

The Black female musical tradition is one of Black women singing and writing in affirming ways about their experiences as Black women, and examining carefully and consciously the politics of this experience. There is a strong critique and understanding of sexual politics and the politics of heterosexuality in Black women's songs, and many Black women musicians and their works can be seen as Lesbian in that they conceive of the necessity of Black women loving and defining themselves with the implicit possibility this creates for sexual as well as emotionally intense primary relationships between Black women. We must reject a purely sexual definition of the term "Lesbian" if we are to understand the most important Black woman-identified qualities in Black women musicians and their works, particularly in the life and music of Bessie Smith.

Between 1923 and 1933 Bessie Smith recorded 180 songs for Columbia Records. In these recordings her voice was one of the strongest in the chorus of Black female voices raised in resistance to the death and enslavement of Black/female bodies and spirits. It is a chorus raised today in resistance to the death of Black women seen in derogatory lyrics like "Girls, I like the girls," "girl you need a change of mind" (sung to a Black feminist) and "she's so much woman she don't have to try to be no man."

Bessie was part of a continuous performance by Black musicians that dates from long before her time to this very moment in tonight's concert and far beyond into the future. It is a performance that has at its heart a dialogue between Black women, a loving conversation between sisters and best friends. I think of Bessie singing "I Need A Little Sugar In My Bowl" and hear Gwen Avery's lyrical "Sugar Mama" in response: "I want to be your sugar mama/I want to be your sugar mama/be your sugar mama every day/ I want you to see how sweet/a woman's love can be." In 1937 Bessie Smith died in an automobile accident because she was refused admittance to a white hospital and did not survive the journey to a Black facility. In performing this evening "The Varied Voices of Black Women" continue the Black female tradition of resistance and Black woman-identification expressed by Bessie Smith, and demonstrate as she did so well the unconquerable beauty of Black women's spirits and voices towering above all else.

by Lorraine Bethel



We feel it is important to share the following budget information. Profits will be split, 60% to the women's community, 40% to the performers after all costs are paid (not to exceed \$3250).

<u>Item</u>	<u>Est. Budget</u>	<u>Actual Budget</u>
Hall Rental	885.00	810.00
Lights	300.00	300.00
Childcare	100.00	100.00
Publicity	500.00	451.53
Printing	300.00	419.02
Piano Rental	70.00	--
Piano Tuning	60.00	60.00
Signer	75.00	75.00
Miscellaneous	750.00	750.00
Bessie Smith Prod.		
Coll. Salaries	1400.00	1400.00
Performers' Salaries	<u>2000.00</u>	<u>2000.00</u>
TOTAL	6440.00	6365.55

(These figures were those available to us at the time the program went to press.)

WORKING WOMEN BSMPL

BETSY YORK 661-0554

BEVERLY SMITH 661-4104

JUDY WALLAK 742-0785

ELISA BUENAVENTURA 332-8872

SUSAN BROWN 332-8872

EMILY CULPEPPER 547-0704

DIANE SABIN 354-0931

TIA CROSS 492-6434

BARBARA SMITH 522-6214

POLLY LAURELCHILD 547-1378

BARBE NESTO 426-4696

DEMITA FRAZIER 522-8563

CHERYL JONES 862-6858 442-4134 (WK)

ELLIE JOHNSON 247-1050

EMILY BLAKE 288-6663 WK 247-6233

Arrange AMARANATH dinner 10/19 ✓

ROADWORK INC.
PERFORMERS INFORMATION SHEET

EVENT INFORMATION

City/Town Boston Event Date OCT. 20, 21 & 22, 1978
Sponsoring Group THE BESSIE SMITH MEMORIAL PRODUCTION COLLECTIVE
description (i.e. university, community, etc.) WOMEN'S COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
Contact Persons DEMITA FRAZER ^{Beverly Smith} ~~322-8563~~ ⁵¹²⁻⁸⁵⁶³ ~~661-4604~~ Phone # (617) 437-4696
Alternate Contact Person See above Phone # ()
Place of Engagement MORSE AUDITORIUM, BOSTON UNIVERSITY
Address 602 COMMONWEALTH AVE., BOSTON 02215 Phone # ()
Capacity of Hall 750 Expected Audience 1250 +
Time of Event 8:00 Arrival Time _____
Sound/Light Check Time Fri: hopefully 3, maybe 5:30
Sat: 4 pm Length of Performance 2 1/2 hrs.
Piano Tuning Time (after moving/before sound check) Fri hopefully 1, maybe 3:30 SAT: 10am
Name of Stage Managers DIANE SABIN & CHERYL JONES Phone # (617) 384-0981
262-6858
Who's doing Sound? You are Phone # ()
Who's doing Lights? Debra Snow Phone # () 926-5528
Who Has Keys To Facility? It's always open Phone # ()

ACCOMMODATIONS (please check one. Refer to attached memo)

Community Housing Karen Paivdis / Elisa Buenaventura
Hotel/Hotel ✓
Address(s) 6 Larchmont Address 17 Prince St
Dorchester West Newton
Name of People _____ How Many Rooms? Room for Mary, Louise, Tim, Gwen,
Pat and Judy
Phone # 288-7098 Phone # _____
Reservation Name 332-8872
How Many Rooms & Beds? Room for 9 Reservation from Night or Day of _____
Very comfortable to Night or Day of _____ for a total
How Far From Place of Event? _____ of _____ Days and _____ Nights.
about 10 miles How Far From Place of Event? about 10 miles
(Please include directions & map of city/town) (Please include directions & map of city/town)