

Olivia on the Record

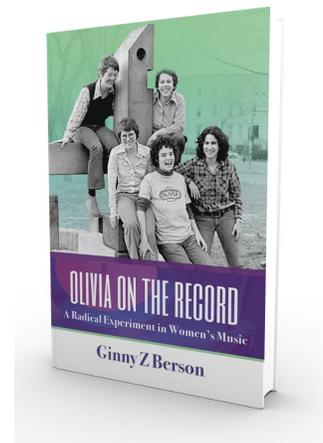
A Radical Experiment in Women's Music

By Ginny Berson

[San Francisco, CA] — Aunt Lute Books is pleased to announce our latest title, *Olivia on the Record: A Radical Experiment in Women's Music* by Ginny Berson, will be released on **October 24, 2020**. We welcome the thrilling account of Olivia Records' trials and tribulations into our repertoire with a virtual Book Launch on October 24, 2020 at 4 pm PT, featuring an introduction by acclaimed author Achy Obejas, a reading by Berson, a Q&A session, and musical performance by Olivia recording artist Mary Watkins. Attendees will receive a 20% discount code.

The burgeoning lesbian and feminist movements of the '70s and '80s created an impetus to form more independent and equitable social and cultural institutions—bookstores, publishers, health clinics, and more—to support the unprecedented surge in women's arts of all kinds. Olivia Records was at the forefront of these models, not only recording and distributing women's music but also creating important new social spaces for previously isolated women and lesbians through concerts and festivals.

Ginny Z. Berson, one of Olivia's founding members and visionaries, kept copious records during those heady days—days also fraught with contradictions, conflicts, and economic pitfalls. With great honesty, Berson offers her personal take on what those times were like, revisiting the excitement and the hardships of creating a fair and equitable lesbian-feminist business model—one that had no precedent.



Praise for the book

"Ginny Berson's important memoir of building Olivia Records into a beloved lesbian institution is a timely narrative from a founding organizer. Ginny walks us through the politics, radical self-discovery, aching romantic tension, and quirky community organizing that characterized an era. In these chapters, we gain a front row seat to the collective "processing" that produced and distributed lesbian records, and meet the first generation of fans to experience women's music as lesbian liberation."

—Bonnie J. Morris, PhD, author of *Eden Built by Eves*, *The Disappearing L*, and *The Feminist Revolution*

"Olivia Records was a small group of queer women who decided to take on the record industry, the patriarchy, and capitalism so that women could have music that reflected their lives. It was ground-breaking and gave us new systems for making and recording music that valued love, kindness and justice. Olivia brought women together in ways that continue to bring us closer to those ideals."

--Lily Tomlin, Actress, Comedian, Writer, and Producer

Olivia on the Record: A Radical Experiment in Women's Music by Ginny Berson | Aunt Lute Books | October 24, 2020 | \$18.95 | 260 pages | ISBN: 1951874013

Aunt Lute Books is a nonprofit multicultural women's press based in San Francisco. For over thirty years, we have published the perspectives of women from a broad range of communities, including several well-known feminist, lesbian authors, including [Paula Gunn Allen](#), [Gloria Anzaldúa](#), and [Audre Lorde](#) and our titles include the first U.S. collection of Filipinx American women writers ([Babaylan](#)), the first collection of Southeast Asian women writers ([Our Feet Walk the Sky](#)), as well as multiple translated texts.



For Immediate Release
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Launch Information

Zoom Virtual Book Launch

Saturday, October 24, 4 pm PT

RSVP [here](#):

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/aunt-lute-presents-olivia-on-the-record-book-launch-event-tickets-121652005423>

Ginny Berson

Ginny Z Berson is a longtime political activist driven by a longing for justice. She was a member of The Furies—a radical lesbian feminist separatist collective in Washington, DC. They produced a mostly monthly newspaper, The Furies, that was distributed nationally and had a significant impact on women’s groups all over the US. After The Furies broke up, Ginny pulled together a group of women in DC to begin visioning and planning what would become Olivia Records, the national women’s record company. She and her partner, the musician Meg Christian, were the initial driving force getting Olivia off the ground. After leaving Olivia in 1980, Ginny worked for many years in community radio—at KPFA-FM, Pacifica Radio, and the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. She now works as Director of Outreach for World Trust Educational Services, an anti-racist educational organization. She also does racial equity work in her neighborhood as part of Neighbors for Racial Justice.

Achy Obejas

Achy Obejas is the author of *The Tower of the Antilles*, which was nominated for a PEN/Faulkner award, among other honors. Her novels include *Ruins* and *Days of Awe*, which was a Los Angeles Times Best Books of the Year. Her poetry chapbook, *This is What Happened in Our Other Life*, was both a critical hit and a national best-seller. As a translator, Havana-born Achy has worked with Wendy Guerra, Rita Indiana, Junot Díaz and Megan Maxwell, among others. A recipient of a USA Artists fellowship, an NEA and a Cintas fellowship, among other awards, she is currently a writer/editor for Netflix and lives in the San Francisco Bay area.

Mary Watkins

Mary Watkins, a resident of the Bay Area since 1977, is a pianist, composer, arranger, songwriter, producer and performer creates a unique sound that fuses the elements of traditional jazz, classical, gospel, folk and pop music. Her work has earned her several grants from the National Endowment of The Arts, and Meet The Composer as well as critical acclaim in publications from Billboard and Contemporary Keyboard magazines to the Boston Globe and Washington Post. She has worked with Skip Scarborough, Donald Byrd, George Duke, Earth Wind & Fire’s Phillip Bailey, Dianne Reeves, and Stephanie Mills. She has also shared the bill with Toshiko Akiyoshi, Billy Eckstein, Jeff Lorber, Neil Diamond, Herbie Hancock, Santana, Carmen McRae, Marian McPartland and a host of others. Watkins has been active in the Bay Area where her stylistic range of jazz, classical, sacred, and folk has been expressed on the recordings of various local artists, documentary films, theatrical productions, opera, and dance as well as her own featured artistry as pianist in concert. She has released several recordings, the first, *Something Moving* (Olivia Records) and last two being *Song For My Mother*, (HighTide Music) and *Dancing Souls* (Ladyslipper). She has composed music for the operas, *Queen Clara*, and *Emmett Till*. She has also composed both libretto and music for the opera *Dark River* which had its premier in Oakland, CA 2009.

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