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Review of *Women in Texas Music: Stories and Songs* By Kathleen Hudson

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views, Kathleen Hudson depicts more than thirty women musicians' journeys in Texas, the Southwest, and in many cases beyond. The author's lively exchange with songwriters and performers invites readers deeper into the conversation, as if they've snuck backstage themselves to listen in.

One of the more engaging themes in *Women in Texas Music* is the various paths traveled by these artists, each road distinct and none easy. "The women have had to work doubly hard to get where they are and to sustain where they are," says Emily Robison, member of the Grammy award-winning Dixie Chicks. What makes it easier, she adds, are women artists like Bonnie Raitt and Emmylou Harris who helped blaze a trail, women Robison describes as "musical matriarchs" and "extraordinary."

Other artists share similar experiences of finding success by breaking accepted conventions in all aspects of the music business, from performance to production. Eva Ybarra's story of being told by a bandleader to play her accordion behind the male performers during a show is a poignant moment, particularly when a drunken man in the audience yells, "How come the best musician is in the back?"

In a conversation with singer/songwriter Ruthie Foster and singer/percussionist Cyd Cassone, Cyd describes an earlier gig as a sound engineer in College Station, a position that took more than one touring band by surprise. "Road managers would walk in and say, 'Where's the sound guy?'" Cyd remembers. "And I would say, 'I'm the sound guy.'"

Along with the artists' personal determination and achievements, the interviews as a collection showcase the rich diversity of Texas music, from blues and honky-tonk to country, conjunto, and rock. It would take at least another volume to capture the numerous women who've made an impact on the music of this region, including Cindy Cashdollar, who doesn't appear in this work. Nonetheless, Hudson's profiles help unravel the mystique, vibrancy, and diversity of Texas music. Her depictions showcase not only these musicians' individual struggles and successes, but also

Women in Texas Music: Stories and Songs. By Kathleen Hudson. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007. xxx + 258 pp. Photographs, references. \$39.95 cloth, \$24.95 paper.

Women musicians take center stage in *Women in Texas Music*, from the gender barriers they've broken as performers and artists to the growing recognition and musical territory they claim. Through a series of personal inter-

celebrate a community of music and culture
these artists have created.

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