

the arts

treatment, I knew I had to do something. I decided to use my voice and relied on contacts in the industry."

Jamieson drew up two lists of women who she hoped would donate a recorded song to the CD. She never had to use her second list. "Everyone said yes instantly." Everyone includes Jann Arden, Loreena McKennitt, k.d. lang, Celine Dion, Sarah McLachlan and the Rankin Family.

In Between Dances went gold on the first day of its release last September and went platinum by Christmas. The CD sales raised over \$1M in just three months.

"It is my hope that those women with breast cancer, who are currently 'in between dances,' with flagging spirits and energy, may continue to find the courage to dance," says Jamieson.

When she heard *In Between Dances* would be included with a story on *Picasso's Woman*, she was thrilled. "Oh, great. Roz is my best friend. That's just great."

Jamieson met MacPhee in 1975 through Jamieson's sister who lived in Lion's Bay. "The next time I saw her was at a breast cancer conference in Vancouver."

"We've been working independently, but conspiring together in our minds not to go down quietly."

When Jamieson heard the Life Quilt Project would also be part of the story she was delighted.

"Roz and I made a square for the border. In it we sewed 'Picasso's Women' and 'In Between Dances.' The picture is of us rowing leaky boats. Roz always said to me that we are rowing leaky boats. So we sewed ourselves into them."

A final piece to this story about the arts and breast cancer is the exhibition, *Survivors, In Search of a Voice: The Art of Courage*. It's a unique collaboration between 24 of

Canada's leading women artists and 100 breast cancer survivors whose intimate stories inspired works ranging from a sculpture of copper wire to a hooked rug. This show will come to Vancouver once a venue with 5,000 sq. feet can be secured.

Survivors is about breast cancer and about how women work together and are resources for one another. The show was conceived by Barbara Amesbury, project director of the Toronto-based Woodlawn Arts Foundation, and her partner, Joan Chalmers, the philanthropist who heads the foundation. They paid the artists and are offering the \$500,000 show for free to any gallery or community in Canada (North American Van Lines

will transport the exhibit, also free of charge).

What does the foundation get? The assurance that the exhibit is used to raise money and awareness for groups fighting breast cancer. Amesbury wants the show to bring activists out of the closet and get them to continue to help groups and individuals in fighting this

disease. "We talk to women and open cracks in doors that they can then walk through," said Amesbury.

One group working in Vancouver to get this show to come to Vancouver is the Vancouver Women's Health Collective. Call them if you would like to work with them on getting the show here.

When it comes, go to it. And pick up a copy of the beautiful catalogue in which 13 survivors speak from the heart (yours free for a \$10 donation to the Woodlawn Arts Foundation, P.O. Box C655, Station Q., Toronto M4T 2N5).

For the moment, this story has no end, just lots of beginnings. The following is an excerpt from the *Survivors Catalogue*:

"She folded her arms around my neck, our foreheads touched, and our souls made love."



Judy Reimer takes the first stitch in the Life Quilt with supporters (l-r) Rosalind MacPhee, Jacki Ralph Jamieson, Ivo Olivetto and Maureen Molaro.

Photo: Janice Drohan.

It was May of '93 and we had just retired when Joanne found the lump. We travelled to Halifax for a needle biopsy. Three days after it came back positive, Joanne had a lumpectomy. The chemotherapy that followed was a disaster. Reacting badly to the drugs, her white cell count dropped off the charts. In stark contrast, the radiation was a breeze. After weeks of uncertainty, the surgeon, armed with the results of a baseline test, pronounced Joanne "clean." "You'll never have cancer again," he said. We were on top of the world. With our bags packed and the camper gassed, we set out to see Canada.

Months later we were sitting in the mountains of British Columbia sipping champagne when Joanne's lower back and shoulder began to ache. Sensing trouble, we turned east and headed for home. Outside of Calgary, Joanne appeared breathless and complained of fatigue. I put my foot to the floor. Stopping in London, Ontario, I checked Joanne into a hospital. An X-ray detected the buildup of fluid in and around one of her lungs. Given her history, the doctor concluded that Joanne's cancer was back. By the time we got to Halifax, her breathing was laboured and she was in constant pain. Tests revealed the disease had spread to her chest wall and lymph nodes. As if that wasn't enough, small tumors were breaking through the skin and a bone marrow tap brought more bad news. The bloody cancer had spread to every inch of her body.

...On our last night together, Joanne sat huddled in a chair as I knelt on the floor in front of her. She folded her arms around my neck, our foreheads touched, and our souls made love. The next morning Joanne died.

Joanne Kohout died on November 28, 1994, at the age of 51. Joanne's husband Mack told her story. ☹