

# Top Women Performers Plan Gala Benefit at U.N.

By JOHN ROCKWELL

A gala benefit concert, with some of the best-known women performers in pop music, is being planned for the United Nations General Assembly on the evening of March 8.

The concert will take place on International Women's Day as the formal opening for several months of concerts and events organized by the International Women's Year.

Income derived from the sale of tickets (at benefit prices) in the 2,050-seat General Assembly and from commercial time on television specials projected for later dates in both this country and in Europe will go to UNICEF, which is organizing the concert along with the arts festival executive board. Tickets for the event are not yet on sale.

According to a spokesman for the United Nations Children's Fund, the following performers have "expressed an interest in participating" without fees (no written contracts have yet been signed): Cher, Ella Fitzgerald, Olivia Newton-John, Carole King, Gladys Knight, Shirley MacLaine, Bette Midler, Liza Minnelli, Anne Murray, Dory Previn, Diana Ross, Buffy Sainte-Marie and Mary Travers. Glenda Jackson has been approached to be master of ceremonies.

Joan Baez and Bonnie Raitt, the spokesman said, are more doubtful. Judy Collins, Roberta Flack, Aretha Franklin, Joni Mitchell, Maria Muldaur, Helen Reddy, Linda Ronstadt, Carly Simon and Barbra Streisand have declined invitations.

## A Literary Reading

The concert March 8 will be preceded by a literary reading March 7 at Town Hall, with such women writers as Nikki Giovanni, Sue Merriam, Marian Seldes and Alice Walker, ac-

ording to Marilyn Boll, the director of the executive board of the International Women's Arts Festival. On March 9, there will be a concert of non-Western music by women performers.

Miss Boll said yesterday that the arts festival would concentrate primarily on events in the New York area, but would encourage other cities and countries to observe the role of women in the arts—particularly Mexico City, which may be the site of a women's arts festival concurrent with the major conference there of the International Women's Year, from June 23 to July 4.

Miss Boll said that the New York arts events would stress women as creators, rather than as performers.

Other events under consideration include a film retrospective in the week following March 9 and several visual arts shows opening March 8. In May, for three days, the festival will present an exhibition of women's books on a Staten Island ferry making regular runs.

The summer months will see a variety of art walks through SoHo galleries, dance programs (including one at Alice Tully Hall on Sept. 16 called "Isadora Lives," with talks, dance and film clips about Isadora Duncan), poetry workshops, a classical-music concert Sept. 17 at Tully Hall, a crafts show in store windows and stores along Fifth Avenue, arts events in city parks and various symposiums.

The women who are organizing the arts festival are volunteering their services, Miss Boll said, and are raising money privately for the activities, mostly from corporations; the festival has no direct budget connection with the United Nations.