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SAN DIEGO  
**ROUBADOOR**

Alternative country, Americana, roots, folk,  
 blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass music news



November 2004

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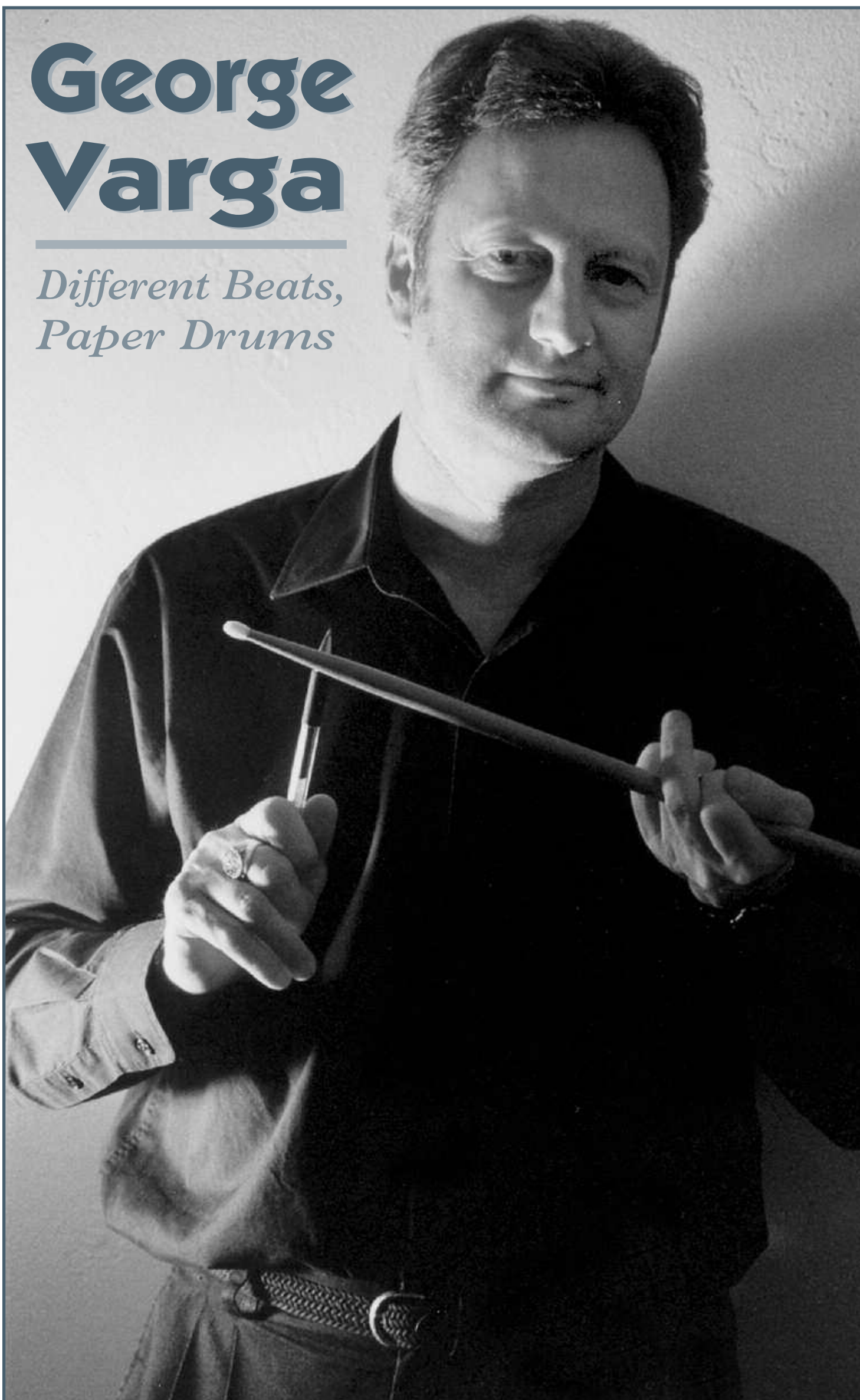
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# welcome mat



## MISSION

To promote, encourage, and provide an alternative voice for the great local music that is generally overlooked by the mass media; namely the genres of folk, country, roots, Americana, gospel, and bluegrass. To entertain, educate, and bring together players, writers, and lovers of these forms; to explore their foundations; and to expand the audience for these types of music.

For advertising rates, call 619/298-8488 or e-mail [lizabbott@cox.net](mailto:lizabbott@cox.net).

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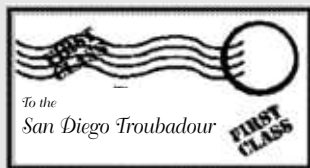
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## WRITE TO US!

We'd love to hear from you! Send your comments, feedback, and suggestions by email to: [sdtroubadour@yahoo.com](mailto:sdtroubadour@yahoo.com) or by snail mail to: San Diego Troubadour, P.O. Box 164, La Jolla, CA 92038-0164.



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Cover photography: Bill Richardson

The San Diego Troubadour is dedicated to the memory of **Ellen and Lyle Duplessie**, whose vision inspired the creation of this newspaper.



## A Time for Thanks and Giving

As we move toward the end of 2004, a year marred by the tragic deaths of our close friends and partners Ellen and Lyle Duplessie, along with a personal setback caused by a tragic accident yet to be resolved, we at the *San Diego Troubadour*, despite the difficulties and hardships, remain as committed and passionate as ever.

This month, the *San Diego Troubadour* is proud to announce the official launch of its new website: [www.sandiegotroubadour.com](http://www.sandiegotroubadour.com), up and running as of November 1. Now you're just a click away from informative articles, CD reviews, monthly columns, a music calendar, and more. We ultimately plan to develop an archive of back issues, designed to serve as a local music reference library and resource. Our heartfelt thanks to **Will Edwards** and **Chuck Schiele** who have been instrumental in making the website a reality.

We are also expanding our coverage of local music to include the genres of **jazz and blues**, which have been added to the *San Diego Troubadour* logo alongside alternative country, Americana, roots, folk, gospel, and bluegrass music. Because the *San Diego Troubadour* covers music that is primarily roots oriented and since we've already written about several artists and events over the past three years that fall into those categories — Earl Thomas, the Harmonica Festival, and Joe Liggins, to name a few — adding blues and jazz into the mix is a natural thing.

The *San Diego Troubadour* is constantly looking for ways to improve and grow so that we can continue to entertain, inspire, and provide information relevant to the local music scene. After all it is you, our readers, who we like to refer to as our *Troubadour* family, who are the basis, the foundation, of what we do. We thank you for your continued support and invite you to write to us. We will approach the future with a positive outlook and an attitude of gratitude.



Liz Abbott and Kent Johnson  
Publishers, *San Diego Troubadour*

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Thur 11 • Karyn Whittemore, Jane Lui, Aaron  
Fri 12 • Victoria Robertson CD Release with Steve White  
Sat 13 • Kevin Tinkle, Greg Laswell, Trevor Davis  
Sun 14 • Late Tuesday, Dustin Shey, Flowerthief  
Wed 17 • Dehra Dun, Campaign for Quiet  
Thurs 18 • **Acoustic Underground Presents: DIVA NIGHT 2** Lauren Morris, Randi Driscoll, Emily Tessmer.  
Fri 19 • Truckee Bros., Kelly Rudick, Jack the Original  
Sat 20 • Gregory Page, Diane Waters, Tom Brosseau  
Sun 21 • Ron Franklin, Kyle Phelan, Samantha Murphy  
Wed 24 • Josh Wachtel, May River  
Thurs 25th • Happy Thanksgiving!  
Fri 26 • Anna Troy  
Sat 27 • Anya Marina, Greg Laswell  
Sun 28 • Michelle Lewis, Grampa Drew, Amber Rubarth, Josh Hall

## full circle

# Paging Through the Ages: America's Sheet Music

by Paul Hormick

During the formation of this country and well into the twentieth century, the instrument that kept America singing was the piano. Most middle class families featured a piano in their parlor or sitting room, with at least one member of the family expected to read music and play the instrument. In the 1860s, for example, there were more than a hundred piano manufacturers in the U.S., turning out over 25,000 pianos every year. And consequently, there were hundreds of sheet music publishers churning out popular hits for the piano players. To this day, almost all popular sheet music, even the sheet music for Metallica, are piano arrangements.

Before iPods and MP3s, before anybody burned a CD of J-Lo or anybody installed an eight track player into their '76 Plymouth Duster, before 45s, LPs, or 78s, there was still music. Today almost all of our music is delivered through a radio or boom box, and it might be hard to believe that at one time all music was live. If you wanted music, somebody had to make it right then and there. And the method of downloading the latest two-step or waltz was to take a trip uptown to the local music store and buy the sheet music to the tune.

Sheet music in the 1800s consisted almost entirely of polkas and marches, reflecting the mostly western European heritage of the population. Of course there were love songs and humorous ditties, but popular music also served different functions in the past than it does now. Before television, radio, and the Internet brought us all the news all the time, popular songs were written and sung about current events. The popularity of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was impossible for songwriters of the day to ignore. Such tunes as "I Am Going There" and "The Death of St. Clare," which focus on scenes from the novel, came out soon after Harriet Beecher Stowe published her book.

Along into the twentieth century, songwriters continued this tradition. Of course the patriotic anthems, such as "Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition," published during the great wars serve as the best example of this. There were also songs praising technological achievement. Many songs were written about the great Erie

Canal in the early 1800s. Published in 1937, "There's a Silver Moon on the Golden Gate" sang the praises of the recently completed bridge. The back of the music sheet even featured detailed drawings and dimensions of the span.

Popular songs were also used to ridicule public figures, ideas, or events. "Mrs. Trollop's Quick Step," with a cover that suggested she was a prostitute, skewered the romance novelist as being uppity and meddlesome. Darwin drew scorn from the songwriting team of Grace Carleton and O'Rangoutang with their song "Too Thin." The lyrics are funny and cleverly poke fun at the new idea of evolution, but the cover takes a turn to offensive racism with an illustration of a white man bewildered by his dancing monkey relations and a black man who seems much more at ease greeting his ape relative.

Sheet music covers are noteworthy in themselves, enjoying a heyday that lasted throughout the 1800s into the early part of the twentieth century. The earliest sheet music illustrations were engravings that featured stately portraits or expansive landscapes. The lithography process, developed in the early 1800s, brought more color to the sheet music covers and was the first printed media to introduce the new technique to the American home, bearing the talents of notable illustrators. Answering an ad seeking "a boy with a taste for drawing. No other wanted," a young Winslow Homer began his career illustrating sheet music covers. Similarly, one of the first works by James McNeill Whistler is preserved on the cover he illustrated for "Song of the Graduates," a tribute to his fellow students at West Point.

Even into the twentieth century, when photography was becoming more and more popular, some well-known artists illustrated memorable covers. Norman Rockwell created a few. His cover illustration depicting a quartet of doughboys enthralled in song for *Life* magazine was reused for the cover of the most well-known anthem of World War I, "Over There." Albert Vargas, famed for his apotheoses of the female form, also illustrated some sheet music covers.

Covers were also influenced by artistic styles. Twentieth century sheet music illustrators brought in elements of cubism and surrealism. Many illustrators copied the Art Nouveau style of Alphonse Mucha, because his art was so well-suited for advertising. On the original sheet to Gershwin's "Summertime," the artist featured a wonderful Chagallesque interpretation of Porgy and Bess.

By the 1880s, capitalism had been around for about a hundred years, and except for Dickens, Marx, and countless factory workers, many folks thought that the new economic system was a great idea. And if it wasn't, it was at least a great way to make a lot of money. Once this notion made its way to the music publishers, the heyday of sheet music publishing — the Tin Pan Alley era — was born. Until then music publishing was a somewhat staid business that had traditionally been in the hands of music lovers, their vocation and avocation being one. The publishers, who were scattered in any and all major cities in the country, provided a

variety of music: popular, religious, classical, and more. They were happy to have their hits, but it was as much due to luck as anything.

The publishers of Tin Pan Alley went for where the money was and only printed sheet music for popular songs. Those who founded and ran the Tin Pan Alley publishing houses were men whose prior experience dealt mostly with the sale of other merchandise such as house wares, shoes, and women's corsets. They were, first and foremost, businessmen. And with the emphasis of the business being, well ... business, they transformed popular music from a pastime or livelihood into an industry.

Tin Pan Alley — a time, a style, and a certain gestalt — was centered in Manhattan, but its beginnings can be traced to the Midwest. Songs had always reflected the news and mores of the day, but in the early 1880s Charles K. Harris, a young man who lived in Milwaukee, began writing "songs to order" for all occasions and aggressively pursuing the tastes of the public. In 1892 he turned down a generous offer from a publisher for his composition "After the Ball" and chose to publish the tune himself. It made \$25,000 in sales a week, ultimately selling over five million copies. With that success, he moved his business to New York.

The art of the popular song had never adhered to any particular guidelines. Tin Pan Alley changed that. The publishers wanted guaranteed hits and analyzed the components of a successful song. Harris, who had gotten the ball rolling for the Alley, even wrote *How to Write a Popular Song*, a book that gave such advice as avoiding slang and making sure the song had a strong theme and simple melody.

As overproduction and overconsumption are the twins that drive any capitalist venture, the salesman comes next into the picture. For this, the business barons of Tin Pan Alley were willing not only to follow popular taste, but also to dictate it. They came up with the music "plugger," who combined musicianship with some of the more aggressive aspects of snake oil salesmanship. They worked out deals with singers, bribed orchestra leaders, and acted as performers themselves, all in an effort to get their songs into the public's ears and the dollars from the public's pockets into the publishers' bank accounts.

Around 1900 as music publishers became more and more successful, they moved from Manhattan's Union Square farther uptown to 28th Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. It was at this location that Tin Pan Alley got its name. Of course, being about music and musicians, the story is apocryphal, but most versions include Monroe Rosenfeld, a bit of a scalawag who was known to be a composer, gambler, and newspaperman. One story holds that Rosenfeld was interviewing Harry Von Tizler for an article on the music business. As he talked to Tizler, Rosenfeld noticed that his piano had been stuffed with paper to produce a tinny sound. Rosenfeld also heard other composers banging away on their keyboards through the open window. To him, the cacophony resembled tin pans clanging together. He titled



Cover illustrated by Norman Rockwell



Song inspired by Uncle Tom's Cabin



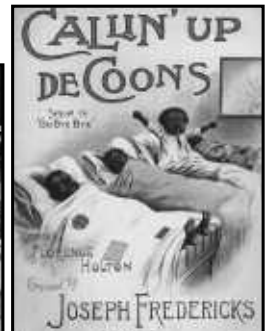
Sheet music from 1852 with illustration by James McNeill Whistler



Sheet music from era in which parlor songs were popular



Example of cover art during WWI



Example of derogatory depiction of black people.



Song written by Irving Berlin, one of the most popular Tin Pan Alley era songwriters



Another song from the Tin Pan Alley era



Asian people were also stereotyped



Cover illustration in the artistic style of painter Marc Chagall.



Example of sheet music featuring singer who made the song popular on the cover.

his article "Tin Pan Alley," and the name stuck.

Sheet music covers produced during the Tin Pan Alley era also changed. Photographs of singers who had made the song popular were often featured on the covers; in the twenties it's hard to find a piece of sheet music without a

picture of Rudy Vallee. If there was artwork, it was often sentimental and mawkish. Another developing trend during that time was the increasingly racist depictions of black people. Throughout the 1800s artists had often rendered unkind portrayals of blacks on their music covers, but during the first decades of the twentieth century their depictions became more caricatured and exaggerated.

We all know that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, and it never was much of an empire either. Similarly, Tin Pan Alley wasn't in an alley and had nothing to do with tin pans and, like the Holy Roman Empire, no one is certain as to when the era ended. It just seems to have faded as the driving forces that had helped sustain it — minstrel shows and vaudeville — declined. As the money from the music business switched over to radio, movies, and records, many of the publishing houses either went out of business or were bought up by their new competitors.

As the decades passed and the music industry's emphasis switched from sheet music to recordings, the wonderful artwork became even more rare. If a song or theme came from a movie, the cover of the sheet music

often bore a reproduction of the movie's poster, listing the stars, director, and producer of the film. By the time rock 'n' roll became popular, sheet music for hits by Elvis and the Beatles were often only one or two-color printings featuring a photo of the stars. The sheet music for "These Eyes," a huge hit for the Canadian band The Guess Who, was a mealy one color — blue — that included the song's title, the name of the band, and the writers in a simple typeface.

Looking past the cover gives a little insight into our musical history. Through the 1800s and into the twentieth century, sheet music was written as piano arrangements. In the early part of the twentieth century, "with added ukulele arrangement" started to appear on sheet music covers, which indicated the addition of ukulele tablature and chord symbols to the piano scores. As the decades passed, guitar tablature was featured along with ukulele. Now that ukuleles are about as popular as saying "23 Skidoo," their tablature has been dropped, leaving just the guitar tab.

Hobbyists collect sheet music for



The Brill Building has become synonymous with Tin Pan Alley

Continued on next page





# Recordially, Lou Curtiss

The 1950s was a golden age for country music on television here on the West Coast. Along with *Town Hall Party*, which ran the whole decade and into the 1960s, it seemed as if every station had a country music show or two and several of them had even more. Along the way I remember *Hometown Jamboree* on Saturday nights, hosted by Cliffie Stone and featuring Tennessee Ernie Ford, Speedy West and Jimmy Bryant, Molly Bee, Herman the Hermit (who was rumored to be a real hill-billy living in a cave way back in Beverly Hills), Harry Rodcay (the Hawaiian cowboy from the island of Maui), Billy Strange, Bucky Tibbs, Joan O'Brien, Eddie Kirk, Gene O'Quin, Merrill Moore (who commuted from San Diego every week), Harold Hensley, Tommy Sands, and always a guest star or two like the Hoosier Hot Shots or the Armstrong Twins. Another Saturday night show was *The Spade Cooley Show* on KTLA, which featured Hank Penny, Ginny Jackson, Noel Boggs, and a comedian in drag called Lotta Chatter. Cooley changed his lineup throughout the 1950s. I remember one time when he had an all-woman band.

On Friday night it was *Western Varieties* on KTLA Los Angeles, with Doye O'Dell as the singing host along with Eddie Cletro and his band, Roscoe Ayes, Carolina Cotton, plus such guests as Tex Williams, the Sons of the Pioneers, or the Maddox Brothers and Rose.

Thursday nights had *The Dude Martin Show* with Hank Penny, John Rovick (also known daytimes as Sheriff John), Dick Williams, and Sue Thompson.

Gene Autry's *Melody Ranch* show had several incarnations mostly without Gene, who only guested once in awhile. At times Merle Travis and Judy Mayhan, who also had their own show for awhile) served as hosts as did Johnny Bond and Pat Buttram. The show also featured Smiley Burnett and Rufe Davis from time to time. Other country shows tended to focus on one artist, sometimes with a guest. Singing cowgirl Janie Davids had a show on KHJ and Stuart



Cast of the Dude Martin Show.



Speedy West



Quincy Snodgrass



Eddie Cletro and Doye O'Dell on the set of Western Varieties



Armstrong Twins



Smokey Rogers



Tex Owens

Hamblen had a Sunday night variety show with his wife Susie.

Many country music artists had daytime shows. I remember one with Wesley Tuttle, Merle Travis, and Johnny Bond, which may have been connected to *Town Hall Party*. And of course San Diego had *Smokey Rogers' General Store* on Channel 8, with members of the Western Caravan, including Cactus Soldi, Joaquin Murphy, Pedro DePaul, the singer Terry Preston — who later changed his name to Ferlin Huskey — Lee Harris, Slim Dossey, and the Hogsd Brothers Roy and Don. On the weekends they would all go up to L.A. and add Deuce Spriggs and leader Tex Williams for the *Tex Williams Show*, broad-

cast live on Sundays from the Knotts Berry Farm. Roy and Don had their own TV show on San Diego's Channel 10 for a time, which was also a country show on Tijuana's Channel 6, hosted by country deejay Okie Bob.

*Forman Phillips Barn Dance* became *Town Hall Party* after Joe Maphis took over musical direction for the show in 1953. Its all-star lineup included Johnny Bond, Merle Travis, Wesley Tuttle, Lefty Frizzell, the Collins Kids, Rose Lee Maphis, Gee Nee Sterling, the Sons of the Pioneers, Tex Ritter, Jimmy Wakely, Carrot Top Anderson, Marilyn Tuttle, Jenks Tex Carmen, Johnny and Dorsey Burnett, Fiddlin' Kate Linville Warren, Marion Hall, Walkin' Charlie Aldrich, Quincy Snodgrass, emcee Jay Stewart, Texas Tiny, the Golden State Boys, Cousin Emmy, Clarence and Roland White, James Burton, Roy Buchanan, Eddie Cochran, and a whole lot more. In its heyday *Town Hall Party* was favorably compared to Nashville's *Grand Ole Opry* and was a lot more open to the emerging rockabilly styles than Nashville ever was. KLAC ran the program four hours — later cut back to three — every Saturday night.

The 1950s and early 1960s saw a lot of syndicated shows like *Star Route* with Rod Cameron, the Collins Kids, and Glen Campbell; *Stars of the Grand Ole Opry*, also called *The Country Show*; and network shows like *The Ozark Jubilee* with Red Foley, the *Jimmie Dean Show*, and the *Tennessee Ernie Ford Show*, which was sort of country with pop overtones.

Many West Coast performers worked all the shows. I remember seeing Wynn Stewart, Buck Owens, Tommy Collins, Carl Belew, Harlan Howard, Princess Ramona,

Merle Haggard, Roy Nichols, Johnny Messner, Eddie Cochran, and more before they ever charted any hits. Buck Owens played lead guitar for Wynn Stewart and Tommy Collins, Merle Haggard played bass for Stewart and Skeets MacDonald. Another performer I remember around Southern California in the late 1950s was Bobby Bare before he had any hits. I saw him around 1960 at the Westerner in National City as an opening act for Lefty Frizzell. I think he was playing bass for Frizzell as well. Jan Howard, who was married to Harlan, also worked here on the West Coast for a time and first recorded on Gene Autry's Challenge Records before joining Wynn Stewart for some great duets on Capitol.

By the early 1960s most of the West Coast country TV shows were going or gone. Cal Worthington

propped things up for awhile with *Cal's Corral* on Sunday afternoons. It even had a bluegrass portion with the Gosdin Brothers' Golden State Boys, featuring an all-star lineup that included Chris Hillman, Del McCoury, Clarence and Roland White, Don Parmaly, and others. *Melody Ranch* continued for awhile on KTLA, hosted by Johnny Bond. There were syndicated shows from the Nashville area by the Wilburn Brothers, the Stoneman Family, and Porter Waggoner that played on local TV, but by 1965 country music performed by Southern California artists on West Coast television was mostly over.

Recordially,

Lou Curtiss

NOTE: Reviewed in this issue is a CD of women featured on the TV show *Western Ranch Party*. See page 12.



Photo: Bill Richardson  
Lou Curtiss

## FOLK ARTS RARE RECORDS UPDATE



New home of Folk Arts Rare Records

It's been a little over 27 years — since April 2, 1977 to be exact — since Virginia and I and our 11-month-old son Ben moved our shop and house into the location at 3611 Adams Avenue. Prior to that we'd been at two other locations for five year stints — one at 3753 India St. from July 1967-March 1972 and the other at 3743 Fifth Avenue from March 1972 to April 1977.

On October first of this year we got word from our landlord that our property had been sold and that we had 30 days to vacate and "git on down the road." This came only two months after he had raised our rent from \$1,000 a month to \$1,700. As you read this, we are in the process of getting on down the road, heading west to our new location on Antique Row at 2881 Adams Avenue.

It's going to be a big job moving and I feel the Avenue is losing a historical landmark. But in spite of that, we're going to continue to collect and preserve and try to pass along the kinds of music we've been involved with for nearly 40 years. And since we're still on Adams Avenue we can continue our involvement with the Adams Avenue Roots Festival (April 30-May 1, 2005) and the Adams Avenue Street Fair (last weekend in September). So we have to think positive and remember the good times and forget the landlord who wouldn't give us a break. Come by and see us during the move at either the old place or the new one, listen to *Jazz Roots* on the radio Sunday nights 8-10pm on KSDS 88.3FM, or read what we've got to say in the *San Diego*

America's Sheet Music continued from previous page.

many reasons, and with the variety of published music, a great number of collections have been amassed. Some collectors are interested only in certain writers, performers, or subject matter. Steve Visakya, a well-known collector, has a plethora of songs about drinking and drunkenness. Lois Bach who, along with her husband Greg Gohde, owns Classic Bows music shop, has collected sheet music for years. "My main interest is in the beautiful artwork," she says. "I like the Art Deco era and things from the Busby Berkley movies." Much of her music is framed or she uses it in other artistic ways. She is not interested in collecting as an investment but says that some of the sheet music can be quite expensive.

So, is that old piano bench — the one you haven't opened since you were looking for the Brimhall arrangement for "Love Is Blue" — filled with gold? Possibly. Allan Witty, who tends

the store Paper Antiquities on the weekends, says that a lot of factors determine the value of a piece of sheet music, the first being the condition of the sheet. If the music is ripped or torn it's as worthless as a bin of cutouts of the Bay City Rollers.

"Sheet music that goes back a ways, to the 1870s or 1880s can be pretty valuable," says Witty. "And a lot of the value of a piece of sheet music is based on who the cover artist was, particularly if it's a signed copy." The small sized sheet music produced during World War I to save paper gets a higher price from collectors. Sheet music featuring movie stars on the cover can get high prices. Witty says, "If the music has Marilyn Monroe on the cover the sheet can be worth \$50; Amos and Andy can go for as much as \$90 to \$100."

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## front porch

# Summergrass and Julian Bluegrass Festivals Strike a Traditional Chord

by John Philip Wylie

Local folk music aficionados had two great opportunities to enjoy bluegrass music at its finest this summer with the return of Vista's Summergrass Festival (Aug. 20-22) and Julian's Bluegrass Festival (Sept. 18-19).

The Summergrass festival was held on the grounds of Vista's Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum and attracted a dozen mostly local bands along with a couple from such far off places as Alaska and the Czech Republic. Building upon its successful 2003 debut, the well-organized festival provided hours of great bluegrass music, inexpensive food, and the opportunity to purchase various musical instruments, CDs, tee-shirts, and crafts. Its Bluegrass Camp for Kids gave novice bluegrass musicians the chance to hone their skills and learn from the masters.

Following an energetic, well received set as part of Bluegrass Etc., veteran bass player Bill Bryson shared his thoughts on North County's fledgling festival.

"This is a great festival. We played it last year too. The physical layout is great here and the atmosphere and the new stage are terrific. Musicians are always interested in convenience. It is easy to get in and out of here and it has a great sound," Bryson said.

"First-time festivals are always a gamble. If they are not done well, there are a lot of negative comments and they become dead in the water. Most of the bigger festivals have learned that it is a real wise thing to make the musicians and audience comfortable. The volun-



Reeltime Travelers at the Julian Bluegrass Festival

teers here do a great job with that and the backstage amenities are very good. As a result, there was a great buzz after last year's event and it lasted pretty much all year. That's a really good sign."

Seventh Day Busker jack-of-all-trades Robin Henkel was equally impressed following his set.

"The antique steam engine museum is really cool. That makes this a unique location," he said. "You never know who you are going to run into at one of these things, but there are some incredibly talented people. Oftentimes, shows like this are the only time that I get to see them."

One month later, a largely different, but equally talented group of about a dozen acts performed for another enthusiastic, appreciative audience at the eastern end of the county. This time it was

Julian's Frank Lane Park, the site of the 34th Annual Julian Bluegrass Festival.

Chris Hillman (Byrds, Flying Burrito Bros. Desert Rose Band) and his D.R.B. bandmate, Herb Peterson, the lone holdovers from the Summergrass festival, delighted the Julian crowd with a set that sampled some of Hillman's Byrds' classics as well as others from the duo's Desert Rose Band collaboration. It was a treat to hear songs embedded into our memory banks with electric twelve strings and percussion now played in an acoustic bluegrass style. While the duo dipped into their well of highly recognizable originals from the '60s, '70s, and '80s they also played some of their more recent gospel inspired tunes. These folk legends set the stage for the final act of the first day, the Reeltime Travelers. The Reeltime Travelers captivated the



Kids camp at Summergrass

audience with a series of infectious, hypnotic rhythms. These rhythms held their traditional and original bluegrass renditions together tighter than bark to a tree. Having contributed to the Cold Mountain soundtrack and joining forces with legendary producer T-Bone Burnett (of *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* fame), this youthful quintet of 20-somethings is clearly climbing the ladder to success.

Lead singer and mandolin player Thomas Sneed was pleased by the warm Julian reception and happy to be closing out a long summer of touring on a bright note.

"This is about as perfect as a spot can get to have a festival," Sneed said. "I think it is a real honor to have Chris Hillman and Herb Pederson here, since they had so much to do with California



Julie Wingfield at the Julian festival



The Witcher Brothers at Summergrass getting involved with bluegrass music back in the '60s and '70s. They still make incredible music today, so for young kids like us, to be on the same bill with them is kind of amazing."

Sneed and his cohorts are on a mission to preserve and promote the music that originated in the Appalachian Mountains not too far from their current East Tennessee home.

"We can't deny that we grew up in a different environment than the hill people who once played this music," Sneed said. "Those people lived in a really rural atmosphere and they didn't have any of the distractions that we have today. We didn't grow up in a holler in the middle of nowhere, but we live right near some, and we have been up there many times to visit." Whenever they do, they make it a point to talk to some of the dwindling number of old-time musicians, and they often unearth some almost forgotten tunes to add to their repertoire.

"This music is a truly American art form, so a revival in it was just bound to happen," Sneed said. "Bluegrass has always been on the fringe, so not many people knew about it. In the last five to 10 years, a lot more people have been exposed to it. It is a great American story how these instruments and songs came from other countries and settled in Appalachia."

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by Bart Mendoza  
(with thanks to Danny Cress)

# Joel Scott Hill Climbs Every Mountain

Although Joel Scott Hill was born August 13, 1939 in Naples, Texas it was as a San Diegan that he first made inroads in what has to be one of the most illustrious music careers to trace its beginnings to America's Finest City. While not quite a household name, Hill was one of the first bona fide guitar heroes who took part in several critically acclaimed groups, appearing on numerous charting records over the decades.

He arrived in San Diego as an eight year old in 1947 and took up guitar playing almost immediately. By the time he was in high school, circa 1956, he had already started several groups, including the Rhythm Runners and the Ramblers. That same year Hill experienced his first brush with success when he undertook a short tour of the South, playing lead guitar for his cousin, Jeanette Hicks, even turning up on a broadcast of *Louisiana Hayride* where he opened for Johnny Cash.

Upon returning to California, he formed a new group, first dubbed the Rebels before settling on the Strangers. At first the group played country music mixed in with rockabilly and a bit of rock 'n' roll, performing at the local serviceman's clubs. By 1958 it became clear that there wasn't enough stage work in town for the group, so the nascent four piece (Hill, plus Harold Kirby on bass, Ron Lynch on tenor sax, Johnny Callard on drums) switched their focus to recording and cut their studio teeth with a few demos that year.

In 1959 the group moved to Los Angeles, a necessity in those days if musicians wanted a real shot at making the big time. The band was still under age at the time (21 then being the age of consent) but quickly attracted a manager, Jim Lee, and played small gigs at Veterans Halls and the like.

Ironically, after relocating to Los Angeles, it was a chance meeting in a downtown San Diego dive bar with Jody Reynolds, then a hit maker with the tune "Endless Sleep," that led to the group signing its record deal. Taking Reynolds to Los Angeles with them on April 16, 1959, the group cut four instrumental demos at famed Goldstar Studios in Hollywood for the princely sum of \$80.

Although the group attempted to shop the demos, they found no takers and in fact ended up recording for Reynolds' original label boss, George Brown. By this time Callard had exited, replaced by Jim Marino, the first of several lineup changes over the next five years, but the Strangers became the flagship release for Brown's then new label, Titan records. It proved to be a great deal for Brown. Simply taking two of those previously taped demos and renaming "Cockroach" the more palatable "Caterpillar Crawl" backed by "Rockin Rebel," the label earned a #49 chart hit, though not without some complications.

Having rebuffed an offer by the larger Kapp label to release the single on their imprint, the rival label instead had a new

version of the tune, which was recorded by Dick Dixon and the Roommates (Hank Garland under an alias). This was a common ploy at the time and resulted in splitting sales and a lost opportunity. While there were some successes to follow for the Strangers, including a big rock 'n' roll show with Sam Cooke for deejay Art Laboe at El Monte Legion Stadium, the 1959 *Dick Clark Cavalcade of Stars* show at the Hollywood Bowl with Duane Eddy and Bobby Rydell, and various shows with Eddie Cochran among others. Unbeknownst to Hill, this was to be the band's high point.

Unfortunately at this point the group attracted unwanted attention when they were sued by another group who claimed the Strangers had stolen their name (the rival outfit was a San Francisco band that recorded for Christy Records). Even more disheartening, another songwriter accused Hill of stealing "Caterpillar Crawl." After the cases went to court, the ruling stated that Hill could use the name anywhere but Santa Cruz County, and the authorship dispute eventually dropped.

The band managed another single in 1959 taken from the previous two demos "Hill Stomp/A Lost Soul" (originally titled "Alone/Hard Guy") and two more in 1960, "Boogie Man/Young Maggie" and "Dance Of The Ants/Navajo," but nothing charted. In hindsight it might have been considered a bad omen, but when the band performed on a Los Angeles TV show to promote that last single, the band was instructed to lip sync the tune. However, when the cameras rolled, the wrong song was played. Trying it a second time got them the right song, but it was played at the wrong speed! The band walked out of the studio and disbanded soon after.

Hill would continue to use the Strangers name for live performances with his first solo single, "I Thought It Over/Little Lover" (the A side was later performed live by Blasters frontman Dave Alvin alongside the Paladins) pointedly credited as Joel Scott Hill with the Strangers. The year 1960 also saw Hill begin to take part in studio session work, notably turning up on such hits as Kathy



Joel Scott Hill

Young's 1960 hit "A Thousand Stars."

In 1962 Lee and Hill founded their own label, Monogram, to showcase a new discovery Chris Montez, on whose classic single (#4 that year) "Let's Dance" Hill played guitar. Not coincidentally the label also released his own next two singles, "Secret Love/I Ran" and "Monkey Business/Hannibal's Hundred" in 1963, but neither release troubled the charts. He next surfaced in 1964 under the name the Invaders with Joel Hill, releasing "Look Out/ Sticks and Stones" again for Monogram, and while the single again didn't chart, on December 5 of that year he at least had the distinction of being one of the opening acts for the Rolling Stones at the Convention Hall, alongside San Diego friends the Misfits, featuring a pre-Moby Grape Bob Mosely.

Hill, in fact, played an inadvertent part in Moby Grape's formation. By 1966, gigging under the moniker the Joel Scott Hill Trio, which at that time included future Starship drummer John Barbatta, Hill was a well known face in the Southern California music scene. He was the connection for the players who would form Moby Grape, introducing guitarist Peter Lewis to Mosely. It was to be a fruitful union — following some LSD influenced jamming on that first night, the Grape's nucleus was formed and their first tune, "Bitter Wind" was written.

While Moby Grape would go on to fame and misfortune, Hill had another spate of bad luck, including a gunshot wound to the leg and a broken hand acquired in a bar fight, resulting in a long lay off with only the occasional gig.

At this point Hill fell off the radar and didn't return until 1971 when he cemented his reputation as a guitar slinger by recording some of his best work. That year alone he appeared on albums from Priscilla Coolidge, Jesse Ed Davis, and an acclaimed if unsung made by session players release under the band name Jerome, L.A. Getaway. More important, 1971 was the year Hill replaced Al Wilson in the group Canned Heat, releasing "Woolly Bully/My Time Ain't Long," though he only appeared on the b-side. A few months later came "Long Way From L.A./Hill's Stomp," featuring a revamped version of the old Stranger's track on the flip, which was also issued in Sweden.

In 1972 the group saw another chart placing, when Canned Heat's "Rockin' With the King/I Don't Care

What You Tell Me" reached #88 on the charts. The single, which featured Little Richard on vocals and piano, also nearly charted in England. One more single "Sneakin' Around/Cherokee Dance" followed, with the band's album *Historical Figures and Ancient Heads* also released at that time both at home and in the U.K, and reissued there in 1990 as well as in 2001. While those were the only items to be issued during his tenure with the band, two further albums were released

in France during 1975 after he had exited the group: *Memphis Heat* with blues guitarist Memphis Slim and *Gates on Heat* with Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown.

Hill next attempted to get a new project together to be called the Docker Hill Boys, but when that didn't pan out, despite some recordings that still languish in Columbia Records, he joined the reconstituted Flying Burrito Brothers in 1975. Hill came aboard in time for their *Flying Again* album, and he once again turned up on the charts when the album made #138 on issue, the band's career peak position. Copies were also pressed in both England and Germany. Three singles were tapped over the next two years: "Building Fires/Hot Burrito No. 3," "Bon Soir Blues" using the same flip, and "Big Bayou/Waiting for Love to Begin." However, following the release of 1976's *Airborne* and despite some success in Britain, Hill departed from the group. Incidentally, while many discographies list Flying Burrito Brothers' 1977 side project *Sierra* as a Hill related recording, this is incorrect.

In the ensuing years, Hill has kept a low profile, but you wouldn't know it from the amount of releases that have been issued during that time span. At last count there were over a dozen compilations that include his early instrumental tracks alone, with the best way to collect all those cuts being the long out-of-print 1976 (reissued 1980) album *Joel Scott Hill: The Rockin' Rebel*. Add in at least four Canned Heat anthologies and three more albums of vintage live recordings (2000's *The Boogie House Tapes* notably includes an otherwise unavailable romp through another Hill oldie "Caterpillar Crawl") as well as another three Flying Burrito Brothers discs taped during their 1976 tour, and Joel Scott Hill remains a prolific artist despite the lack of any new released recordings in almost 20 years! It's clear that whether Hill ever records another note, he is one of the greatest musical treasures to ever emerge from San Diego.



Jody Reynolds

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## parlor showcase

## George Varga

*Different Beats, Paper Drums*

by Bill Richardson

**W**ayne Newton and his body-guard Tulio didn't look very happy at all.

"Mr. Varga, we've (we? Oh yes . . . the imperial) been in this business that we love so deeply since before you were even an egg. Your slam on our Del Mar Fair show was not just stupid, it was downright mean. We don't like mean people. Especially Tulio. He despises them."

The brutish giant cracked a wicked smile as he left Newton's side, approached Varga, and placed the barrel of a shiny Barretta against the writer's forehead.

George closed his eyes and listened while the King of Vegas, ten feet away, began an absurdly vibratoed croon: "Danke Shoen. . . for nothing, omelet-head."

Then he woke up.

Ah, that was a cute one, he thought. Actually, he hadn't had a real nightmare for years. Closest thing might have been the actual Wayne Newton concert he'd witnessed last week. Now, that was *really* frightening.

Sitting with his lovely fiancée, Beth Wood, on a couch at her home near Balboa Park, George Varga seems honestly content. He's soft-spoken, wise, well traveled, and a hell of a writer. He's got to be very lucky as well, hasn't he? The gentleman holds what must be one of the choicest jobs in town: Pop Music Critic for our city's venerable daily paper, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. Over the years, he's amassed a mini-Smithsonian collection of albums, CDs, books, magazines, videos, and knick knacks pertaining to popular music. The enviable bounty remains anonymous and hidden, desperately in need of a curator; the

owner suffers a shortage of free time.

What struck me when I first met him more than two decades ago was his physical and vocal resemblance to English actor Francis Matthews, who appeared in a few Hammer Films epics. What strikes me today is the care Varga continues to invest in his work after so long a time, while I ruefully remember Hammer films becoming increasingly careless after five or six years of brilliance 40 years ago.

Back then George would have only heard Francis Matthews' Varga-like voice . . . dubbed in German anyway.

He was a military brat, an only child destined for some extreme travel or, as an optimist might see it, an enforced cosmopolitanism. Born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, he was three years old when he breezed over to Hawaii to live for a period of four years, delighting his parents and his own little self when he won a spelling bee in second grade. Still, little George wanted more and, not surprisingly, followed his folks to Frankfurt, Germany for the essential nourishment of his formative years.

Through junior high and early high school, Varga's primary nutrition seemed to be music of all kinds, and he began reviewing albums for

his school paper and drumming in his first band, Judd Seuss.

One memorable evening young George was sent out on his first interview. Several acts, including a wild new one called Alice Cooper, were doing a German tour and Varga was out to get a scoop.

It was an important evening for

Varga on many levels. He realized that Cooper's band would be going on well after he'd be able to catch the last bus home. He did run into them tuning up backstage though and, with bemused incredulity, recalls

*"It was my first real interview, and it was pretty embarrassing."*

the guitar player tuning each of his strings to a separate pitch-pipe (!), six essential tools for any virtuoso novice, of course.

So the interview would have to be with another band six months later. At the time Chicken Shack had just lost its pianist, Christine Perfect (soon-to-be McVie), so Varga wrote out a list of questions that he recited to the group's leader, Stan Webb "without any sort of follow-up questions. It was my first real interview, and it was pretty embarrassing." Picture what was happening: He was in a dressing room right off the stage. He was holding a list of questions in his hands. One band member was holding his tape recorder, another his microphone, while another was slowly stripping a lovely, willing groupie until she was naked and, like the band, very happy indeed. Then, one of the guys opens the door, shoves her out into the club, and locks her out while he concludes his interview, the audience going wild outside. "To show you how new I was to this (if you need more evidence) I didn't include the groupie incident in my subsequent article."

Later on, Varga's second interview subject turned out to be the same as his first: Stan Webb of

Chicken Shack. By this time, the young scribe had gotten his act together so well that Webb deemed it the best interview he'd ever given.

While in the tenth grade Varga began writing reviews and articles for an American-financed English language magazine, published in Germany and distributed in many NATO countries, called *Trading Post* (later renamed *Overseas Life*) to which he contributed until its demise in 1994.

Just when Varga, teen tycoon of type, was getting his groove going his father retired and prepared to move the family back to the United States. Varga's father became ill before the move and remained in Germany with his wife for treatment, and Varga was sent back to the U.S. alone to start 11th grade, living with friends of the family.

In Twentynine Palms. With a strange foreign accent. With shoulder length hair. Welcome to Culture Shock, George, 1972.



Varga playing drums in 1972

Twentynine Palms wasn't exactly a cultural mecca nor were many of its 7,000 or so inhabitants disposed to a natural open-mindedness. During physical education, Varga once found himself being tackled by his own team as well as the opposition's. His accent was perceived as more suspicious than exot-

ic, and far too often a stranger's greeting essentially stated, "Go back where you came from, Commie." When the school paper actually interviewed him (as a kind of curiosity) he recalls saying, "I have great pity in my heart for people who have only one radio station . . . and it only plays garbage." Then, turning philosophical, he voiced his concern about the gullibility of the American public.

He continued his monthly misadventures for *Overseas Life* and joined a band called Teeth as their drummer. These dudes were quite a bit older than Varga; one of them, Gypsy, had done some session work with Santana and others after going AWOL from the Marines. In fact, Gypsy would perform (his long hair and beard rendering him unrecognizable) in Twentynine Palms on occasion.

Teeth landed a sweet gig at Varga's high school, which resulted in a mini-triumph. The long-haired, non-jock, non-doper's band was very good, and the kid could keep a beat.

And, of course, he wrote like a fiend, even editing his school newspaper. His journalistic skills in a competition won his entire senior class a trip to Magic Mountain, a trip he wouldn't share himself. He'd graduated early and headed back to Frankfurt to follow his muse. A few of his former schoolmates, after passing through the "Wow-who-was-that-dude?" phase, implored the principal to send some money to him in Germany. A belated thank you?

The 15 months back in Frankfurt gave him a Spartan existence but an enjoyable one, including several odd jobs along with a lot of writing and a bit of drumming. He was the youngest member of the press corps at the Montreux Jazz Festival, and he continued his education at a German branch of the University of Maryland.

He briefly lost his job at *Overseas Life* when popular, expected groups like the Eagles failed to make the cut in one of his year-end, ten-best columns, returning when intelligence and reason were retrieved at the magazine.



Francis Matthews imitates George Varga in *The Revenge of Frankenstein*



Varga will have none of it

Photo courtesy of San Diego Union-Tribune



# parlor showcase



Photo: Bill Richardson



Baby I'm-a-whomp you: Milli Vanilli, still valuable as a practice pad.

In November of 1975 Varga rejoined his parents in San Diego. Soon he was writing album reviews for the *San Diego Reader* as well as features, reviews, and interviews for San Diego's monthly music magazine *Kicks*. He took classes for a while at San Diego City College (where his guidance counselor happened to be Cameron Crowe's mom) and played on the soccer team there, vanquishing any intimidation with his renowned ability to direct the ball perfectly into any opponent's face when necessary.

He continued to drum in a suc-

cession of bands and perhaps reached a commercial peak with a duo called Mountain Leaf, playing evenings on the Bahia Belle as it floated along Mission Bay.

He joined a poetry circle in Ocean Beach, which led indirectly to a position as a curriculum editor with San Diego City Schools.

In 1982 Varga began to freelance for the *San Diego Union*, an assignment that would become more frequent and eventually permanent.

And he loves his job.

He was one of the first to expose lip-syncing at "live" performances in

the late eighties and has remained tenacious in that particular crusade. Madonna, Britney Spears, and several others have been needled and poked over the years by his pen (or word processor) of truth.

In 1995 he authored a major piece for *Billboard* magazine on the history of pop music in San Diego, likewise a history of pop music at the Hollywood Bowl for a gorgeous, coffee table collection commemorating that institution's 75th anniversary.

He's written the liner notes for a great many albums by artists including Larry Carlton, Happy the Man, and San Diego sax player James Moody.

But the *Union-Tribune* is his prime gig and a proud one.

"The goal is always to write honestly, to be as informative as possible," Varga says. "To back up your opinions, to explain why you think what you think. Try to provide context, perspective. Don't try to curry favor with your readers; don't try to antagonize them."

But it's inevitable. He's well aware of that. He's hit the wrong nerve on several memorable occasions.

His Wayne Newton pan in 1995 upset many readers. His review ended up in the local section of the paper rather than in the entertainment pages and, in all but one edition, another writer's byline was mistakenly substituted for his own. At first, the other reporter couldn't understand the enormous amount of hate mail directed his way, and an amusing correction would run later, which included photographs of both writers,



Varga and Alex Van Halen in 1992

leaving no doubt as to which face belonged on the voodoo dolls Newton fans might have been making.

Perhaps the biggest moment of infamy centered around Linda Ronstadt's July 18th performance at Humphrey's last summer. The singer's brief introduction to an

encore bore a dedication to filmmaker Michael Moore and engendered unprecedented upset along political lines. Varga defended her right to do what she wanted to at her

shows and found himself taken to task by hundreds of readers who seemed to demand everything from his job to his head. There were supporters for Varga as well, and even the most casual reader could certainly find something of value in the vigorous debates that jammed the letters pages for a few weeks. Varga's article was somehow posted on the *Drudge Report*, and the writer was invited as a guest on radio's *The O'Reilly Factor*, an appearance that revealed Varga to all as reasonable, informative, and intelligent.

Certainly aware that critics can occasionally sway public opinion, experience and accrued reason keep Varga from anticipating any victories as a cultural crusader. Still, he'd be ecstatic if *The Negro Problem's* greatness was more universally acknowledged. Other artists for whom he'd see Big Things under some elusive worldly justice would include A Girl Called Eddy, TV on the Radio, Mindy Smith, Yerba Buena, the Darkness, and Dizzee Raskai.

Everyone has an opinion. George Varga gets paid for his. That, I believe, is pretty darn nice. "I've learned more and experienced more as a writer than I ever would have as a drummer," he says.

George and Beth are about to leave for a concert, but Varga has a few final thoughts. "The most fre-

quent response from readers who disagree with something I've written usually goes, 'Was Varga even at the same concert I was?' I can answer them all now. No, I wasn't. We are

all in different places. Great music, like great art, will simultaneously function on several levels. And that's the wonderful thing about it: every response is valid."

*"I've learned more and experienced more as a writer than I ever would have as a drummer."*

Another time and place. I listen to Varga's message on my answering machine. "A critic can take only so much criticism . . . I've been offered a job to drum with a big group. East Coast. I'll tell you later. Anyway, I've been asked at the paper for suggestions on a possible replacement for me. They might be calling you today or tomorrow. Just try to pretend that you like hip-hop."

Visions of thousands of readers begin to transport me. Meeting stars. Idols and idiots. Backstage parties, long-distance interviews, expanding my musical knowledge, meeting babes . . .

Then I wake up.

The beat remains in the hands of one far more competent to drum the times.

Photo courtesy of Roni Galgano



Oh, the glamour! A rain-soaked Varga takes notes at the 1994 Woodstock festival.



# ramblin'

## Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



### BLUEGRASS HEAVEN

Have you ever attended the International Bluegrass Music Association's annual event in Kentucky? Come to think of it, what is IBMA? The International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) is the pre-eminent trade organization for bluegrass music and bluegrass musicians. Members include most of the top bands and performers, most bluegrass musicians' agents, venue operators and promoters, and most of the top local bluegrass organizations like your local San Diego Bluegrass Society (SDBS) and North San Diego County Bluegrass and Folk Club (NCBFC). The majority of IBMA members are "professionals," meaning agents, artists, or folks otherwise earning a living in the music business. About five percent are organizations like SDBS (although if you count the members of these local organizations this group is by far the largest segment of IBMA), and the rest is a combination of fans and others. IBMA's mission is to foster and promote:

- positive working relationships among its members
- professionalism in the music, how it is presented, and in the image of bluegrass
- integrity and honesty
- honoring tradition, which is viewed as important not only to the past but to the future
- diversity and inclusiveness
- forward thinking
- education



IBMA, which is governed by a board of directors, headed by Tim O'Brien this year, operates on a budget of \$760,000 (2004), and \$889,500 next year, giving you some idea of the organization's clout. Among IBMA's major activities is its annual World of Bluegrass Trade Show and Fan Fest in Louisville, Kentucky each October. Starting next year it will take place in Nashville. The week-long event includes three days of educational seminars on every imaginable topic, ranging from bluegrass in the schools and how to set up and run a bluegrass web site to bluegrass humor and more. The trade show itself is a fabulous exhibition, featuring luthiers, music stores, musicians, and bands where you can see and try out the latest instruments and products.

Meanwhile, throughout the three days of the trade show, a different band performs every 30 minutes from 10am-10:30pm. This is an excellent opportunity for those shopping for bands to check them out, for bands to show their goods to potential buyers, or for fans to just hear unbelievably great nonstop music. And, there's more! Showcases, sponsored by local bluegrass organizations and others, are held in hotel suites every night from 10:30pm-2am, offering free admission, free drinks and snacks, and the chance to hear bands up close and unplugged and a great opportunity to really hear the music and meet band members. All this is capped with jamming and private parties that last all night long. If you attend I guarantee you will bump shoulders, if not instruments, with the biggest stars in bluegrass and come home blurry eyed!



This is also when IBMA presents its annual awards show, which is the bluegrass equivalent of Grammy awards.

These shows are truly spectacular, and we all owe thanks to our own local Wayne Rice of KSON's *Bluegrass Special* radio show (10pm-midnight every Sunday) as he, with assistance from Tom Cunningham, produce the show for IBMA. Proceeds from the bands go to the IBMA trust fund to aid bluegrass musicians with medical and other needs.

Following the three-day trade show, IBMA opens its Fan Fest, a full-on bluegrass festival with three days of top bands, workshops, and other activities. (The trade show also continues through Fan Fest.) You definitely will not forget a week spent at an annual IBMA event, which, according to locals, really stands for "I've Been Mostly Awake!"

IBMA has a new DVD out, aimed at local teachers and schools, with lesson plans and teaching materials for presenting a Bluegrass in the Schools program. IBMA also offers insurance and other assistance to its members. In this way, IBMA is the key parent organization for the music we love. Give some thought to visiting Nashville next October for the first IBMA held there. Check out the IBMA website: [www.ibma.org](http://www.ibma.org), or call toll free 888-438-4262.

### LOCAL NEWS



**Chris Stuart**, a Del Mar local, and his band **BackCountry**, will be holding a CD release party

November 12 at Acoustic Music San Diego, located at 4650 Mansfield Street in the Normal Heights United Methodist Church. The band's new song, "Silver Quarter," is number six on the bluegrass charts, an outstanding feat for a local bluegrass! You won't want to miss this great band in a rare local performance. For tickets and information go to <http://mypeoplepc.com/members/carey-driscoll/musicforyou2/id24.html>.

On October 15 the **Kruger Brothers** gave a great concert in Pacific Beach, followed by a guitar, banjo, and band dynamics workshop at Acoustic Music the following day, and a show at Dizzy's that evening. These guys can really play those instruments and know how to present an entertaining show.



**Virtual Strangers**, hard at work on their first CD, will be the featured band at SDBS Fuddruckers in La

Mesa on November 9, so come on down and enjoy a great evening. Admission is free, but a \$5 donation is suggested. There will be plenty of jamming too, so bring your instrument.

Coming November 21 to the St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Clairemont is an all bluegrass evening honoring **Emma Radcliffe**, long-time church member and supporter extraordinaire of local bluegrass. The program features five to seven top local bands, who are encouraged to write and perform at least one original song dedicated to Emma. Mark your calendars for this free event!

As usual, there is a lot going on in San Diego's bluegrass world. Hope to see you out there pickin'!



by Sven-Erik Seaholm

### THE LLAMAS AND ME



Kekhoe and Sven

Not to sound like a whiner, but I'm not a wealthy man. I've met a lot of folks who hear the words "record producer" and assume I drive a really nice car (I drive someone else's compact beater), own a really bitchin' house (I rent a nice, but modest one), and am able to make them as rich and famous as they think they deserve to be (Ha ha ha! Oops, sorry). Another common misconception (and this comes from my friends, mind you) is that I'm a workaholic. *Au contraire, mes amis*. When this comes up, I reference the shark analogy: If they stop swimming, they die; If I stop working, bills don't get paid.

Of course all of this is offset by the fact that I'm my own boss, I get to work within my chosen field, and I truly love my job. But without a break every now and then, even your dream job can turn into a profound case of too much of a good thing. A prolonged period of non-stop working can result in extreme fatigue, which can diminish the quality of my contributions to any project. The bottom line is that after two years without a break, I was more than overdue.

So my wife Gail and I decided to plan a vacation. Her first suggestion involved going to Chicago to help her family celebrate her mother's 80th birthday. Nothing wrong with that, but it would also be a lot of activity densely compacted into an extended blur of barbecues and reminiscing that we all too often end up wondering how it all went by so fast as we're being driven to the airport. I was looking for the opposite effect, I wanted time... to... slow... down. I wanted a total change of scenery, and I needed one thing above all others: Quiet. The sweet stillness of silence that our ever-bloating little Southern California burg won't be able to offer until the next Ice Age.

The obvious problem was that Gail's mom only turns 80 once, and rightly, she was determined to be there for that. However, as I said earlier, money ain't growin' on any trees in our yard, so it would be cost prohibitive for both of us to go and then try to do anything else. We decided that Gail would go for a week, then return in time for us both to go somewhere else. But where?

Hawaii was our first choice, but after

a couple of weeks looking for deals online, I realized that financially it wasn't going to happen. Ditto Mexico, contrary to the reputation it has of being affordable. Then I remembered one of the most vast expanses of beauty and quiet I'd ever experienced, albeit some 20 years ago: Puget Sound, an area in the Northwest corner of the U.S., split by a border with the Canadian province of British Columbia. I had been to Victoria, B.C.'s Butchard Gardens, which is a Willy Wonka-like fantasy world comprised of seemingly every type of flower and fauna and considered it a must-stop for two shutterbugs like Gail and me. I'd also been to Vancouver and felt it would be a cool place to stay while we were "in the neighborhood." Besides, the only thing I needed other than rest and quiet was the stimulus of being in a different place from where I'd been for the last few years.

We eventually decided to spend two days in Seattle, three in Victoria, and two in Vancouver. But where would we stay in Victoria and find the quiet and rest that were our primary objectives? The answer came to us as gently and quietly as we would find our new friends to be.

We discovered a Bed and Breakfast that was an actual llama farm, nestled in the serenely forested hills of British Columbia and home to a baker's dozen of the most interesting, peaceful, and (fortunately for Gail) hypoallergenic animals we'd ever encountered outside of our great zoo. Upon our arrival there, we took a quick tour around the grounds, which were also home to a salmon-spawning stream, a few chickens that laid some incredible eggs, and a wonderfully friendly cat named Tigger. We then carried in our bags and sat down to enjoy afternoon tea. After a few moments, I looked over to Gail and said, "Do you hear that?" For the next half-hour, we were both frozen in the blissful realization that we had finally found what we had long been searching for: a perfect, vacuum-like silence. I don't even think we ate the cookies for fear they would shatter the unspoiled crystalline stillness that enveloped us.

We spent the next few days taking literally hundreds of pictures of the llamas and the farm. At one point the sun splashed across my digital camera's lens, creating the most striking sun flare across



Sven-Erik Seaholm

the image. Turning the camera even slightly would yield a myriad variations, and I soon found myself looking through a couple dozen examples of the effect. What I eventually noticed was that I had progressively lost sight of what I had been taking a picture of in the first place, resulting in a bunch of fairly pedestrian photos that all had a great visual effect



Wallace

but little else remarkable about them.

How many times have you gotten the vibey-est guitar sound, but not a great guitar part? A crappy snare sound with a terrific reverb? A wonderfully intimate-sounding vocal with a just "so-so" performance? By chasing after coolness, we can often end up losing sight of what is or at least should be our main objective: making real music that real people can really feel.

Here I was on the vacation of a lifetime, and a llama was helping me my write my column. Geez, maybe I am a workaholic...

*Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning recording artist and producer. His band The Wild Truth will make its performing debut Saturday, November 13th at the Triple Crown Pub, 3221 Adams Ave. in Normal Heights.*

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# Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

Anyone can have a bad day. That's a scientific fact. Even celebrities sometimes find themselves suckling on the sun's mysterious tainted teat. And, more often than not, surveys reveal that when someone famous hits a bad patch and the whole world ends up knowing about it, the general feeling is that it can't really be all that bad because, after all, the unfortunate sap still has fame, fortune, uncommon social graces, and continues to produce enchantingly fragrant, evocatively picturesque stool.

Boys and girls, let the bubble-bursting begin.

We'd prefer to keep the bad stuff private. Even Jack Kennedy had no comment about his misfortunes on November 22, 1963, and his ongoing refusal of interviews has transformed speculation from a diversion into an industry. The average person demands full disclosure and seamy details much like some thirsty dog that drinks from the running sores of a leper.

I can't believe I just wrote that. You see, I've been upset for days since being . . . I mean, since a friend (also a celebrity) had a day that wasn't just bad, it was downright evil.

As I recount it, ask yourself: what would I do if I were in his place? Bear in mind that you'll never likely be a star and will never comprehend how much more deeply celebrities feel pain than do average folk like you.

Here goes. Your household staff doesn't wake, bathe, and feed you as instructed so that you can make an

important early photo shoot. In fact, they've entirely disappeared, along with your cars, credit cards, much of your jewelry, and all of your rubber lounge wear and recreational aids. Your private photo albums are missing too, along with the autographed, indexed, annotated 20-year collection of visitors' lingerie.

You urge yourself to look at the bright side. Your hidden trunks with all the *really* good stuff are undiscovered and undisturbed. And, darn it, *no one* can *ever*, will *never*, take away your talent.

Sometime, during the hour you spend on the phone calling cops, your agent, quarantining your credit cards, your attorney, personal trainer, and favorite new chat line, you notice a well dressed couple peering through your front window. "Bout time, you think, motioning for their attention and waving them in.

You explain the situation, pointing out various scenes of the crime and invite them to do whatever they have to do — take pictures, process fingerprints, whatever — while you soak awhile in your sauna at the end of the hall over there. Winking at the pretty blonde agent, you whisper that there's room for two and she smirks, fakes indignation, and turns away. One of those, no doubt. What a waste.

When you return to the atrium after awhile, the couple's van is gone from the driveway. So are they. And so are several pieces of furniture and audio-video equipment. The word "sucker" is spray painted on the inside of the front doors, marring the polished cedar.



The scintillating Mr. Sinatra

The real detectives arrive about half a day later and the first thing they ask is for your autograph. Four, maybe five would be nice. For free.

Well, what would you do?

What if, rather than go berserk (which can promote crow's feet, I'm told) you find some privacy and, for the first time in your life, turn your troubles over to the Lord? And right then stigma appear on both your hands, quickly staining your favorite shirt?

The finale and outcome of that dark day, the decisions made and retaliation instigated will remain my secret. Oh, and my friend's too, of course.

Try to be positive. If you wanna feel like a million bucks, go and vote! At the polls everyone's equal. You're doing something fabulous. Unless the results are wrong and we end up living in a secretive evil dictatorship with an agenda that would confound Harold Robbins.

In which case, try whistling.



# RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

## MY BACK IS BACK

It was 4 p.m. on Thursday, September 23. "Jim, can you hear me?" said a faint voice. "Oh, Jim...are you there?" said another, louder voice. Struggling to open my eyes, I saw the fuzzy visage of my surgeon. "How do you feel?" he asked.

"Didja get the license number of the bus that hit me?" (I am *not* making this up!)

The crew in the O.R. all laughed ... not only at my wacky one liner but also because I had successfully survived seven and a half hours of surgery

to repair my lower back, alleviating a source of chronic severe pain that had plagued me for over five years.

Waking up in the recovery room was like waking up in paradise. Music played gently in the background (Ottmar Leibert, I think it was), nurses whispered sweet nothings in my ears ("nothings" because I had no clue who or where I was, nor what was said), and everyone made me feel like the most important man on whatever planet we were on. When I was moved to my regular room on the eighth floor, however, my life became like *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Every morning at six a whole new crew of nurses and nurse trainees invaded the floor, and everyday I had to try to keep some of them from messing me up. The doctor had asked for a standard blood sample — once. Somebody misread his instructions and kept waking me up every four



Jim McInnes

hours to take another sample. Before the doc stopped them, I was half-dead, having lost 1.2 liters of blood! My body temperature had dropped to 96 and my blood pressure was 90/50. I was pale and weak. I was also hallucinating.

Ahhhh, the hallucinations: the unforgettable night in the P.B. beach house with two hot chicks; the trip by

car to the space shuttle; the fear that my hospital roommate, Alfonso, was communicating with terrorists through his clothing iron, despite the fact that there

were no irons! I even believed I was a fantastic lead guitarist. That's when I really knew I was having visions. That dilaudid is great stuff. Good thing it's prescription only.

Kudos to my wife Sandi for saving us from further insanity by bringing the gizmo that sounds like ocean waves to our room.

As I write this I'm wearing my 15 pound turtle shell back brace and the electronic bone growth stimulator attached to electrodes in my back. What fun. I'll be free just in time for Christmas. Meanwhile I am back on 103.7 The Planet from my home studio.

I did it all for you. Have a nice life.

Hear Jim McInnes weekdays on The Planet 103.7 2-7pm and then again on Sunday nights 6-8pm for his show The Vinyl Resting Place®.



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## Phil Harmonic Sez

"Humility in the artist is his frank acceptance of all experiences, just as Love in the artist is simply that sense of Beauty that reveals to the world its body and soul."

— Oscar Wilde



## the highway's song



The Zombies: Rod Argent, Paul Atkinson, Hugh Grundy, Colin Blunstone, Chris White

by Bart Mendoza

One of the greatest bands to emerge from the sixties, as well as one of the most underrated, The Zombies managed two hits in 1964, "She's Not There" and "Tell Her No," as well as a posthumous late sixties perennial, "Time of the Season" after the band had split in 1968. Now, against all odds, the band has regrouped for a new album, *As Far As I Can See* (Rhino Records), and a tour that recently brought the quintet to San Diego for the first time.

For the band's long time area fans, the wait was more than worth it. On a bill that also featured sixties heroes Love, the interior of 4th & B was a Who's Who of the local music scene. The Zombies didn't disappoint, impressively earning several standing ovations with a mix of new tunes and vintage tracks. From the three-part harmonies to the instrumentation, the band was spot on, playing a wealth of material many music fans never thought they'd ever get a chance to experience live. Impressively, the new material went over almost as well as the older songs. A quick scan of the crowd during those tunes showed that

even though their disc had only been released in the U.S. a few days before, quite a few were already singing along.

The new tunes from *As Far As I Can See* fit in the set seamlessly, the album itself capturing the spirit of the original group. Fans of the Zombies piano-based orchestral pop with jazzy flourishes, not to mention Colin Blunstone's breathtaking vocals and Rod Argent's signature keyboard riffs — all elements still firmly in place — will find it an essential listen.

For his part Argent is sure he can pinpoint the reason the new album is being so well received. He says, "It was very much me writing for Colin's voice again, just as I started out doing and just as Colin started out learning to sing by." He sees this as a crucial item in the group's reformation. He added, "It felt honest for the first time to call ourselves the Zombies. In a nutshell, this wasn't a decision to reform, it was something that happened to us really, without us planning it, and I think that things are gaining because of that. Because it's not contrived, it's just us having a good time on the road and working together again."

Argent and Blunstone cemented their musical bond during their teenage years. "I've known Colin since

# Back From the Dead: Reunion Tour Brings Zombies to San Diego

our first rehearsal. That was in 1961." Argent remembers. "Colin used to play rugby football, and I went to meet our new guitar player in front of a local pub, and I met this guy who looked like a huge bruise with two black eyes and a big plaster on his face, because he's just broken his nose playing rugby."

While the teenage musicians gelled into a group from the start, the lineup was restructured within an hour of their meeting. "Colin was going to be the rhythm guitar player and I was going to be the singer, because this was supposed to be a guitar band," Argent recalls. "So we had our first rehearsal and during a break I wandered over to an old upright piano in the corner and started playing 'Nutrocker' by Bumble and the Stingers." Argent's obvious talent on the keys impressed his musical cohorts.

"Colin came up to me and said, 'You're mad. You can't play piano like that and not play piano in the band, so I suddenly became the pianist.'" This was not to be the only change to take place that day. "About ten minutes later we were having a coffee and Colin started strumming his guitar and singing a Ricky Nelson song, probably 'It's Late,'" says Argent, laughing at the memory. "I just looked at him and said, 'Well, you've got to be the singer.'"

Within a few years the band scored their first hit with "She's Not There," initiating the group's first visit state-side. Argent is clear that the hardships of touring in the sixties (and early seventies with his own group) was one of the reasons he didn't tour for decades. "The very first thing we did in the states was the Murray the K Christmas Show and we opened up on Christmas day in 1964, at 8 o'clock in the morning at the Fox Theatre," he states. "We played eight shows a day as I remember. Even though we only played one or two songs in the whole show, we were stuck in that theatre."

Going on the road proved tougher, as the band found out when they joined a Dick Clark package tour. "It was knacker back in the Dick Clark

days. Back then there weren't very many good sound systems or lighting rigs, and it was harder just getting around," he says. "I was 19 years old. I came back after five weeks, and I was completely shot. It took me about three weeks to get over it."

Luckily the camaraderie among the musicians on those tours, in which the artists were crammed together on a roaming bus, was more than worth it. The band shared the stage with The

believe he started shouting about when we were in the studio." Finally pushed to his limit, Argent made a stand. "He was being so rude to everybody and I thought I'm not going to stand for this. I stood up said, 'If you're going to talk like that, I'm going.'" Luckily the notoriously difficult producer found humor in the situation. "He just laughed, and he was nice as pie for the rest of the day."

In 1967 the Zombies moved to Abbey Road Studios to record their landmark album *Odyssey and Oracle*. The band received little label support and, in fact, ended up financing the project themselves. One of the sessions' most amazing moments came while the band was finishing up a track, and workers started removing gear while the tape was running. The anecdote has Argent highly bemused. "You have to realize that Abbey Road at the time was a wonderful, groundbreaking studio, but it was also a studio that had been there since the 1930s." Indeed, the studio had been opened with a session by composer Edward Elgar and was known for being a particularly stuffy

environment. "It was a mixture of the best technical brains and an extremely nine-to-five, white coat working regime. So it didn't matter who you were, you had to book your studio time in sessions, like 10-2, 2-5, and so on. We were at the end of one session and I think I was actually right in the middle of an organ solo," Argent pauses for a moment. "It might have been 'Time of the Season.' I can't remember which track exactly at this point, but the door burst open and two guys in white coats burst in." The band looked on incredulously but kept recording. "Because it was 5 o'clock, they started carrying out some of the equipment from the studio and we just stared at them open mouthed." Argent's laughter is contagious. "They just said 'Sorry mate, five o'clock, this stuff has to be out of here.'"

These days the band handles all its own affairs, including recording at their own studios. Argent couldn't be more thrilled about touring and releasing music with the newly reconstituted Zombies. "It is obviously a very demanding lifestyle and it's one where the tedious parts of it certainly don't get any less tedious as you get older," he remarks good naturedly. "When you're traveling day after day after day in a minibus or something and doing hundreds and hundreds of miles, it can really wear you down. But we're putting up with that for the blast of actually playing live."



Rod Argent and Colin Blunstone

Shangrilas, Ben E. King, Patti Labelle with the Bluebells, and many more. "Dionne Warwick toured with us on the *Dick Clark Show*," recalls Argent. "I remember that because once after a show she invited us back to her family's house, which very possibly could have been Cissy Houston's house. There was a little baby there and I have forever wondered if that was Whitney Houston," he says with a laugh.

Despite continually releasing some of the most groundbreaking singles of the era, of the follow-ups to "She's Not There," only "Tell Her No" bothered the upper reaches of the charts. The group did however appear on numerous TV shows and scored an appearance in one of the great cult films of the sixties, psychological thriller *Bunny Lake is Missing*. "The whole thing was done very quickly, it was like one day's shooting," Argent says of his movie debut. "I have to say, working with Otto Preminger was a mixed blessing. He was a very rude man and I couldn't

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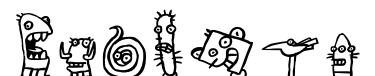
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## J. Turtle Project

by Charles Dahan

*Project*, the latest effort from SDSU educated and California bred J. Turtle, offers songs from nearly every genre of modern pop music throughout its ten tracks, all enjoyable and showing potential with the exception of a few of the songs that come across as contrived. This happens when he attempts genres outside his forte, which is writing songs with intense lyrics and sweet melodies, accompanied by acoustic instrumentation.

Beginning with "Something Different," Turtle invokes repetitive lyrics, overlays and electronic beats, and a near-yelling chorus similar to Linkin Park. While the song appears to be the most obvious attempt at a single, it lacks the gritty emotion of Linkin Park's Chester Bennington and, in the end, falls flat. After listening to the rest of the album, it seems almost as if, on this song, Turtle received bad advice from a producer.

Turtle is clearly a talented acoustic folk guitarist and vocalist, which is why this is a very good CD. Emotional and personal lyrics, vocals accompanied only by his guitar, and intoxicating melodies make up most of the album, most notably on "My Lullaby" and "I Still Tell You Everything." "Xylophone," which I consider to be the gem of the album, is a jazzy, ultra-hip love song where Turtle really shines. Happily, the vocals here do not fall into the easy trap of sounding like a lounge singer or crooner but rather stay true and beautiful. Shunning the electronic noise present on some of the preceding tracks, Turtle, accompanied by his guitar, drums, and a bass, appears confident and cool with his own music, which is the image I think he should be pushing.

*Project* makes a gallant attempt to showcase the artist's range but instead illustrates the shortcomings an individual musician has with difficulties producing tracks that involve numerous layers. However, where most bands and male singers attempt to pound out vocals and sacrifice nuance for the hip sounds of British garage band rock, he clearly has a solid grasp in creating touching, simple-yet-effective melodies to accompany his sweet, emotional lyrics.



## Simply Complex

by Charles Dahan

Each song on *Simply Complex's* self-titled CD begins with strong, rich, enticing instrumentation led by impressive guitar work, offering the same potential of being a catchy alternative-rock song. When the singing starts, however, images of Fleetwood Mac and Genesis are suddenly replaced by images of starting the song over. At times, lead singer Rosie Chiurlia style suggests Ann Wilson (Heart) and Sarah Shannon (Velocity Girl). On "Slip Away" and "Don't Cry," her delivery is nuanced, her powerful voice blending perfectly with the excellent work of the band. In the final song, "I Wonder," Chiurlia takes center stage without overshadowing the instrumentation. This is the best song on the album because it encapsulates the band's best traits as a whole in producing a fantastic rock song. On most of the rest of the album, however, her voice unfortunately tends to overpower the rest of the band and falls short of rocking out. Rather than blending with the instrumentation, one is reminded of a Las Vegas act instead of an experienced rock band.

The album is saved by a fantastic driving bass and electric guitar, as well as some great riffs in "Africa" and "Amberia." Also included on "Amberia" are some stand-out vocals from keyboardist Mike Knoll, with a hint of both Tom Petty and The Eagles. *Simply Complex* is carried by experienced musicians who have put together some fantastic songs. The rock tunes harken to a generation past, helped by solid, precise musicians who take pride in their craft. The disproportionate vocals on most of the tracks, however, tarnish the album as a whole.



## Various Artists Hardheaded Woman: A Celebration of Wanda Jackson

by Bart Mendoza

Remembered mostly as the original Queen of Rockabilly, Wanda Jackson's sound was actually equal parts country and rock 'n' roll, as this new 21-track collection ably shows. Featuring new interpretations of songs written by Jackson as well as choice covers that she recorded, this disc is a treasure and better than the average tribute album.

Not everything here succeeds. Neko Case's take on the Chuck Berry penned "Brown Eyed Handsome Man" is less than inspired, while one of Jackson's best known early stompers, "Fujiamama," is reduced to a spooky carnival-esque dirge by Trailer Bride. But what hits its mark more than makes up for a few uninspired recastings.

The music that works the best here uses, for lack of a better phrase, classic stylings. High points include Kristi Rose's plaintive voice on the country perennial "This Should Go On Forever," the jazzy touches on keyboard driven R&B standard "Sticks and Stones" from Nora O'Connor, and the tinkling piano ballad "Right or Wrong," given a passionate reading here by Kelly Hogan. Also impressive is "Funnel Of Love" by the Asylum Street Spankers, a brilliant arrangement that takes in a musical saw, massed vocals, and terrific clarinet, among the shuffling guitars.

Notably, two of the stand-out tracks here are by artists with local ties. Candy Kane turns in a storming "Rock Your Baby," her bluesy vocals nicely surrounded by guitar riffs and a superb bit of wailing harmonica by Jimmy Wood. Meantime Rosie Flores, who recently helped bring Jackson herself back into the spotlight, contributes a version of "In the Middle of a Heartache," as heartfelt a country tear jerker as you're going to come across.

continued next column →



## Various Artists Country Girls on Western Ranch Party 1957-1960

by Phil Harmonic

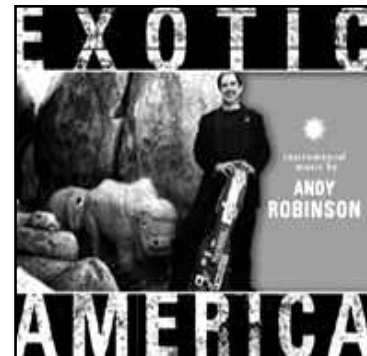
Back in the late fifties, a syndicated TV show called *Western Ranch Party* featured every country star of the day as well as Tex Ritter as its host. *Country Girls on Western Ranch Party 1957-1960* features Bonnie Guitar, Patsy Cline, Wanda Jackson, Audrey Williams (widow of Hank Williams), the Collins Kids, and more. Once you hear them, you'll recognize just about every song.

The musicianship is extraordinary throughout, but on Patsy Cline's "Walkin' After Midnight," Joe Maphis on guitar and Jimmy Pruett on piano stand out. You'll hear more blues and rockabilly influences than country western music. Traditional gospel tunes by Dorothy Wight and by the *Town Hall Party* gang are also exceptional. This 35-song CD was made in the Czech Republic, but the man responsible for compiling all the songs and writing all of the liner notes is San Diego's own musicologist and *San Diego Troubadour* columnist, Lou Curtiss. This CD is special and will bring back forgotten memories to those of you who were kids in the fifties. Close your eyes while you listen and you'll be transported back to those early days when the entire family sat in the living room together and watched television.

You can purchase this unique CD at Folk Arts Rare Records on Adams Avenue. The record store will soon be moving on down the street from where they are now. The new address is 2881 Adams Avenue.

continued from previous column

Whether you're a long time fan of Jackson's music or a fan of the groups included here, you won't be disappointed. These are classic songs for the most part played with real conviction and understanding. As a tribute it does its subject justice, but perhaps more important, it spreads the word about one of the icons of rock's early days just a little bit further.



## Andy Robinson Exotic America

by Simeon Flick

Andy Robinson couldn't have chosen a more apt name for his new album, *Exotic America*. It is particularly difficult to blend Eastern and Western musical idioms so naturally, so seamlessly, let alone with a simultaneous, synergistic mixing of traditional acoustic instruments and modern electronic synthesizers. It has been attempted many times before to questionable avail.

But Mr. Robinson has succeeded here, and with a minimum of the campy, saccharin byproduct often associated with "exotic" new age and world music hybrids (the "na na na" vocalizations on "The Bridges Are Burning" and the title track being the only miniscule, yet hardly unbearable, exceptions).

It's very easy to forget that this is an instrumental album; the melodies and solos are engaging, performed on and supported by instruments that one would hardly think belonged together, but somehow they do. Thumb pianos, kalimbas, and Egyptian tambourines share sonic space with mountain dulcimers, clarinets, guitars, and synthesizers.

The music effortlessly finds the natural fit among all its seemingly disparate elements, like a front-porch barbecue where curried hot dogs and A-1-marinated lamb shanks co-inhabit the grill, awaiting the appetites of sarong-and-cowboy-hat-wearing denizens of many nationalities.

*Exotic America* as a whole is a melting pot of cultural diversity stirred in the cauldron of joy. "Conversations" begins with the sound of pleasant banter that could have been recorded at a multicultural dinner party. Different accents can be discerned among the revelers, alluding to a realization of racial peace and harmony that, cliched as it may be, is still refreshing.

The skillful musicianship and production on *Exotic America* will engage almost any listener, and it is certainly exotic as the title maintains, but the subtly enjoyable delivery of its message — the universal tolerance of diversity — may be Mr. Robinson's most noteworthy accomplishment with this release.

# 'round about

# NOVEMBER CALENDAR

**monday • 1**  
**Irish Open Mic Night**, Rosie & Joe's, 7986 Armour St., 7:30pm. 858/277-5777.

**wednesday • 3**  
**Regina/Annie Bethancourt/Lisa Bastoni**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**thursday • 4**  
**Pete Thurston Night/Andrew Foshee**, Lestat's, 9pm.  
**Rip Carson**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.

**friday • 5**  
**Open Mic Night**, Tabloid Coffee, 9225 Carlton Hills Blvd., Santee, 7pm.  
**Bela Fleck & the Flecktones**, Spreckels Theatre, 8pm.  
**John January/Skott Freedman/Curtis Peoples/Gayle/Gregory Douglass**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.

**Pop Rocks**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.  
**Sue Palmer & her Motel Swing Orchestra**, Croce's Top Hat, 9pm.  
**Bart Mendoza**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**saturday • 6**  
**Kris Colt & Black Rose Band**, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7pm.  
**Mary Dolan CD Release**, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 7:30pm.  
**The Strawbs**, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. 619/303-8176.  
**Hugh Gaskins/Renata Youngblood/Rick Rutti/Krister Axel/Rheanna Downey**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.  
**Bushwalla Benefit**, Lestat's, 9pm.  
**Anna Troy/Brett Weisman CD Release**, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 5960 El Cajon Blvd., 9pm.

**sunday • 7**  
**Dan Connor & Little Big Men**, Dark Thirty Productions, Lakeside, 7:30pm. Info: 619/443-9622.  
**J. Turtle**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**wednesday • 10**  
**Robin Henkel**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**tuesday • 9**  
**Anna Troy**, Galoka, 5662 La Jolla Blvd., 8pm.

**thursday • 11**  
**Tracy Grammer**, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. Info: 619/303-8176.  
**Karyn Whittamore/Jame Lui/Aaron**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**friday • 12**  
**Jus Jer**, Tabloid Coffee, 9225 Carlton Hills Blvd., Santee, 7pm.  
**Chris Stuart/Michael Tiernan**, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. Info: 619/303-8176.  
**David Clark**, East S.D. Masonic Lodge, 7849 Tommy Dr., 7:30pm. 619/463-4676.  
**Sue Palmer Trio**, Bookworks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.  
**Neil Young Tribute w/ Berkley Hart/ Cindy Lee Berryhill/Dave Howard/Chuck Schiele/Sven-Erik Seaholm/Peter Bolland**, Dizzy's, 8pm.

**Band in Black (Johnny Cash Tribute)**, Cask & Cleaver, 3757 Mission Rd., Fallbrook, 8pm. 760/728-2818.  
**Ted Ehr/Dave's Son/Lindsey Yung/Aaron Bowen**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.  
**Victoria Robertson CD Release w/ Steve White**, Lestat's, 9pm.  
**Big Daddy Orchestra**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.

**saturday • 13**  
**Benefit for Charge Across America w/ Steph Johnson/Simeon Flick/Andrew Foshee & more**, Longboard's Bar & Grille, Pacific Beach, noon.  
**Hot Club of Cowtown**, California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 7pm & 10pm.  
**Roger McGuinn/Tom Rush**, Poway Ctr. for Performing Arts, 8pm.  
**Martin Storrow/Aaron Strout/J. Turtle/Reserved 16**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.

**Derailers/Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash**, Casbah, 8:30pm.  
**Kevin Tinkle/Greg Laswell/Trevor Davis**, Lestat's, 9pm.  
**Blue Largo**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.  
**The Wild Truth**, Triple Crown Pub, 3221 Adams Ave., 9pm.

**sunday • 14**  
**Indie Music Fest w/ Danielle LoPresti/ Jonatha Brooke/Danny Peck/Lisa Sanders/Matthew Stewart & more**, The Abbey, 2825 Fifth Ave., 6pm.  
**Laurie Lewis w/ Tom Rozum**, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7pm. Info: 858/566-4040.  
**Jeff Black/Christene LeDoux**, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. Info: 619/303-8176.  
**Late Tuesday/Dustin Shey/Flowerthief**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**monday • 15**  
**Irish Open Mic Night**, Rosie & Joe's, 7986 Armour St., 7:30pm. 858/277-5777.

**wednesday • 17**  
**Lauren Moris/Angelo of Celticana**, Rosie & Joe's, 7986 Armour St., 8:30pm. 858/277-5777.  
**Dehra Dun/Campaign for Quiet**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**thursday • 18**  
**Los Lobos**, Belly Up Tavern, Solana Beach, 7:30pm.  
**Acoustic Underground w/ Lauren Morris/Randi Driscoll/Emily Tessmer**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**friday • 19**  
**Ian Gallagher & Friends**, Tabloid Coffee, 9225 Carlton Hills Blvd., Santee, 7pm.  
**New City Sinfonia**, First Unitarian Church, 4190 Front St., 7:30pm.  
**Garrin Benfield/Ashley Matte**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.  
**Truckee Brothers/Kelly Rudick/Jack the Original**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**Freemonts**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.

**saturday • 20**  
**Open House**, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave. Information: 619/280-9035.  
**Benefit for Tom Boyer w/ D.R. Auten/ Brian Baynes/Bob Boerner/ Christopher Dean/Jim Earp/Patty Hall/Marion Law/Mike Nelson/Suzanna Reed/Keve/ Jim Soldi & Sharon Whyte**, Foothills United Methodist Church, 4031 Avocado Blvd., La Mesa, 2pm.  
**Sue Palmer w/ Deeja Marie**, Iva Lee's Restaurant, San Clemente, 7pm.  
**Not-Open-Mike Hootenanny**, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7pm. Info: 858/566-4040.

**The Weepies**, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. 619/303-8176.  
**Carlos Olmeda/Alex Esther**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.  
**Gregory Page/Diane Waters/Tom Brosseau**, Lestat's, 9pm.  
**Li'l Louis & Wild Teens w/ Danny Santos/The Savoy/DJ Reb**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.

**sunday • 21**  
**B.B. King**, Sycuan Casino, Dehesa, 8pm.  
**Ron Franklin/Kyle Phelan/Samantha Murphy**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**wednesday • 24**  
**Josh Wachtel/May River**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**thursday • 25**  
**Cindi Larvous/Little World**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**friday • 26**  
**Chris Klich**, Dizzy's, 8pm.  
**Spiral & Ethno-Groove Dancers**, Exotic Bamboo Tea House, 1475 University, 8pm.  
**Lauren DeRose/Jack the Original**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.  
**Anna & Lindsey Troy/Shaddox Brothers**, Lestat's, 9pm.  
**The Joey Show w/ Guest**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.

**saturday • 27**  
**Concept: Bravery/Shining Thru**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.  
**Anya Marina/Greg Laswell**, Lestat's, 9pm.  
**Billy Watson**, Tio Leo's, 5392 Napa St., 9pm.

**sunday • 28**  
**Michelle Lewis/Grampa Drew/Amber Rubarth/Josh Hall**, Lestat's, 9pm.

**monday • 29**  
**Irish Open Mic Night**, Rosie & Joe's, 7986 Armour St., 7:30pm. 858/277-5777.

## WEEKLY

every **sunday**  
**7th Day Buskers/Gully** on alt. Sundays, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.  
**Connie Allen**, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.  
**Traditional Irish Music**, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 3pm.  
**Irish Dance**, Dublin Square, 554 Fifth Ave., 3pm.  
**Celtic Ensemble**, Twigg's, 4pm.  
**Traditional Irish Music**, R. O'Sullivan's, Grand Ave., Escondido, 4pm.  
**Traditional Irish Music & Dance w/ Cobblestone**, 5-6:30pm/Boxty Band, 6:30-10pm., The Field, 544 Fifth Ave.  
**Joe Rathburn**, The Galley, 550 Marina Pkwy, Chula Vista, 5-9pm.  
**Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss**, 8-10pm, KSDS (88.3 FM).  
**The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice**, 10-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every **monday**  
**Connie Allen**, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.  
**Open Mic Night**, Lestat's, 7:30pm.

every **tuesday**  
**Connie Allen**, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.  
**Traditional Irish Music**, The Ould Sod, 7pm; Blarney Stone, Clairemont, 8:30pm.  
**Comedy Night**, Lestat's, 9pm.

every **wednesday**  
**Pride of Erin Ceili Dancers**, Rm. 204, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, 7pm.  
**Sue Palmer Supper Club w/ Deeja Marie & Sharon Shufelt**, Caffè Calabria, 3933 30th St., 6-8pm.  
**Open Mic Night**, The Packing House, 125 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 8pm.  
**Open Mic Night**, Twigg's, 8:30pm.  
**Highland Way**, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 8:30pm.  
**Pat Molley**, Egyptian Tea Room, 4644 College Ave., 9:30pm.

every **thursday**  
**Open Mic Night**, Just Java Cafe, 285 Third Ave., Chula Vista, 7-10pm.  
**Traditional Irish Music**, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 8:15pm.  
**Joe Byrne**, Blarney Stone, Clairemont, 8:30pm. (also Fri. & Sat.)  
**Rockabilly Thursdays w/ Hot Rod Lincoln**, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.  
**Brehon Law**, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 9pm (also Fri. & Sat.).

every **friday**  
**Connie Allen**, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.  
**California Rangers**, McCabe's, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.  
**Irish Folk Music**, The Ould Sod, 9pm.  
**Open Mic Night**, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.

every **saturday**  
**Connie Allen**, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.  
**Talent Showcase w/ Larry Robinson & the Train Wreck Band**, The Packing House, 125 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 8pm.  
**Christian/Gospel Open Mic**, El Cajon. Info: J.D., 619/246-7060.

San Diego Songster of the heart and mind  
**Michael Tiernan**  
 Catch him this November:  
 11/12: Acoustic Music San Diego opening for Chris Stuart and Backcountry CD Release  
 11/14: First Ever San Diego Indie Music Fest  
 11/18: LA Music Awards: Nominated for Male Singer-Songwriter of the Year  
 Saturdays in November: E-Street Cafe, Encinitas

"A fresh voice of very high quality...Tiernan's songwriting star is definitely one to watch for." - Folk and Acoustic Music Exchange  
 "...adheres to no boundaries; every genre is crossed as Tiernan showcases his technical skill with exceedingly intricate guitar work." - San Diego Reader  
 "The down-to-earth human excitement he gets from performing music is contagious." - Jim Kloss Whole Wheat Radio

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Dark Thirty Productions Presents  
**Dan Connor**  
 and his band Little Big Men

Over the past several years, **Dan Connor** has emerged as a gifted singer-songwriter in the San Diego area. Connor and his band, **Little Big Men**, will return to the stage at Dark Thirty Productions on November 7 to share songs in their engaging musical style. Copies of their new CD, **Live at Jimmy Duke's**, will be available for sale.

(l to r) Bob Goldsand, Dan Byrnes, Dan Connor

**Sunday, November 7, 7:30pm**  
**www.darkthirty.com**

FOR RESERVATIONS AND INFORMATION, CALL:  
**(619) 443-9622**

every **thursday**  
**Open Mic Night**, Just Java Cafe, 285 Third Ave., Chula Vista, 7-10pm.  
**Traditional Irish Music**, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 8:15pm.  
**Joe Byrne**, Blarney Stone, Clairemont, 8:30pm. (also Fri. & Sat.)  
**Rockabilly Thursdays w/ Hot Rod Lincoln**, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.  
**Brehon Law**, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 9pm (also Fri. & Sat.).

every **friday**  
**Connie Allen**, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.  
**California Rangers**, McCabe's, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.  
**Irish Folk Music**, The Ould Sod, 9pm.  
**Open Mic Night**, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.

every **saturday**  
**Connie Allen**, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.  
**Talent Showcase w/ Larry Robinson & the Train Wreck Band**, The Packing House, 125 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 8pm.  
**Christian/Gospel Open Mic**, El Cajon. Info: J.D., 619/246-7060.





# the local seen



## Adams Avenue Street Fair, September 25-26



Photo: Liz Abbott  
Lisa Sanders



Photo: Steve Covault  
Johnny Love Sound



Photo: Steve Covault  
Floyd Dixon



Photo: Liz Abbott  
Roy Ruiz Clayton



Photo: Steve Covault  
Texmaniacs



Photo: Steve Covault  
Jump Jones



Photo: Steve Covault  
Lester Chambers



Photo: Bill Richardson  
Gregory Page



Photo: Steve Covault  
Tomcat Courtney



Photo: Steve Covault  
Willy Venant



Photo: Liz Abbott  
Peter Bolland



Photo: Liz Abbott  
Will Edwards Trio



Photo: Steve Covault  
Singer with Floyd Dixon's band



Photo: Liz Abbott  
The Truckee Brothers



Photo: Liz Abbott  
From inside Lestat's, Lou Curtiss in the foreground, with Will Edwards and Johnny Love in the background

## San Diego Music Awards Events: September 26-28



Photo: Steve Covault  
A.J. Croce



Photo: Steve Covault  
Day Buskers accepting their award



Photo: John Baldi  
Lifetime Achievement Award Winners Scottville  
Squirrel Barkers



Photo: Steve Covault  
Lifetime Achievement award  
winner Charles McPherson



Photo: Steve Covault  
Kevin Hellman



Photo: John Baldi  
Carlos Olmeda



Photo: John Baldi  
Bart Mendoza



Photo: John Baldi  
Christopher Dale



Photo: John Baldi  
Gregory Page, Anya Marina, Jeff Berkley



Photo: John Baldi  
Joey Harris



Photo: John Baldi  
Nathaniel & Simeon Flick, Matthew Stewart



Photo: John Baldi  
Chuck Schiele



Photo: John Baldi  
Marcia Staub, Danny Cress in background



Photo: John Baldi  
Four Eyes



Photo: John Baldi  
Dan Connor

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NOV 13 RT LONGBOARDS

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