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SAN DIEGO
ROUBADOOR

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



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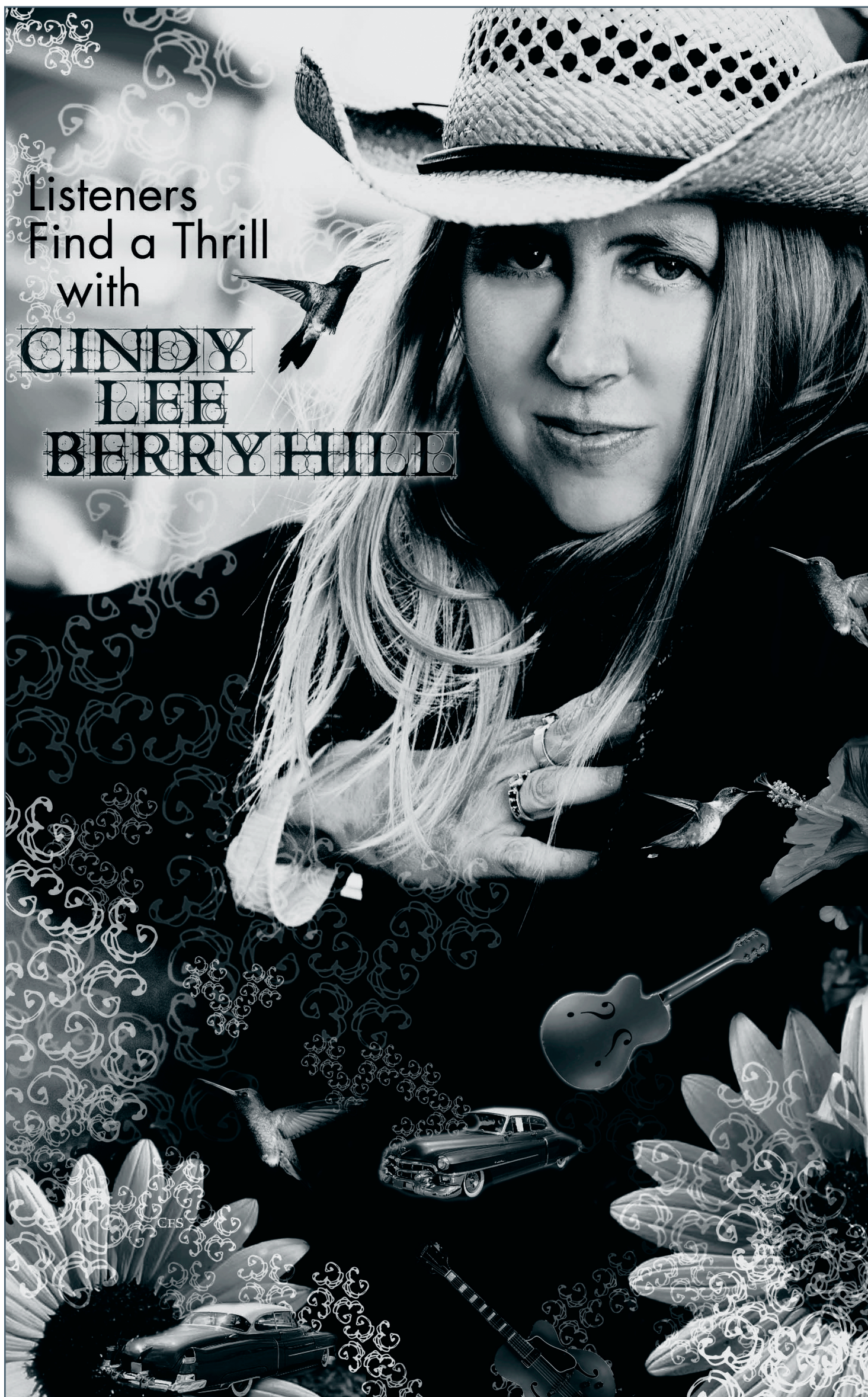
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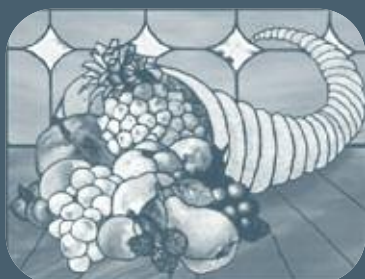
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The San Diego Troubadour is dedicated to the memory of **Ellen and Lyle Duplessie**, whose vision inspired the creation of this newspaper.

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Tradition Continues at Acoustic Expressions Music Store

by Dwight Worden

Bob Page, long-time owner and operator of Buffalo Brothers Guitars in Carlsbad, has taken over as the new owner and operator of Acoustic Expressions, North Park's venerable music store. Page, who is planning some important changes, expects to bring in many more instruments for sale. Anyone who has ever visited the Carlsbad store knows that Buffalo Brothers is one of the largest guitar stores in the country, featuring over 2,500 quality guitars on the floor, sold at great prices.

With its long and storied history, the local acoustic music community is excited to know that Page will continue to carry on the tradition that Acoustic Expressions established more than 30 years ago. For this great little North Park neighborhood store, it all began in 1974 during a time when the music world was suffering under the strains of disco, and folk music seemed to be destined for extinction. Walt Richards, however, had a vision, which was to preserve the "music of the folk." In February 1974, along with Bob Zink, a school of traditional music opened, called the New Expression. In its small house on Ray Street, the business grew and flourished, initially as a small retail operation under the direction of Vicki Cottle, providing students with suitable instruments on which to learn, as well as strings, picks, and music books that were otherwise hard to find.

These acoustic music pioneers are also responsible for starting the now well-known Slo-Jam, which has not only provided a very enjoyable respite from television, video games, and the constant media drive to consume, it has also proved to be a great learning tool for those who might be reticent to share their musical gifts with others. Also key to the early success of the little store was a group of enthusiastic music students and teachers who combined into a performing entity they called Mandolin Madness, which focused on learning to play in public and, equally as important, to have as much fun as possible while doing so. Thus, the New Expression music store began to nurture acoustic and folk music of all kinds — for instrument buyers, for teachers and learners, and for performers. Hence, the little shop on Ray soon became a focal point for the local acoustic music scene.

One of the star students to emerge from Mandolin Madness was George Thorward who was also very adept in the business world. In 1991 George and Jean Thorward purchased the retail operation from Cottle and operated it as a separate entity under the name House of

Strings. Under the careful and friendly guidance of the Thorwards, the shop made great strides and soon became a premier folk and bluegrass venue.

A few years ago Thorward decided to retire and, in 2003, sold the House of Strings business to Carol Winn and Mark Bennett. The partners moved the store from its long-time, but cramped, location in the little house to its current — and much larger — location at 2852 University Avenue. Winn and Bennett redecorated, added studios for instruction, fixed up a performance space in the back, and re-named the business Acoustic Expressions. Within a few years, however, it became apparent that the demands of their other business, coupled with the daily requirements of running the store, became difficult, so the partners began to consider either selling the business or closing its doors. However, a chance remark overheard at this year's Summergrass led to the store's latest reincarnation.

When Page, a lifelong bluegrass and acoustic music fan, heard that Acoustic Expressions would be closing at the end of September, and feeling that it would be a great loss to the acoustic community, Page purchased the store from Winn and Bennett.

Under Page's experienced and guiding hand, the store will continue to carry all the essential supplies and instruments sought out by



Acoustic Expressions in North Park



Bob Page (left) and Dwight Worden in Buffalo Brothers' booth at Summergrass

the acoustic music community and also make some upgrades. After a long absence, Martin guitars will return to the shop as will Collings, Ode, and many other well-known makes of instruments. The teaching staff will be retained too — but under its original name, the New Expression School of Music. In addition, the store will feature workshops conducted by local as well as visiting artists and a variety of other services to the local music community. Page is excited about this new undertaking and welcomes everyone to come down, see the store, and say hello. And so, the tradition continues.



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Musical Odyssey



Witness to the Great Folk Scare The Allen Singer Story

by Larry Rose

In 1959 the folk music revival was already underway in New York's Greenwich Village long before the rest of America found out about it. For what became known as the Great Folk Scare, the Village was Ground Zero. U. Utah Phillips, a folksinger known as the Golden Voice of the Great Southwest, came up with this phrase early in his career and it is still in use today, describing an incredible outpouring of traditional acoustic music that is still alive and well around the country, including San Diego. As the undisputed keeper of the flame here in San Diego, local musician Allen Singer was there from the beginning, jamming with guys like Bob Dylan, David Grisman, and John Sebastian before anybody ever heard of them. Because he was in exactly the right place at exactly the right time, his acoustic music education is second to none. Currently coordinator for the San Diego Folk Song Society and on the board of San Diego Folk Heritage, Singer is up to his eyeballs in the local traditional music scene, which is simply the natural progression of his entire life.

Singer grew up in the Chelsea area of New York City near Tenth Avenue and 27th Street. His musical interest was fueled by spending nearly every summer from the age of five at progressive camps where the songs of Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, and Pete Seeger were common campfire sing-along material. These tunes included union organizing ditties and early protest songs, such as Leadbelly's line "The white folks in Washington, they know how to chuck a colored man a nickel just to see him bow." Singer later became a camp counselor himself, helping another generation get hooked on the noncommercial, yet deep rooted, American sound. His father was into jazz and blues and he learned to love those tunes too. While in junior high school during the mid-1950s Singer read John Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, Woody Guthrie's *Bound for Glory*, J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, which set off a journey that pushed him toward the music that was closer to rural farmers, working class people, real life stories, and union activists. Here you could experience the real world and go through musical doors that took you further along on your life's journey.

Attending Junior High School No. 3 from



Singer at Pioneer Youth Camp Hootenanny, 1964

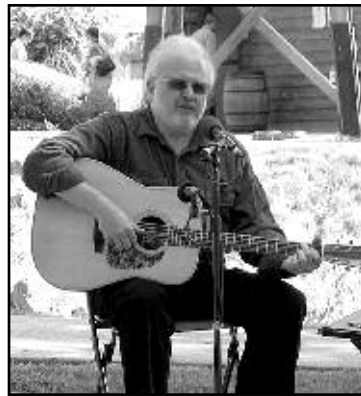
1956 to 1959 on Hudson Street in Greenwich Village, a new world opened up to Singer, where his classmates included kids of artists, musicians, Mafiosi, and writers. He got to know the Village and the people who lived there and never looked back. When Singer went to high school with Jose Feliciano, jamming with him in music class turned him on to really learning the guitar. Prior to that, Singer had been playing viola in the junior high band and, later, clarinet in a Greenwich Village dixieland band throughout most of high school. In the fall of 1961 his interest in folk music carried him by subway to the Village, where great old time music had been going on for some time. Finally serious about learning to play the guitar, Singer got his first decent guitar in early 1962 — a 1955 J-45 Gibson that cost him 70 bucks. He still has it and trots it out from time to time at San Diego folk music gatherings. He has since found a Collings Dreadnought guitar that he likes much better and picks that ax 90 percent of the time.

For decades Greenwich Village had been the center of the bohemian culture, home to great jazz clubs that launched the careers of many mainstream entertainers over the years. In 1949 Bob Hope discovered a kid named Tony Bennett singing in a Village club and gave him his stage name at that time. Bennett cut his first record in 1950 with Columbia, the same label that would eventually produce Bob Dylan's first LP, which took the Folk Scare to the rest of the world. This writer had never heard anything called "folk

music" until some of the stuff being done in the Village leaked out and made its way to the West as a commercial phenomenon.

The center of the Village was, and still is, Washington Square, bordered by New York University on three sides, with clubs occupying the streets on the opposite side. The Square was the gathering place for musicians and college kids from all over the East. Open jamming went on everywhere and Singer couldn't get enough of it. MacDougal Street, which ran south from the Square, was home to many clubs and coffeehouses where musicians played. Izzy Young's Folk Lore Center was the clearing house for all folk music activities in New York, which also fed the folk revival. The open mic was invented here in the late 1950s and was a magnet for Singer and the rest of the kids from the university as well as from New York's surrounding boroughs. When Bob Dylan came to New York in January 1961, he went straight to the Café Wha? and tried the open mic there on Hootenanny Night. Club owner Manny Roth, David Lee Roth's father, noted later that Dylan's first set was almost all Woody Guthrie songs. Dylan played with Mark Spoelstra, Dave Van Ronk, and Fred Neil who wrote "Everybody's Talkin'" in one of the watering holes on or near MacDougal Street. Dylan opened for John Lee Hooker in his first professional gig on April 11, 1961, at Gerde's Folk City, a club west of the Square on West Fourth Street, and Singer was there.

Singer remembers that the late blues and jazz



Singer at Train Song Festival, 2006

artist Dave Van Ronk was the star of the MacDougal Street coffeehouse and club scene at that time and that Dylan wanted a piece of the action, copying Ramblin' Jack Elliott and yearning to be just like Jack and also using Van Ronk's arrangements in his songs. Having released at least a dozen records in his career, Van Ronk wrote the definitive book about the epicenter of the Folk Scare called, fittingly, *The Mayor of MacDougal Street*. In his book Van Ronk gives Dylan credit for both launching the Great Folk Scare as a commercial happening with his first LP in December 1961 and then ending it with his first all-electric LP in 1965. Van Ronk's wife, Terri Thal, who was Dylan's first manager, was Singer's high school English teacher in the 11th grade. Small world. Dylan never forgot Washington Square and the nearby clubs and in a 1985 interview noted that it was a very special place that launched the music careers of hundreds of people and inspired thousands more who helped spread the magic to college campuses and coffeehouses everywhere.

Greenwich Village had been the hot spot for bohemians, traditional musicians, artists, and writers since the 1920s, most of whom lived and played in the alternate culture-rich area that included bookstores, cheap apartments, and lots of small clubs that featured jazz, poetry readings, and American roots music. Hearing traditional music on the radio was rare anywhere outside the South, and the northern-based music business ignored what was going on in the Village. This drought was broken by Oscar Brand, a folksinger who hosted a folk music program on WNYC, the New York City owned radio station in the 1950s, where you could hear the first musicians of the folk revival. He still hosts the same folk music program today. During the late 1940s Washington Square's fountain became the place to hang out and play guitars, fiddles, and banjos. When Singer discovered the place in 1961, he thought he had died and gone to heaven. Soon thereafter the commercial music business took notice when Dylan was featured in a major newspaper article written by Robert Shelton about music in the Village.

Traditional music could be heard in every club, coffeehouse, and bar in the Village before the scare really got going; Singer was there nearly every night and every weekend, witness to an amazing array of acoustic music styles there. Doc Watson played there in his first venture outside of the South. Ramblin' Jack Elliott, whose music Singer lived and breathed, was a resident as well as a coffeehouse regular. Singer also heard the Weavers, Pete Seeger, Mississippi John Hurt, Reverend Gary Davis, the Stanley Brothers, Bill Monroe, Flatt and Scruggs, the New Lost City Ramblers, Merle Travis, Joan Baez, Johnny Cash, Judy Collins, Tom Paxton, Phil Ochs, John Lee Hooker, Lightnin' Hopkins, Muddy Waters, Odette, and Maria Muldaur before they all became the vanguard of the folk movement. This is just a small list of the hundreds of traditional acoustic musicians who played the clubs where Singer and his friends hung out.

Singer notes that the first bluegrass band he heard in the Village, from someplace other than the rural South, was called the Greenbriar Boys. In fact, members of the band — Ralph Rinzler, Bob Yellin, and John Herald — who used to call Singer the "fat kid," jammed on the Square with Singer and his friends. This type of traditional hillbilly music, along with bluegrass and old time country music, which was spread to the north almost entirely by a bunch of Jewish kids from New York City, many of whom were second generation children of Eastern European Jews who had settled in the Village. Attracted to this kind of music, Singer felt it was his way of becoming a part of the real American culture. He couldn't identify with Dick Clark's brand of rock and roll and its sugary covers of doowop and black rhythm and blues. He loved honkytonk, cowboy, and old time country music. He notes that Roy Acuff called New York bluegrass "Jewgrass" after hearing some of these northern kids pick and win at the Galax Old Time String Band Contest in Asheville, North Carolina.

Marshall Brickman and Eric Weissberg, Washington Square regulars during the 1950s and



Singer, 1963



CD cover photo for Desert Tracks, Ocotillo, 2006

early 1960s, released the first all bluegrass banjo LP recording by northern pickers to add credence to Acuff's Jewgrass moniker. Done in the Earl Scruggs hot three-finger style, the sound was soon being heard all over the world and the Village became, once again, the non-southern launching pad for the five-string banjo boomlet. Folk-oriented LPs at the time would bear a big splash on the jacket, such as "featuring five-string banjo!" to make sure the new urban fans of "Scruggs style" bluegrass banjo would not miss it.


After his move to the city, Dylan hung out at the Square, feeding on the many varieties of folk music played there, but his genius soon took him beyond the Square, fueled by his innovative use of poetic wordplay supported by folk guitar and harmonica. Johnny Cash once gave Dylan a Gibson J-200 guitar, which can be seen on the cover of his LP *John Wesley Harding*. Cash was a Columbia recording artist who had made it big with his country rock sound in the late 1950s but was well aware of what was going on in the Village, having played the clubs there. In fact, Cash threatened to quit Columbia when Mitch Miller, then A&R man at the record company, wanted to fire Dylan after his first LP had only sold 5,000 copies. Dylan wasn't fired and the rest is history.

When Columbia signed Dylan in 1961 it turned out to be the trigger event that really launched the Folk Scare on a national level. Radio and television began playing traditional American music for the first time, and there was even a national TV show called *Hootenanny*. Singer played music at the Square until 1965, the year Dylan went electric and soon became a pop artist. Although many of Dylan's old friends in the Village disowned him for "selling out" to the commercial music industry, Singer felt that Dylan's move was positive because he was extending the folk circle and saving not only folk music but rock and roll as well. It was at that time, however, that the Beatles took the U.S. by storm and the folk boom faded fast. Even Dave Van Ronk went electric in 1968 in order to continue to survive as a full time musician. Singer believes the folk music phenomenon continued on even after it was no longer played on the radio or TV but just went back "underground" much as it was when Woody Guthrie played in the obscurity of the Greenwich Village clubs and union halls long before the Folk Scare broke out.

After the folk boom quieted down in 1965, Singer concentrated on his education, graduating from Pace College in 1967 with a degree in psychology. He went to graduate school at NYU on Washington Square from 1969 to 1971, earning a master's degree in clinical social work. Throughout the 1970s he worked for the Salvation Army and lived in the Village just a short distance from MacDougal Street. Along the way he acquired his wife, Linda, and moved his family to San Diego in 1980, where he landed a job in Kaiser Permanente's psychiatry department and retired from there in 2003. Singer admits that during his working years in San Diego he didn't play much guitar. He started to play regularly again in 1999 after having a conversation with his local New York buddy Pete Zelin, who encouraged him to "get out there and play music again." Sadly, Zelin died a few days later and never got a chance to see Singer step out and play.

When he discovered the San Diego Folk Song Society, Singer was not only surprised but also very pleased and has never looked back. For him,

continued on page 13



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Recordially, Lou Curtiss



Photo: Bill Richardson

Lou Curtiss

HANK WILLIAMS AND COUNTRY MUSIC

It was some time in the late 1940s that my Dad came home with an MGM 78 record by some guy named Hank Williams. The tune was "Lovesick Blues" and, for some reason, I was very attracted to it. Now I'd been listening to country music practically all my life at that point and grew up listening to the Prince Albert Grand Ole Opry with Roy Acuff and, later, Red Foley. I also listened regularly to a rascally old country deejay on KVI in Tacoma, Washington, named Buck Richey. If he didn't like the song he was playing, he'd break the record over his knee and say, "That'll never get in the library; some of these other doofuses at the station might play that. We gotta keep country music country." Actually, he probably said "hillbilly" 'cause that was the word they used then. At any rate, Buck liked Hank Williams and so did my Dad and I. Other records came home with Dad and I remember hearing Hank on the Grand Ole Opry a couple of times. When we moved to San Diego from Washington in 1952, we hadn't been in San Diego more than a week when my Uncle Tony hauled my Dad, Mom, two sisters, and me out to the Bostonia Ballroom east of El Cajon to see Hank. (I wrote about that experience in my very first "Recordially" column in the first issue of the *San Diego Troubadour* back in September 2001. You can still read it on line I guess. If not, drop by Folk Arts Rare Records and I'll show it to you.)

Well, what I'm getting around to here is that San Diego Repertory Theater will be doing a production of *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*, beginning November 10, and I'll be taking part in a discussion before the Wednesday night show starts — on November 22 at 7 p.m. The discussion, which will be led by San Diego Rep artistic director Sam Woodhouse, will also include George Varga, music writer for the *San Diego Union-Tribune*. It ought to be fun, and the play is certainly worth seeing. You know, country record collecting icon Joe Bussard has called Hank "the last country singer." I don't know whether that's true, but certainly his rise to stardom was the beginning of the end of "country in country music." It's been Nashville

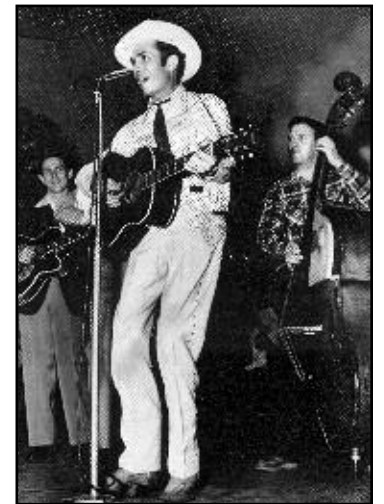
(just another city with city music) ever since. All the rural areas with their own smaller country scenes had mostly shut down by the end of the 1950s. Most of the other big Barn Dance country shows like *Louisiana Hayride*, *Wheeling Jamboree*, *Town Hall Party*, *Cowtown Jamboree*, *Boone County Jamboree*, *National Barn Dance*, *Renfro Valley Barn Dance*, *Midwestern Hayride*, *Hollywood Barn Dance*, and so many others had shut down in favor of the "Big O" (*Grand Ole Opry*) and it just about took all the country out of country music. Since then, there have been revivals within and without the country scene. There was Bakersfield during the 1960s, which more or less got absorbed; the old-timey revival, which mostly got ignored yet remains a part of the folk music scene today. Bluegrass has created its own scene in a way that the Nashville types tolerate and try to subvert every now and then, creating hybrids that aren't really bluegrass. (You hear terms like *newgrass* and *Americana*, but a lot of it's just watered down new age elevator music.) The Austin outlaw music scene during the 1970s recently got absorbed into the Nashville thing and sort of provided a link between country music and rock 'n' roll (or renewed some of the links that rockabilly had already created). There have been other so-called traditional revivals in country music, most of them some ad man's dream about what that word really means. Or some Hank or Lefty Frizzell sound-alike will do a straight forward honkytonk country album and, by the time he's done a second or third album, there come the over-produced, 101 strings backups with echo and overdubs and crap that Nashville sound engineers like to do. And there goes another moderately good country singer to the ash heap, and probably some country collector who really liked the guy's first stuff feels ripped off again. I remember thinking about the first time I heard doowah vocals dubbed in behind Webb Pierce some time back in the mid- to late 1950s and that I really didn't like it. I remember when MGM took a bunch of old Hank Williams' songs and dubbed in violins (not fiddles, violins). I wrote a letter to MGM (who never replied), complaining. In 40 years of talking to record collectors and music buffs here at my record shop, particularly country

music fans, I've come to the conclusion that many of the people in charge of country music at the various major record companies really didn't like country music and sought to change it, which they certainly did. They have an awful lot of damn nerve calling it country.

So that's why it's fortunate that people are still doing accounts of real rural music like *Hank Williams: Lost Highway*. That's what I've been trying to do with the Roots Festivals these last 40 years — keeping folk songs for the folk and country music in the country. It's a hard fight when people want to replace it with something else and call it something it's not.

Recordially,

Lou Curtiss



Hank Williams (note Chet Atkins on the left)

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Down The Road

Allen Singer

A description of the album on Singer's website says, "[it] takes you on a journey through American 20th century folk music, country blues, traditional, and early country music. Listen to the songs and the music that set off the 1960s' folk revival."

With *Down the Road*, Singer lights the spark for the modern revival.

— Kate Kowsh
San Diego Troubadour

Allen Singer
DOWN THE ROAD

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Kalimba Creativity

by Andy Robinson

Most people know a kalimba when they hear one, although they may not know the instrument by name. Kalimbas have a distinctive, ethereal tone; it's what I imagine water running over smooth stones would sound like, if you could somehow train water to play melodies. If you are struggling with a mental picture, try the phrase "thumb piano," which is a fairly common term used to describe this little tuned percussion instrument.

Christian Carver is the director of African Musical Instruments (A.M.I.), the company that makes the Hugh Tracey kalimba. Carver says, "The word [kalimba] is from the Shona people of Zimbabwe. In many Bantu languages, the suffix mba is the word for 'note,' thus we have words such as mrimba, which means 'many notes,' and kalimba, which means, loosely, 'little note.'"

The kalimba is related to the African mbira, one of the oldest instruments in the world. It's hard to overstate the significance of the mbira in the lives of many Africans. In one Shona legend, ancient spirits gave the mbira to humankind so that we could play the music the spirits want to hear, and indeed, mbira are played to this day in many religious ceremonies in Africa, as well as for entertainment.

Noted ethnomusicologist Hugh Tracey became enamored of the mbira in the 1920s while farming in Zimbabwe. In the 1930s, he introduced the mbira to the rest of the world as part of his effort to validate and popularize African music. He eventually introduced his own design, the Hugh Tracey Kalimba, in the 1950s. Sales of his kalimba originally founded the International Library of African Music, which, among other things, is notable for being the only archive for recordings of traditional South African music.

Despite Tracey's efforts, the word "kalimba" didn't exactly become a household word, although it is familiar enough for many people to use it as a generic term for any thumb piano. You can find endless variations on (and imitations of) his kalimba in gift shops and import and music stores, occasionally alongside mbira.

Kalimbas generally have a sound box that is held in two hands and that resonates when one or more of an assortment of metal tines, or keys, are struck with the tip of the thumbs or thumbnails. The keys are suspended over a bridge, which leaves the longer, playing end suspended over the top or soundboard. Kalimbas are usually fairly small — Hugh Tracey kalimbas are slightly larger than a paperback book.

The traditional mbira is played while inserted into a large, hollowed-out gourd for amplification, although a player might choose not to use a gourd resonator if he were only practicing. Mbira have multiple rows of keys, and tuning arrangements and scales can vary quite a bit. They usually have small bands of wire or, sometimes, metal strips cut from soda cans, wrapped around the non-playing end of the tines, or shells, or bottle caps attached to the resonating chambers, for a rhythmic buzzing sound. Mbira decoration varies wildly — carving, paint, and beads may distinguish an mbira, depending on the builder.

I have been playing kalimba since the early 1970s. Back then, I was a drummer in search of my own means of melodic expression, and I'd already picked up the mountain dulcimer. When I saw Taj Mahal and Maurice White of Earth Wind and Fire playing kalimbas, I decided I needed to have one.

Hugh Traceys are my instrument of choice. They are all well constructed, built with beautiful and resonant Kiaat wood, and they have a very clear, musical tone with nice sustain, especially in the lower registers. They have two small soundholes on the back and a larger one on the front,

with which you can create a lovely vibrato effect by using gentle finger movements. There are several models available. All Hugh Tracey kalimbas come pre-tuned to the diatonic G Major scale, although they can be tuned to any key. (This isn't something you can do onstage in between songs, though. Moving the keys

back and forth precisely is challenging and takes real concentration. If you want to play in a variety of keys, take my advice: get several kalimbas, tune each one the way you want it — once — and be done with it!)

I first played kalimba with my two friends, Richard Matthew and Bill Birney, in a group called the Earthlings. We were essentially an acoustic group, but it wasn't too long before I decided to amplify my kalimba, so I began using a Barcus Berry mandolin pickup, stuck on the soundboard for that purpose. (The pickup is still stuck on there, to this day. I think that goop has fossilized!)

At any rate, I used to run the signal from my kalimba through a little Boss graphic equalizer stomp box, because the piezo-electric element in the Barcus Berry tended to emphasize the percussive "clink" part of the kalimba sound. With judicious use of EQ, I could pull down the offending frequencies and mellow things out. From the EQ, I ran the signal into a Roland JC120 Jazz Chorus amp.

If you're any good with a soldering iron, you can make pickups for a kalimba very inexpensively. I made some using piezo elements that you can buy at Radio Shack. These elements are meant for door buzzers, but they're very similar to what's in a Barcus Berry and they only cost about five bucks

apiece. I found instructions on how to build this kind of pickup in an ancient issue of Frets magazine. My copy of that magazine is long gone, but if you want to build your own pickups, an Internet search will probably give you all the info you need on the subject.

Eventually I was fronting a full band and playing leads on my amplified kalimba, so I began experimenting with effect pedals, much to the amusement of my electric guitar-playing pals. This was tricky. A fuzz kalimba can sound fantastic — strange and wonderful — for a second or two. But your pickup can be sensitive, and, in addition to amplifying the kalimba, it might also capture the sound coming out of your amp, or the crack of a drummer's snare, or anything, really. Then your interesting sound can suddenly explode (along with your eardrums) in high-pitched, screaming feedback!

In general, very subtle effects, like a mild touch of chorus or a bit of digital delay, can complement the sound of a kalimba. Just don't stand too close to your amp. (I still occasionally freak out with weird effects in my studio. It's easier to do the crazy stuff with recording software than it is in live performance.)

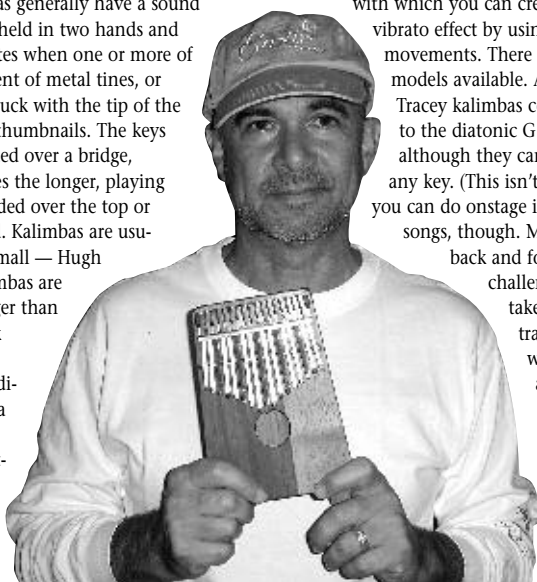
If you'd like to hear what can be done with a couple of kalimbas and a little imagination, check out the Earthlings MySpace page: <http://www.myspace.com/earthlingsaz>. Judging from the many enthusiastic comments about the Earthlings page, lots of people out there either have kalimbas or have always wanted to play them. If playing the kalimba sounds like fun to you, I hope this article will inspire you to get started. I'm starting a new kalimba-oriented group, by the way, and I'd like to hear from anyone who might be interested. Email me at robinson5@aol.com.

In the meantime, here are some other cool links to check out:

<http://www.kalimba.co.za> (A.M.I. - makers of the Hugh Tracey Kalimba and other neat instruments.)

<http://www.kalimbamagic.com> (A great wealth of kalimba information is available here, and you can order Hugh Tracey Kalimbas on this site.)

<http://www.cdbaby.com/andyrobinson>



Andy Robinson with his kalimba. Photo by Dasha.



(Listen to the sound clips of "Penguin," "Nameless Parade," and "Let There Be Night," from my 2004 solo CD, *Exotic America*. You can listen to the rest of the clips, too, but those songs have kalimba!)

<http://www.ekalimba.com> (Wild and innovative electronic kalimbas, by David Bellinger.)

<http://www.ilam.ru.ac.za> (International Library of African Music)

<http://www.crammed.be/craworld/crw27/e/index.htm> (This group is amazing. You'll either love them or they'll drive you insane!)

<http://www.andyrobinsonmusic.com>

Recommended reading: *The Soul of Mbira, Music and Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* by Paul F. Berliner (a fantastic, scholarly book about mbira and mbira players in Africa.)

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Robin Adler and Dave Blackburn Celebrate the Songs of Joni Mitchell

by Liz Abbott

Local husband and wife duo Robin Adler and Dave Blackburn will bring their talents to the stage this month to celebrate the 63rd birthday of iconic singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell. With a music career spanning nearly 40 years, from her first album in the 1960s to the last one she recorded in 2000, Mitchell has inspired many a songwriter along the way with her gift for poetry imagery as well as the alternate guitar tunings she uses to accompany herself.

Adler, who is known in San Diego primarily as a jazz vocalist, will be negotiating Mitchell's challenging music in all its beauty and complexities, along with Blackburn on guitars, vocals, and percussion. On this special evening the couple will be joined by Barnaby Finch (keyboardist for Tom Scott, George Benson, Lee Ritenour, and Ronnie Laws) on keyboards and vocals, Roger Friend on drums and percussion, Paul Carman (ex-Frank Zappa sax man) on saxophone, and 16-year-old wunderkind Evan Stumpges on fretless bass.

Mitchell's music will be presented chronologically in order to showcase the art of her multi-phase career, which ranges from folk to rock to jazz and will be performed against a backdrop of Mitchell's artwork and photos of the artist.



Robin Adler and Dave Blackburn in concert.

Baby boomers who listened to "Woodstock" and "Both Sides Now" during the 1960s are sure to enjoy this live musical tribute to the often un-sung artist as Adler, Blackburn, and their band bring out the best in what can only be described as one of the most influential repertoires of the twentieth century. From her earliest ballads to her later jazz-infused offerings, fans of Joni Mitchell will have a rare opportunity to revisit her music.

Joni Mitchell Tribute with Robin Adler and Dave Blackburn, Saturday, November 4, 7pm at Dizzy's, 344 Seventh Ave. Tickets: \$15. All ages welcome. For more info or to hear a demo of the "joni band," go to <http://robinadler.com/music.html>

Still Crazy After All These Years Isaac Cheong Elevates his Game

by Will Edwards

There's an old saying in the entertainment biz: it's not what you know, it's who you know. As a man who has hosted open mics in San Diego since the mid '90s, Isaac Cheong knows everybody. This month marks an important milestone as he reflects on 10 years in the San Diego music community.

If you don't know him, you should. It's easy. Cheong has developed many talents as a result of his decade of service to the music community. One of his most refined skills is the art of conversation and getting to know people. Cheong believes in building community. "I was drawn to the community and the camaraderie," he says. "When you see the same people in the same place for years, that's the vibe I try to maintain at my open mics."

Cheong debuted, as an open mic act, at Mikey's, the now-closed Poway café, back in 1995. "I was going through a really rough, emotional time and I was pretty much laying low for a year — really depressed. We played there [at Mikey's] and people really liked us. People remembered me and I started going back because it was a friendly place. After a while I was there every night of the week." Over time, Cheong got to know everyone there. The open mic host at the time got swept away with other interests about a year after Cheong arrived. Opportunity knocked and, after some hemming and hawing, Cheong answered, starting an important series of events that would shape who he would become.

For the next five years, from 1996-2001, Cheong would introduce new up-and-comers to the Poway stage. "I wanted to bring a different Vibe [to Mikey's]. I wanted to make it more like a show." Cheong wanted to be entertaining, so he entertained. "I had to keep it interesting for myself. Week after week it gets stale, so I had to indulge my hunger for weird tangents." His entertaining stage presence was a big hit, and musicians were increasingly gravitating to his open mic.

But, in 2001 Mikey's lost their lease and the once well-established music community that was centered on the café began to disperse. "It was nice to have my Sunday nights again to myself. But I missed seeing all the familiar faces," Cheong remembers. A few open mics were cropping up around Carmel Mountain and some of the players began playing at Lestat's in Normal Heights. In 2002, Lestat's opened an all new venue, now called Lestat's West and the previous host of Lestat's Monday night open mic left for job-related reasons.

Cheong's open mic hosting prowess had traveled the distance from Poway to San Diego via word of mouth and the owner of Lestat's had heard the word on the street. "John [the owner of Lestat's] came up to me and said, 'People have been telling me that you should host the open mic.'" Again, Cheong hemmed and hawed. At the time Lestat's was going through a few guest hosts per month. Cheong agreed to be a guest host for two weeks, which became two months and so on. Five years later — this month, in fact — Cheong will be celebrating his 10th anniversary as an open mic host. Although



Isaac Cheong at the H.A.T. Award ceremony

Cheong has developed a reputation as a world-class funny man, he doesn't consider himself an extrovert. "I'm still afraid of the audience. That nervousness keeps you sharp. Either you crash and burn or you elevate your game."

Cheong continues to host and introduce new music to the stage every Monday at Lestat's West, but he's also working on new ideas. More recently, in 2005, Cheong co-founded an independent business coordinating print productions. With his roots in the artist community, it follows that his first clients were photographers. He also helps musicians with promotional print work and CD manufacturing and packaging as well.

Over time, Cheong has gathered a few pearls of wisdom. "There are rules that every person should know — like open mic etiquette. Be there on time. Tune your guitar before you get on stage. Don't go over the time and don't make excuses. Don't come in, play your song, and leave. You make the effort whether or not you get a return. Your job is as an entertainer. Sometimes the best moments are spontaneous and the product of exploring through those rough nights."

A grand celebration/concert/party will ensue at Lestat's West on Friday, November 10, as Cheong passes the 10-year mark. "There'll be people from the old Mikey's days, some traditionals and new names, and others." It will be a night to remember!

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by Mike Alvarez

As Cindy Lee Berryhill took the stage with her band Big Oil at this year's Adams Avenue Street Fair, she looked every bit a country music star with her cowboy hat, blue jeans, and long mane of wind-blown blonde hair. So it seems quite ironic that she has re-invented herself as an "anti-country" artist, particularly since she opened her set with her interpretation of a Mississippi Fred McDowell tune that contained more authentic twang than the majority of tunes topping the latest country charts. It was just her, a resonator guitar, and a weathered antique chair that she brought especially for that one song.

Longtime fans probably wouldn't bat an eyelid. Her oeuvre is rife with irony and humor, both light and dark. Lyrically, she favors the topical, taking on social and political issues with a vengeance. Yet her message is delivered with a sly sense of humor. Even when she is at her most cynical, one can't help but smile and nod in time to the music's irresistibly rhythmic melodies. Or more. Make no mistake about it—this is heavy stuff with an edge, but it's delivered with an almost lighthearted elan. "Damn, I Wish I Was a Man" ably demonstrates this with its feminist theme going straight to your subconscious while you're wracked with spasms of laughter. Her polished songwriting and the great musicians with whom she surrounds herself make for a very potent combination.

Berryhill is a very accomplished guitarist herself, playing crisp rhythmic accompaniment as well as hot guitar licks, which she traded on this day with lead guitarist Jeff Berkley. She speaks quite enthusiastically about her position as a guitar teacher at Giacoletti Music in Carlsbad, as it gives her another means of sharing her musical gifts. Her vocals are very sweet and clear, often punctuated with an endearing earnestness that allows her to directly express the full range of meaning and emotion in her finely crafted lyrics. She has also been known to play a mean harmonica when the song calls for it.

At this gig she was backed by drummer and long-time musical collaborator Randy Hoffman, bassist Marcia Claire, and guitarist Berkley, all performing as Big Oil, an entity that is to Cindy Lee Berryhill as Crazy Horse was to Neil Young. They are a loose but confident ensemble that delivered a crowd-pleasing show underscored with humorous and comfortable banter between bandmates. They sounded raw when circumstances called for it, but they also proved themselves capable of great subtlety. This versatility is very important when one considers the stylistic territory covered by Berryhill's songs, which run the gamut of folk, alternative, pop, soul, rock, and country. A spin of her second album, *Naked Movie Star*, demonstrates that early on she clearly had the ability to put her unique imprint on a variety of musical styles.

The set continued with "Cry Me a Jordan," a heavily country-inflected song about Bakersfield, the California town where she and her family had spent some of her younger years. "Bars, Booze and Boys Clubs" is propelled by the same octane that fuelled many a Johnny Cash song. To her dismay, it has become a favorite of her young son. The slow country ballad "Beloved Stranger" was dedicated to all the soldiers who are returning from war with brain injuries, an issue of considerable personal significance to Berryhill. So much so, that it is the title track of her upcoming CD. Her husband, *Crawdaddy* magazine founder Paul Williams, had suffered such an injury, and the challenges they faced in dealing with it have

informed her art. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to find a song of hers that was created frivolously.

In a moment that drummer Hoffman later said "could not have been scripted," a man with a cane began dancing in front of the stage when they launched into the raucous "Make Way for the Handicapped." He was soon joined by another fellow, much to the delight of band and audience alike. This is perhaps a succinct illustration of Ms. Berryhill's appeal: it's brain food that tastes good!

They followed this with a new tune that will surely be a controversial highlight of the *Beloved Stranger* album. "When Did Jesus Become a Republican?" questions religion's place in politics. In typical Berryhill fashion, it does so with a bouncy rhythm and an engaging melody. It was featured on Neil Young's Living With War Today website (www.neilyoung.com/lwwtoday/), garnering the attention of the man himself (under the pseudonym R. B. Warford). In his words, "This is a funky and funny track with bangin' drums and questioning lyric content, sung by Cindy Lee with attitude. Perfect coffee music for Karl Rove and Co." In a gesture of thanks for this, the band finished their set with a ragged but spirited rendition of "Cinnamon Girl" that would have made him proud. She had an opportunity to meet Young while working in his management office a few years ago.

Her first album, *Who's Gonna Save the World?* was released in 1987 and was met with great critical acclaim. Berryhill initially emerged as an "anti-folk" artist because her music had more of an edge than most performers in the New York City folk scene, where she launched her career. The term "anti-folk" has enjoyed widespread usage ever since she coined it and she proudly notes that there was a Los Angeles establishment called the Anti Club. During this period, she was frequently mentioned in the same breath as Lucinda Williams, Tracy Chapman, Sinead O'Connor, and Victoria Williams. Later on, she was associated with such influential artists as Ani DiFranco, Liz Phair, and Alanis Morissette. Such was her success that she made numerous television appearances and performed with acts like Shawn Colvin, the Indigo Girls, Billy Bragg, the

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Smithereens, and X, some of whom took the stage as her opening act. She enjoyed a great deal of record company support as well as coverage in such noted publications as *Rolling Stone*, *New Musical Express*, and *Melody Maker*.

Her influences make for a very eclectic list, not all of them musical. Science fiction authors Arthur C. Clarke and Philip K. Dick are there, as are some celestial bodies. Poets Jack Kerouac and Alan Ginsberg have made their mark. People and places, books and magazines, family and friends all inspire her to create her unique blending of words and music. The copious liner notes that accompany each track in the *Garage Orchestra* album provide a revealing glimpse into her creative process. Reading them, one clearly sees that she is a keen observer of the big picture as well as the mundane minutiae of life, adding each to her ongoing musical tapestry.

During the *Garage Orchestra* phase of her career she paid a huge homage to Brian Wilson, the troubled genius behind the Beach Boys, by creating her own take on his pioneering efforts in instrumental and vocal arrangements. Some of the sounds and riffs would not sound out of place on *Pet Sounds* or the recently completed *Smile*. The hugely Wilsonian "Song for Brian" is an ode to the master that pretty much seals the deal. The *Garage Orchestra* is a musical concept in which tympani, vibes, and orchestral strings stand side by side with the folk pop ensemble to create a colorful stage upon which she sets her musical vignettes.

The man behind the drumkit onstage has been instrumental in helping her to realize the music in her head. For years, Randy Hoffman has been a photographer for the San Diego Reader as well as a musician. A number of years ago, coincidence or kismet resulted in his doing a photo shoot with Cindy Lee as the subject. During the course of this assignment, the discussion turned to music and it so happened that Hoffman had much of the instrumentation—and musical ability—that she needed. It is interesting to note that while he cites such composers as Bela Bartok and Harry Partch as his influences, he is effusive in his praise for Berryhill's pop songwriting talent. He

Berryhill's unique sounding recordings . . . "look under rocks and go into the corners" in their quest to find new ways to do things.



Berryhill with Mojo Nixon in San Diego 1985



Berryhill in New York City, 1987.



Berryhill with John Doe at this year's Adams Avenue Street Fair

enjoys the challenge of working with lines and verses that are not necessarily symmetrical. Equally challenging are her lyrics, which are neither conventional nor comfortable. He is emphatic in his assertion that he is not a co-writer, although his contribution is significant. With his input, they transformed her songs from their original guitar-and-vocal beginnings into their final form as unique-sounding recordings. As he puts it, they "look under rocks and go into the corners" in their quest to find new ways to do things.

These experiments in production and arrangement were continued on her *Straight Outta Marysville* CD, although one can already



Photo: Dina Douglas



Photo: Steve Conwill

Big Oil (l. to r.) Jeff Berkley, Randy Hoffman, Berryhill, Marcia Claire

sense a return to a more acoustic folk approach in some of the songs. She takes special delight in recounting an anecdote during the mastering of this album, which took place next door to Ocean Way Studios (formerly known as Sunset Sound). Pushing Ocean Way's buzzer button, she was admitted inside to see her associate David Leaf where she spotted none other than the Beach Boys themselves! Brian Wilson, Al Jardine, Carl Wilson, Mike Love, and Andy Paley had united to

work on a recording project.

Public taste, however, is a fickle thing, and according to Berryhill, the advent of the Grunge movement in the '90s took her away from "the cutting edge of cool." True to her art, she opted to pursue her own muse rather than the latest musical trends. In her words, the music "comes from within. It has never been success-driven." As such, she has achieved the status of an obscure cult hero. Like many prolific artists, she has a

couple of legendary lost albums, one of which was partially recorded during her residence in Taos, New Mexico. Should it ever be completed, it would undoubtedly be a very interesting work, as her time spent in New Mexico seems to have been both trying and inspirational. Two of the best songs on *Garage Orchestra* – "Song for Brian" and "UFO Suite" – were inspired by her stay in the high desert, so it's a safe bet that the unreleased material would be welcomed by fans.

Musical pursuits soon had competition for her time and attention when she and Williams started a family. Their son Alex, now five, displays a precocious sophistication in things musical, and one can only speculate at what the future holds for a youngster with such auspicious beginnings. She loves being a mom, saying that parenthood keeps one centered on life's priorities. Music industry publications take a back seat to the daily responsibilities of providing for one's child. Yet the muse still calls, so she presses on, with a new album coming out next spring and a tour of the U.K. planned for the summer. She readily allows that the challenges of family life have had their influence on the new batch of song cycles that comprise this new release. While not designed as a cohesive concept album, the songs definitely interact with one another.

To illustrate the passage of time, she notes with some amusement that when her last album came out, fan mail came as letters in the mailbox. Nowadays she gets more of it in the form of e-mails. Studio sessions for the *Beloved Stranger* album actually began three years ago, and the effort to complete it was sustained with a great deal of encouragement from fans and fellow musicians. Berryhill is quick to list the Truckee Brothers, the Wigbillies, and comic artist Mary Fleener among the musical colleagues who are helping her to re-emerge more fully upon the scene.

A longtime believer in creating a family feeling among her musicians, she withholds no praise for bassist Marcia Claire, a noted local musician with whom she immediately established a great rapport. All of Big Oil's members look very much at ease with one another onstage. Berryhill speaks about the other guests on the album with equal affection, singling out Dave Alvin's guitar playing on "Beloved Stranger" and "Hugs and Kisses," and X's John Doe who sings a duet with her on "Forty Cent Raise." With a big grin she refers to Doe as "George Jones to my Tammy Wynette."

Like the artist, Berryhill's music has been on a long continuous journey, venturing out into the world, exploring undiscovered territory, and ultimately returning home. After excursions into folk, rock, and art pop, listeners might be a little shocked when they hear the country sound she is currently exploring. Yet as a major staple of her parents' musical diet, country music was part of the soundtrack of her formative years. She lists such artists as Johnny Cash, Glen Campbell, and Bobbie Gentry as early musical heroes, so it seems wholly appropriate that her muse leads her back to it now that she is a parent herself. There is a beautiful circular symmetry to this that she undoubtedly must appreciate. How long will this "anti-country" period of her career last? Even she cannot say.

While Cindy Lee Berryhill may have kept a low profile for a few years, she still kept a keen eye and ear on the world around her. A great many things have changed, yet the things that have stayed constant are her powers of observation and her drive to express herself through music. She has her new CD *Beloved Stranger* waiting in the wings and is booking an increasing number of live dates.

Memoirs of a Female Messiah



Memoirs of a Female Messiah

Cindy Lee Berryhill's lyrics have always been narrative in nature, telling tales and expressing emotions. So it really comes as no surprise that she has penned a novel. Published in 1999, *Memoirs of a Female Messiah* is ostensibly the true story of a real person named Michelle Domingue who encountered Cindy Lee in a bar and then proceeded to entrust her with this account of her experiences. At least that's what she claims in the introduction. However, the stream-of-consciousness writing style and the wonderfully wacky point of view are pure Berryhill. One can easily conclude that this introductory device is present to add another layer of verisimilitude to the proceedings.

It is a sprawling tale of romance, fame, and self-delusion, eccentrically told through the eyes of a protagonist who blithely bounces from one misadventure to another. Through it all she never loses her belief in her own power, wisdom, and sex appeal, bringing enlightenment, love, and happiness to those fortunate enough to be graced by her presence. The tone is tongue-in-cheek, the characters are absurd, and the situations are outlandish. Yet as with Ms. Berryhill's lyrics, one cannot help but see a kernel of autobiographical truth in every Faulknerian word.

Unless, of course, there is a REAL Michelle Domingue living out there somewhere, collecting royalty checks.



Catch Berryhill's next performance with Big Oil at Dizzy's, 344 Seventh Ave., in downtown San Diego, on Saturday, November 11, 8pm.

For the latest information and song downloads, go to www.cindyleeberryhill.com.



Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



Here are some interesting happenings coming up soon:

BLUEGRASS GOSPEL NIGHT

St. Marks' United Methodist Church and the San Diego Bluegrass Society present an all gospel concert Sunday November 19th at 7 pm. at St. Mark's at 3502 Clairemont Drive. Admission is free, although donations will be accepted as this is a fundraiser for the church and SDBS—all bands are donating their services. It looks like we will have 7 great bands, including some new faces as well as some familiar ones. Look for The Virtual Strangers, Second Delivery, The Bluegrass Ramblers, SwissGrass, the Soledad Mountain Band, The Full Deck, and the Gospel According to John. The show includes some classic four part a capella gospel numbers, along with some hard driving, as well as sweet, instrumental backed gospel music. There is a reception with drinks and snacks after the show, so tell your friends and mark your calendar for what looks to be a great night.

SOUND SEMINAR FOR PLAYING MUSICIANS

If you are a playing acoustic musician or a singer, this is for you. SDBS will be presenting a seminar on Saturday, December 9, from noon to 2:45pm at the Hammond Ashley Violin shop located at 5889 Oberlin Drive, suite 106, right off Mira Mesa Blvd., just east of the 805. Admission is free to SDBS members in good standing; \$10 to non-SDBS members, or you can join SDBS at the seminar for \$20 for the year for the whole family and get in as a member.

The seminar will be conducted by sound experts, including Richard Burkett, who has run sound at many major shows, as well as other SDBS personnel with sound experience. The seminar is targeted at playing band members and is being billed as "everything a playing band member should know about sound to get good stage sound." Topics include discussion and demonstration of different kinds of microphones — what works well for vocal, for various instruments, how to place a mic on stage for your instrument, how to "work" the mic, how to do a sound check to get what you want, how to interact with a sound person, what feedback is and how to deal with it, and related information. The first hour is lecture, followed by a question and answer period. The next hour and 45 minutes allows participants hands on experience with the equipment.

This seminar is not targeted for professional sound persons (no lectures about the difference between balanced and unbalanced lines,

etc.), although they are welcome, but rather it is aimed at giving practical advice to playing band members by addressing what they need to know to get good sound from a sound person or a sound system if they have to run it themselves. The seminar includes handouts and many useful tips. It is being presented by SDBS free as a service to its members and at a nominal fee of \$10 to the local acoustic music community. Space is limited, so sign up early by emailing dworden@adelphia.net or calling Dwight at (858) 481-2609.

REGULAR BLUEGRASS EVENTS

Remember to visit one or more of the following regular bluegrass events around town. You won't regret it!

First Tuesday of the month: North County Bluegrass and Folk Club's bluegrass night at Round Table Pizza, 1161 East Washington in Escondido, including a featured band, jamming, and open mic.

Second Tuesday of the month: SDBS bluegrass night at Fuddruckers in the Grossmont Shopping center features open mic, band sign ups, and jamming.

Third Tuesday of the month: SDBS south county bluegrass night at Fuddruckers on Third in Chula Vista includes open mic, band sign ups, and jamming.

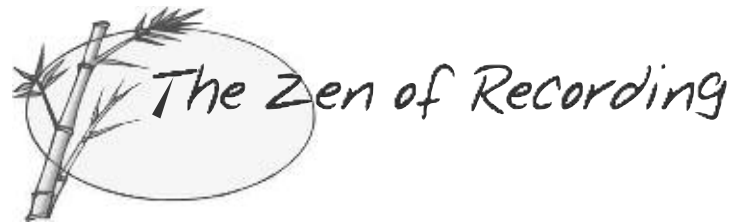
Fourth Tuesday of the month: SDBS's Featured Band Night at Boll Weevil, 7080 Miramar Road, presents a top notch band along with open mic and jamming.

For more info on North County Bluegrass and Folk Club events visit:

www.northcountybluegrass.org. For more info on SDBS events, or to sign up in advance for open mic or a band slot at an SDBS event (sign up on site is allowed as well, time permitting) visit: www.socalbluegrass.org.

Also, be sure to check out **Acoustic Music San Diego's** web page for their outstanding regular events in the beautiful church at 4650 Mansfield off Adams Avenue. While not all of their events are bluegrass, they do have fairly regular presentations of great bluegrass groups (Byron Berline Band, Bearfoot, John Reischman, Chris Stuart, and others have played there). It's easy to visit their web page and sign up for the email list so you will know what is coming. Surf to: www.acousticmusic-sandiego.com. and do what you can to support them when they bring great bluegrass music to town.

And, in case you haven't noticed, be thankful for all the great bluegrass we have here in San Diego. Hope to see you at these events!



by Sven-Erik Seaholm

NICE GUYS FINISH

M editor is going to have either a huge laugh or a tiny scream upon reading this column. This is going to happen due the fact that I'm going to emphasize the importance of not just finishing your commitments, but doing so on budget and in a timely manner. I am not a professional writer. I am a professional record producer. Suffice it to say that my columns have rarely, if ever, been delivered in a manner even remotely resembling "timely." So once again I'm hoping the sheer magnitude of irony that wraps itself around this month's entry folds it into some sort of huge karmic burrito that someone will find fulfilling. My commitment to this magazine is a monthly column comprised of between 800 to 1000 words. Most professional writers can dispense with that quantity of language by simply blowing their nose. I take between four hours and um . . . forever.

I recently had the opportunity to have a Tarot card reading. Now I'm not really one who travels heavily within the mysteries of the occult, but I thought it would be a cool experience regardless. So I watched in amusement as the lovely gypsy girl laid out my past and destiny on the ground between us, in cardboard and ink.

"This girl's project is really weighing on you," she said almost immediately, scrunching her eyes, nose and forehead into the very picture of consternation.

"I'm not sure I understand what you mean," I said cautiously.

"Well, it's just been taking such a long time, and it appears to be a heavy burden for you."

Well ding, ding, ding, ding . . . jackpot! She had me there.

Almost exactly a year ago I started an

album for a female artist with whom I had worked on three previous album projects. Our working relationship is a solid and streamlined one, so things progressed very quickly at the start. With this particular project, the idea was to record the artist's scratch vocal and guitar first (to a click track) at what we both agreed to be the desired tempo for each song. I then worked to build each song's arrangements, performing some parts myself and recording guest musicians on other parts.

Drums, bass, and guitars were all laid down in about two weeks, and the next two were devoted to solo overdubs, editing, pre-mixing, various layers of sweetening, etc. So far so good, we're right on schedule.

We gave ourselves another week for her vocals, with the sixth and final week to be dedicated to mixing and mastering the entire 11 song album.

Those last two weeks have yet to transpire. Why? Because sometimes life just sort of lays a big ol' butt biscuit over the best laid plans.

A small army of construction workers descended upon her home for several weeks of renovations, leaving her no quiet time during nearly all of her waking hours. At the same time, her day job had its own stress level ratcheted up a few notches. To add grave insult injury, her mother became very ill nearly 2,000 miles away, and she would have to fly there for extended periods to help care for her.

Obviously, all of these factors compromised her mental and physical state to the point where she was not able to return for several more weeks. By the time she was able to come in, my recording schedule was prohibitively hectic; this month we will finally be able to finish what we started all that time ago.

That tarot card reader was right on the money about one thing: this lack of completion was a heavy burden indeed, and I



Sven-Erik Seaholm

didn't even have the hard part.

Obviously, things outside of our control worked against us, but experience gives you a pretty good idea of what you can accomplish within a certain period of time. It is a producer's paramount responsibility to correctly gauge the amount of time it will take to complete a project. Not only so that you can most accurately quote prices for your clients, but also be able to schedule future projects and meet those deadlines as well.

Next month, we'll take a look at a few different types of projects and the time you can expect them to take based upon some key parameters. This will hopefully keep you out of trouble, as well as help to build in a bit of buffer time between big projects.

Hopefully, fortune will smile upon my journalistic promptness as well.

Sven-Erik Seaholm types three words a minute. When he's not making records, he's playing somewhere near you. Go to www.svensongs.com for more info on where and when.

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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

FALLING BEHIND

That the mighty continue to fall with clock-like regularity is just another hint that things haven't really changed that much in the last two thousand years or so*. Plummeting to their graves, the sound of their dying sighs are echoed and eclipsed by the celebratory cheers of those they exploited or the woe-filled wails of the ones they had served.

Let us wait now, and loudly (at least we few iPodless, Internetless, PC-less renegades of an age killed too quickly) while we witness the tortured final agonies of Tower Records — the demise of this charismatic, regal alien who stood among the most magical, bountiful friends we've ever known.

Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!

And that's just for starters.

Wasn't it around 1972 that San Diego's one-stop, shop-til-you-pop audio-visual Taj Mahal brought her delightful bouquet to Sports Aromas Boulevard? Suddenly, all of our eight-track, cassette, and vinyl needs were right there, in one place. Tower immediately became the Elder of the Tribe and, over decades, would bravely branch out throughout the county, her boughs yielding books, magazine, videotapes, CDs, laserdiscs, DVDs, and toys.

Regular sales events would generally undercut just about every place else, at least in the early years. But always — if you wanted something in print that, amazingly, wasn't in stock, Tower would find it for you quickly and with a genuine smile.

As noble competitors like Licorice Pizza or Classic Encounters emerged and retreated, there weren't any victory celebrations; Tower Records was unlikely to have even noticed them, instead spending all her attention serving her patrons and continuously striving to become an even better Tower.

When you learned that an album or movie you'd been awaiting for years was finally going to be released on Tuesday, Tower would stay open so you could go home with it at 12:01am. (If only Tower herself could have gone home with you, too!)

If I occasionally happened upon an obscure Georges Delerue album or Peter Cushing movie somewhere else, Tower didn't mind at all, knowing she would quickly find something for me even more obscure and precious. And she did, again and again. Knowing someone who worked at Tower Records could offer benefits to make one feel blessed . . . and I was, many times.

Oh, let us not forget the brief existence of her outlet wings (eventually becoming stores) in the College/Grossmont areas, where the deals were so exquisite that they now seem impossible. Visiting other Tower branches in New York or D.C. or San Francisco or L.A. was, despite the variant building layouts, as warm and familiar as burrowing in the trunk within your regular store's garden. Inside all the Towers was an

* that is, if one overlooks Roundtree's invention of the wheel in 1065 A.D., a smart idea, indeed, since the event actually occurred some years earlier

Photo: Fallon Faraday



The gently twisted Mr. Sinatra

atmosphere of inviting, playful seriousness: you could almost hear a voice, whispering from the walls or from the ceiling that said, "Thanks for coming, for being here. I've missed you. Take your time; I promise you'll find something to make you, or someone you love, very happy."

But recently, the surprises stopped (along with any new stock) and the whispers choked into silence. *The End of the World as We Know It* say the signs, and a more apt or profound sentiment I shouldn't attempt, knowing that I'd end up choking, myself.

It's an added shame that Tower's racks won't ever feel the golden, glistening weight of Darryl Monroe's remarkable new CD, *Conflicts And/Or* (darrylmonroe@sbcglobal.net). Self-produced in his own living room on Adams Avenue, this one-man show is many things, including something of a masterpiece.

There's punk, poetry, philosophy, self-pity, anger, humor, and enough flashes of tenderness to render the whole immense work an indescribable, quivering dream. Still, I've gotta try:

There's a lot here that recalls Zappa's early Mothers of Invention; while perhaps lacking the technical polish, there's poetry here that the Mothers couldn't touch; sonic tripping with fine musicianship, along with some sort of dignity that surprises and humbles. Buddy Blue would have adored it (I'm pretty sure he does), but it may be too complex or insane or insanely logical for the modern masses. Believe this: they would do well to open their lives a bit (while wearing headphones) and click it on for several rewarding listenings as they rut contentedly in their pens.

That'll be my only randy allusion this time, folks, believe it or not. Unless you'd like to consider just one other single word, in reference to the mighty giant whose death rattle should haunt us forever. . .

Cavernous

As in vast and empty. A dead chasm that once served as an oasis for the delirious last-second Christmas shopper. A Towering void that has reluctantly taken in, and taken away, much of what we've been.

The *Hose's* latest column, "Falling Behind," can be read again in its entirety by going back and starting with the first paragraph.

RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

JIMMY REVIEWS JAZZ

I've been reading the record reviews in the November issue of *Downbeat*. Here are a few examples of the reviewers' prose:

"...a brisk blow-fest built around dizzy accelerandos, ensemble meltdowns that function as heads at the end of solos and thunderous piano clusters that nonetheless convey the melodic essence of the theme;"

"...introduces the offbeat and has a distinct metronomic function that remains throughout his counterpoint release passages;"

"...engaged in a sly and stealthy prowling past trills that flare and sparkle unexpectedly in shadows, and creeping up to sudden pauses."

Huh? I just want to know if a record is something I'd like enough to steal or buy!

Thunderous piano clusters sounds kinda scary, and I'm not so sure I'd like seeing sparkly stuff creeping up on me in the shadows.

So I'm going to give you a few simple reviews of some jazz records that I've been playing at KSDS, Jazz 88.3.

1. *Jungle Soul*, by Dr. Lonnie Smith. Smith is a doctor in the same way that Dr. John is a doctor. The word is just a part of his name. On this album, though, he's more like a chemist, concocting a heady brew of swamp music. Titles like "Witch Doctor," "Jungle Wisdom," "Zimbabwe," and the title track ought to give you an idea of the sound. Smith plays the coolest instrument over 450 pounds — the Hammond B-3 organ — and is accompanied by two guitarists and a drummer. Throw in a few jazz standards like Eddie Harris' "Freedom Jazz Dance" and Monk's "Bemsha Swing" and it's a very compelling package. Plus, this cat has a long



Jim McInnes

white beard, wears a turban and a dashiki, and carries a mean looking walking stick. I'd buy it if I had any money!

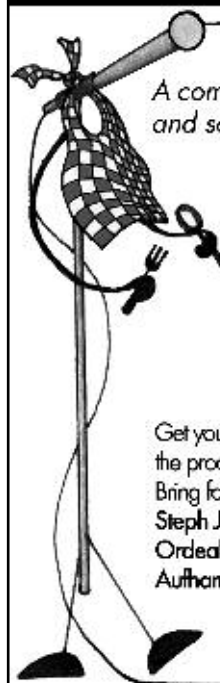
2. *Findin' the Groove*, by Terry Gibbs. Gibbs plays the vibes. Gibbs is 82 years old. Gibbs kicks ass on this session! With special guest Hubert Laws on flute, the title tune alone is worth the price of admission. It's the kind of pop-jazz that's so catchy and hummable that, in a better world, it should be on Top 40 radio everywhere. I'd buy it if I had any money!

3. *Live at Dakota, Volume 2*, by Nachito Herrera. Pianist Herrera, accompanied by bass, drums, and a seemingly four-armed percussionist, shows why he was a child prodigy in his native Cuba. His chops are so spectacular, it's jaw-dropping. This concert was recorded in the Latin jazz hot spot of North America: Minneapolis/St. Paul, the Twin Cities! I don't know how Nachito wound up in the Great White North, but it sure hasn't taken the heat out of his playing. My favorites on the set include "Spain in the Twins" and the show-stopping finale, "West Side Latin Jazz," which is taken at whiplash speed, sounding like there are six or seven players instead of just the four. And Herrera doesn't hit a wrong note. It has to be heard to be believed! If this track in particular doesn't get you on your feet dancing, you are probably dead! I borrowed it from the station and made my own copy. Viva Nachito!

Enjoy. I'll talk at ya next month.

P.S. Don't miss the *Modern Rhythm Band* at *Humphrey's Backstage Lounge*, 6-8 p.m. on Saturday, November 18.

CD RELEASE PARTY

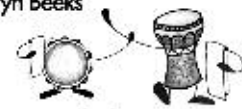


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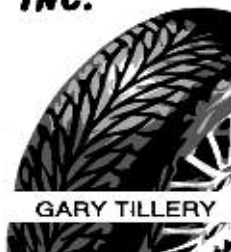
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Scott Paulson Revives the Golden Age of Radio

by Liz Abbott

Scott Paulson's fertile imagination has always kept him busy with a multitude of projects, both fun and engaging. As outreach coordinator for UCSD's Arts Libraries, he is responsible for installing exhibits in the display cases outside his office, which are often wacky but always interesting. One of the more notable exhibits was a display of vintage vacuum cleaners, accompanied by a continual showing of an *I Love Lucy* episode in which Lucy is a vacuum cleaner saleswoman, and for which Paulson premiered a new chamber music piece he wrote for vacuum cleaner and bassoon. Toy pianos from his personal collection have also been on display.

Paulson also serves as the University Carillonneur, performing short concerts on the library's rooftop carillon (a set of tuned chimes) week days at noon. And yes! He takes song requests for the chimes, "Stairway to Heaven" being the most popular request this year.

After hours Paulson plays his oboe in a number of chamber groups as well as in a trio that plays

klezmer music. But that's not all. Stumbling upon a cache of 16mm silent film reels in the library's storage area several years ago gave him an idea: to collect a group of friends who would provide musical accompaniment for the lost treasures and schedule silent film showings for the public. Thus, the Teeny Tiny Pit Orchestra for Silent Films was born. Now in its sixth year, Paulson's Teeny Tiny Pit Orchestra has become a hit with audiences in San Diego and L.A., garnering raves from the media as well as a loyal following that keeps growing. These not-so-silent film festivals are always lively, with lots of audience participation. In addition to the three to four member "orchestra," a variety of noise makers, whistles, and bells are passed out to willing participants who Paulson coaches to cue them when they should sound their particular instruments. For example: coconut shells for scenes with horses, plastic clickers for cricket sounds, bells for a clanging trolley, and so on.

The Short Attention Span Concert Series is another brain child of Paulson's, aimed at exposing people to classical and experimental music who



Scott Paulson

may not have had the opportunity or desire to attend an evening at the symphony. Several times a year, downstairs in the Arts Library, a small chamber group presents a short program of music, lasting a mere 30 minutes. Local musician Sue Palmer has often been a featured guest.

With an ever-increasing interest in sound effects, Paulson's latest endeavor reflects his passion for the Golden Age of Radio. Much like his silent film programs, his "live radio broadcasts" are like walking into another world. You're greeted by "cigarette girls" dressed in period costume handing out treats that include candy cigarettes and cigars. Thirsty? Go over to the bar, where mocktails are served, complete with little paper umbrellas. When the lights go dim, out comes the announcer, speaking through a vintage microphone and, for the next hour and a half, you're a member of a live studio audience, enjoying radio plays and live music, thanks to the studio orchestra. It's a one-of-a-kind experience in a time travel kind of way.

Paulson will host his next radio broadcast, "Tarot Reading on Turkey Farm Road" (for Theremin, actors, tarot deck, and turkey caller) on Wednesday, November 22 at 12:30pm on the lower level, west wing of UCSD's Geisel Library.

If that isn't enough to keep him busy, Paulson will play the part of the on-stage radio sound effects guy in Cynet Theatre's production of *It's a Wonderful Life*, a live radio show version of the classic American film. Using vintage items that would have been available in the studio of a 1947 radio station, Paulson will create all the sound effects. Previews begin November 30, with shows running throughout December. For information, go to: www.cynettheatre.com/wonderful.php

As Paulson quips, "Hey, the future is in radio, and I have the face for it!"

Variety is the Keynote at Dixieland Jazz Festival

The San Diego Thanksgiving Dixieland Jazz Festival is best known for presenting top traditional jazz bands and this year is no exception. The 27th annual festival, scheduled for November 22-26 at the Town & Country Hotel in Hotel Circle, features jazz bands from across the U.S. and Canada. In addition to the excellent bands that will be playing, this year's festival includes a number of special events.



Hal's Angels

Wednesday night pre-festival concert and dance with Hal's Angels and the High Society Jazz Band



Carl Sonny Leyland

Town & Country Thanksgiving Buffet on Thursday afternoon, with music by Anita Thomas, Carl Sonny Leyland, Hal Smith, and Butch Thompson

Swing Dance Exhibitions by San Diego's Radioland Rugcutters and 2toGroove, plus Orange County's OCSwing



Heliotrope Ragtime Orchestra

Ragtime Extravaganza, featuring the Red Rose Jazz Band and Heliotrope Ragtime Orchestra, with Ragtime Era dance steps performed by local vintage dancers in period costume

Butch Thompson Trio, led by the featured performer on *A Prairie Home Companion*

Jazz historian and performer Tex Wyndham presents the compositions of Walter Donaldson, plus an all-star group made up of musicians performing in other festival bands

American roots music of Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Carl Perkins, played and sung by the Memphis Sun Kings (traditional jazz musicians who are performing in other bands at the festival)

JazzSea Jams, led by cornetist Dick Williams. These sessions attract traditional jazz musicians from coast to coast. Have fun jamming while you learn how to play in an organized band

Pianorama from ragtime to stride, featuring festival pianists in a solo setting

Guest vocalist Eva Emingerová-Dostálová from the Czech Republic

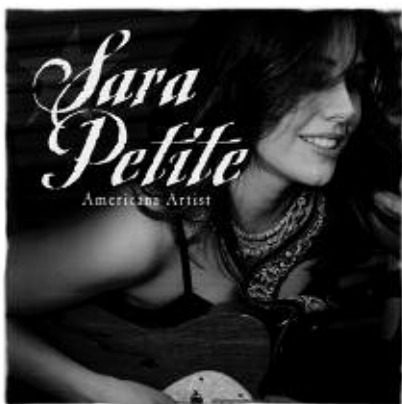
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thanks to everyone who nominated, voted, played, presented, planned, gave and sponsored this event. it was magic and it will be back in 2007!

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- Best Acoustic Group: Berkley Hart
- Best Acoustic Pop/Rock: Kyle Pbelan
- Best Alt. Country: The Coyote Problem
- Best Americana: Aaron Bowen
- Best Backup: Dave Sawyer
- Best Female Performer: Jane Lui
- Best Female Singer/Songwriter: Kim Divine
- Best Female Vocalist: Kim Divine
- Best Guitarist: Aaron Bowen
- Best Host: Hot Rod Harris

- Best Instrumentalist: Richie Blue
- Best Male Performer: Josh Damigo
- Best Male Singer/Songwriter: Josh Damigo
- Best Male Vocalist: Josh Damigo
- Best New Acoustic: Josh Damigo
- Best Piano/Keyboard: Jane Lui
- Best Promoter: ListenLocalSD.com
- Best Songwriter: Carlos Olmeda
- Best Venue: Lestat's West
- Best Young Musician: AJ Peacock
- Lifetime Achievement: Gregory Page

www.SanDiegoHATAwards.com



Allen Singer, continued from page 4

the Folk Scare never ended. He continues to maintain a New York connection through the New York bluegrass and old time blog on Yahoo, a select closed group of more than 150 veterans of the Washington Square great folk revival in the 1950s and 1960s. Singer remembers, "Washington Square was one big continuous ongoing jam. It was our meeting place and it changed our lives. It was an ever-changing music school that provided us with lasting friendships, a creative forum, the politics of the 1960s, and a music education that still helps mold who we continue to become through our playing of folk music."

During the 1970s, after the Folk Scare faded, Singer took jazz guitar lessons and now owns an Eastman F-hole arch-top jazz guitar. Greatly influenced by the music of Django Reinhardt, Charlie Christian, Nick Lucas, Eddy Lang, Joe Pass, Herb Ellis, Chuck Wayne, and Barney Kessel, he studied with Ron Parker in New York, a hot picker who taught Paul Simon and played every Broadway show pit during the 1960s and 1970s. He later took lessons from Chuck Wayne before moving to San Diego. Singer still loves folk music best but says that learning jazz guitar was essential to learning the guitar neck and also inspired him to learn to read sheet music, a very un-folkie thing to do.

Active in the local acoustic music scene since 1999, Singer really got into it big when he retired from his day job. He has since performed at the Adam's Avenue Roots Festival and Street Fair and was recently featured at the annual Train Song Festival in Old Poway Park. Recently Singer did a blues centered concert as part of the San Diego Folk Heritage Musical Odyssey series with his great harmonica playing buddy Dane Terry. In addition, he coordinates the gatherings of San Diego's oldest folkie group, San Diego Folk Song Society, founded by Sam Hinton in 1957. He is deeply involved in the San Diego Folk Heritage group, which brings wonderful artists to San Diego County.

Singer's CD, *Down the Road*, which features the tunes he loved best from his Washington Square days, is available through his website www.allensinger.com and through www.cdbaby.com/cd/allensinger. Singer highly recommends the CD boxed set *Anthology of American Folk Music* (ed. Harry Smith) and *Friends of Old Time Music: The Folk Arrival 1961-1965*, a CD boxed set that includes many of the concerts Singer attended in New York. Both are available at www.amazon.com. A website called <http://www.juneberry78s.com/sounds/index.htm> is a great source for the roots music that fed the Folk Scare and it still provides Singer with musical inspiration today.

For further reading about the Great Folk Scare, read Dave Van Ronk's book *The Mayor of MacDougal Street*, published by Da Capo Press (2005), available at www.dacapopress.com and www.amazon.com.

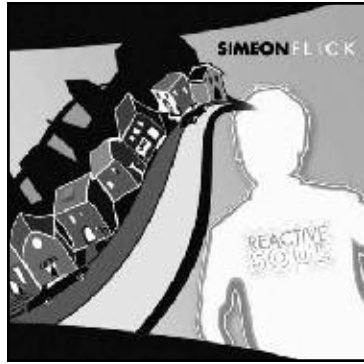


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Simeon Flick Reactive Soul

by Craig Yerkes

Simeon Flick is one of those rare *wunderkinder* who seems to harness musical energy from some other dimension. The good news is that his new CD, *Reactive Soul*, somehow captures lightning in a bottle so that the rest of us can enjoy.

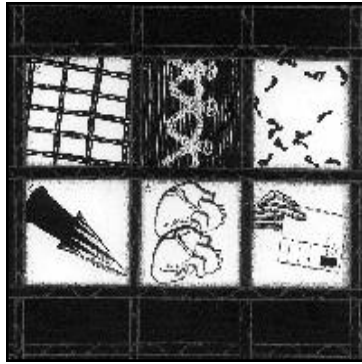
Within the tapestry of Flick's work on this stunning record you'll find mind-bending lyrics (that may have you reaching for Mr. Webster's help), octave defying and soulful vocals, guitar wizardry, and an over-reaching compositional ingenuity that binds it all together.

First, it should be noted that Flick played ALL of the instruments and sang all of the vocal parts (the wonderful guest vocal by Cathryn Beeks is the one exception) on this recording. Ummm...wow! There is cohesion and confidence permeating this music, which is simply the result of a masterful musician working tirelessly to perfect the expression. Flick really hits his musical stride on this disc, whether he's slinging his own brand of brainy pop rock ("Many Moons," "American Boy"); jazzy, blue-eyed soul (the bona-fide hit single "Money Don't Make the Man" and the sizzling "Your Love is Wrong"); or his more quirky/artsy fare ("Caveat," "Black Mare"). "The Acrobat" and "Grave Boy" offer glimpses into the amazing things that Flick can do with a nylon string guitar, especially on "The Acrobat" where the artist's world-class classical training and abilities will make you wonder if this is the same guy who was just tearing it up on the Telecaster. The electric guitar performances are flawless and inspired (personal favorite moments being the tremolo soaked solo on "Your Love is Wrong" and the blazing rhythm parts on "Money Don't Make the Man"). The brilliantly executed lead and harmony vocals ooze passion and intensity, yet sound utterly effortless, which boggles the mind considering how ridiculously ambitious the parts are.

All of this takes place over a harmonic and compositional backdrop that manages to merge wild innovation with yummy pop hooks. The music delivers wicked, audacious surprises but doesn't neglect to provide sonic comfort food. For example, "Money Don't Make the Man" will have you instantly nodding your head as the ear candy is dished out, but the bridge serves up a really cool, somewhat dissonant, odd time signature cacophony that lasts just long enough to bring something fresh without distracting from the heart of the song. "Black Mare" offers the most intriguing blending of Flick's alternative, pop, rock, and folk compositional sensibilities with Dylan-esque wordplay, infectious guitar hooks, and a deliciously dark, foreboding harmonic framework.

Now, let's talk brain twisting lyrics. On "Money Don't Make the Man," a casual listen might give the false impression that the artist is presenting a straight ahead, feel-good, anti-materialistic sermon, but listen more

continued on next column →



Tim Mudd Self-Titled

by Chuck Schiele

Like a slow flowing river this is a body of work that rolls just as gently. Heavy on introspection, the lyrics are delivered in a way that leaves the listener feeling privy to the private ponderings of Mr. Mudd and that this whole thing has been a heartfelt admission in complete confidence.

While there is nothing earthshaking in terms of irreverence, it stands boldly in terms of its concern for beauty and moodiness. It's a very moody document. It's more of an acoustic record than it is a folk record. With a few ethereal moves, such as hauntingly gorgeous vocalizations from Jane Lui and keyboards and arrangements à la producer Aaron Bowen, this work also finds itself midstep in its way outside some of the obvious expectations for this genre, all while remaining modest and whispery in its tone. One has to lean into this record much in the same way you do when your lover – or a child who adores you – wants to tell you a secret.

The production is pristine, lending the feeling that we – the listening audience – are present in a private special place. Quietness is considered and an important element of the art rendered here.

I'd also like to say that the artwork itself is tremendous, thanks to Jon Ascher, as it is the perfect "face" to represent the mind, soul, and body of this Tim Mudd CD.

Oftentimes I might call out a tune or two, but I don't think that's an appropriate way of describing this music. It's better to speak in terms of its listening experience – the attitude of it being more like a soundtrack than a collection of catchy hooks and musical pyrotechnics. The lyrics meander through arpeggios and the guitars always have the feeling of flowing water. No crazy, ego-validating solos; not one "yeah, yeah, yeah."

I also find Mr. Mudd's work to be emblematic of the San Diego acoustic scene and representative of the style we've all managed to forge as a body of musicians. Like a slow muddy river, here's Tim rolling his way right through it.

I'm still leaning in, curiously.

Reactive Soul, continued

closely and you'll hear a less idealistic side of the conversation ("...can we pretend that money don't make the man?"). "Choice" also sidesteps convention by twisting what begins to sound like a standard rock and roll anthem about our personal power to direct our lives into a much deeper exploration of the subject of free will.

I wish I could have made this review twice as long to cover more of the musical and lyrical treasures to be found on this CD, but alas, there are space limits I must adhere to. If you've been longing for something to blow the cobwebs of stale musical convention out of your airspace, this is the record you've been waiting for.



Early Dolphin Swim

by Dave Sawyer

Shades of the '60s! The muddy, distorted guitars; the low-in-the-mix, full stereo; and nearly mumbled vocals add a Farfisa organ, making *Swim* sound like a Rhino re-issue of almost any mid-to-late '60s psychedelic band. Dig out your old lava lamp, strobe light, back light, and posters; light some incense; grab a bottle of Patchouli oil; and let's groove, baby!

Early Dolphin is comprised of Clay S. Guccione on guitars and vocals, Michael B. Myers on bass, and Spencer T. Nikosey on drums. There's a lot of music coming out of this trio — the songs are well-packed with swelling guitar chords and rumbling bass lines.

This debut album is pretty consistent in maintaining this hippie era folk rock feel. I do hear modern influences here and there, just enough to keep it interesting. Listen closely to the rotary phased guitar tones toward the end of "Go Where You Want to Go" to hear what I mean. They use the altering speed of the rotary effect as a dynamic change within the solo section.

"Swim," the title song, is the only exception, being very folk and low-key — and at 2:12, it's the shortest song on the disc. The entire CD is only 22:40, split between eight songs — a little short for a "full" CD, in my opinion.

The CD packaging is the tri-fold style with hand-drawn cover art by Josh Cochran. It's actually pretty nice and goes well with the overall theme of the band and its music. While it doesn't really grab your attention, it doesn't scare you away either and is fairly neutral in that respect. More vivid colors might help if it's sitting on a shelf with 100 other CDs.

While nothing really stands out or blows me away, *Swim* is musically well executed and DOES work as a cool homage to that renaissance period in our musical history when "rock" music emerged from rock and roll, pop, folk, and blues. "Cycles," track two, is typical of the topics and arrangements from that era. A little college philosophy, mixed with whatever might be growing out back, went a long way during that rebellious time.

In this current era of short attention spans and shock music that beats you over the head with meaningless lyrics, fictitious words and noises, and simple, angry beats — it's refreshing to hear an album that you can put on and listen to all the way through and simply enjoy. In the end, it's a very different kind of record for this day and age — and quite listenable. I'll bet these guys are really great to see and hear live!

Once again, this review will be available on my MySpace blog at <http://blog.myspace.com/abod>, which allows you to respond to my reviews. All I ask is that you keep it real and avoid "colorful" remarks. Thank you for reading and supporting local music.

Happy listening!



Gregory Page Daydreaming at Night

by Lou Curtiss

It's hard to put words to a review of a CD by a guy what [sic] writes his own stuff, but Gregory Page can always be counted on in the stuff department. I've listened to 10 or 12 CDs that go back to a Street Fair audition cassette that my old friend Buddy Blue turned me on to around the time I first took over the book- ing, about 1994. There were good songs on that tape and on all subsequent CDs that I've heard since. *Page's new CD is the best one yet.*

One of the signs of a good song, and a quality collection of songs, is whether you remember the words and can hum the tune (or at least have it whirling around in your mind). That is certainly the case here. I find myself humming "The Ghost with Sad Eyes" and singing parts of "Everybody's Happy" on a regular basis. Poetic tag lines like "daydreams at night" and "sleeping in dirt" and "flying kites in the middle of night" stick with me.

The overall image that runs through all the songs here is one of things passing and, in a nonthreatening way, it could be lives, loves, ideas, or even the Bush administration. Things pass, and Page reminds us that we don't have to dwell on it, we just go along for the ride; some nice memories will be picked up along the way.

This is also the nicest package I've seen from Page. Ray Suen's swinging violin and mandolin, and Martin Greaves' keyboards, fit right in. Other guest instrumentation from Shanna Nichols, Doug, Myer, A.J. Croce, and others fit in at the right places when needed.

Page's vocals just get better and better. With a contemporary salute to the crooners of the 1930s, the songs have an appeal that makes them as up to date as the eternal subjects he sings about. Broken hearts, eternal truths, various kinds of sorrow, and loads of optimism get you through it all. The whole gang coming on with newly written songs (except for Gus Kahn's old chestnut "I'll See You in My Dreams," which fits right in) sometimes sounds like they could be played on a wind-up phonograph.

Also included is a photo verse booklet with images that fit with bits of lyric into the songs presented to remind you that although things pass, they also endure. This is a CD that's not only nice entertainment, it also gives you something to think about. I have a feeling I'm going to keep this one close at hand and play it through every once in awhile. It's that kind of CD — full of things that alter and illuminate or minds.

One of these days someone in the Department of Musical Taste is going to decide that Page is the bee's knees and San Diego is going to lose another of our own. It's happened before. Meanwhile, grab this CD and go listen to him live. You'll never be sorry.



All photos by Steve Covault unless otherwise noted

O' BERKLEY, WHERE HART THOU?



Clown Prince Jeff Berkley and Calman Hart



McKenna Doyle, Dakota Berkley, Melissa Hart



Tim Flannery



Photo: Gail Donnelly Seaholm

Jim Soldi, Eve Selis, Marc Twang



The Amazing 7th Day Buskers



Rev. Gregory Page



Jim Austin & Beth Mosko



Randi Driscoll, Robin Adler, Eve Selis



Marcia Claire



Cindy Lee Berryhill



Grand Finale

H.A.T. AWARDS



Aaron Bowen



Barbara Nesbitt



Carlos Olmeda



Dan Broder



Robin Henkel & Lisa Sanders share a moment



Jeff Johnson



Simeon Flick



Jane Lui



Lestat's soundman Louis



Kerri Dopart



Doctor Dave



Earl Thomas



Matt Silvia



Matthew Stewart



Jen Knight



Will Edwards



Kyle Phelan



Cathryn Beeks



Nathaniel Flick



Steph Johnson



Josh Damigo



Kellis David



Laura Kuebel



Bart Mendoza



Tim Mudd



Tommy Edwards



The Bobs at Dizzy's



Peter Bolland



Gregory Page, Drew Andrews, Sven-Erik Seaholm



Dizzy's Chuck Perrin



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Tom Petty



Joe Rathburn, Peggy Watson, Dave Beldock @ Meeting Grace



Nathan Welden @ Cosmos

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