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SAN DIEGO
ROUBADOOR

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



December 2007

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BEN OWENS. Eighteen-year-old fingerstyle guitarist Ben Owens is paying for college by playing his guitar. He has been gigging since he was 15, and in that time he has raised \$10,000 for disaster victims and wounded soldiers. He has shared the stage with local luminaries Jim Earp, Tom Boyer, and Fred Benedetti, as well as internationally acclaimed virtuosos Tommy Emmanuel, Pete Huttlinger, Richard Smith, and John Knowles. Ben is also a featured performer at the annual Chet Atkins Appreciation Society Convention in Nashville. He has written more than 30 songs, and recently he recorded and produced his own solo CD, "Never Alone." Aside from his musical pursuits, Ben was also Co-Valedictorian of his high school graduating class this past May.

In addition to being a seasoned performer and a great role-model, Ben is a lot of fun; you can't sit in his show and not be happy.

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

SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR, the local source for alternative country, Americana, roots, folk, blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass music news, is published monthly and is free of charge. Letters to the editor must be signed and may be edited for content. It is not, however, guaranteed that they will appear.

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Email your gig date, including location, address, and time to info@sandiegotroubadour.com by the 23rd of the month prior to publication.
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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.

CONTRIBUTORS

FOUNDERS
Ellen and Lyle Duplessie
Liz Abbott
Kent Johnson

PUBLISHERS
Liz Abbott
Kent Johnson

EDITORIAL/GRAPHICS
Liz Abbott
Chuck Schiele

ADVERTISING
Kent Johnson

BUSINESS CONSULTANT
Joanna Schiele

DISTRIBUTION
Kent Johnson
Dave Sawyer
Mark Jackson
Indian Joe Stewart
Dan Long
Peter Bolland

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Steve Covault

WEB MASTER
Will Edwards

WRITERS
Mike Alvarez
Peter Bolland
Lou Curtiss
Paul Hormick
Jim McInnes
Tim Mudd
Raul Sandelin
Chuck Schiele
Sven-Erik Seaholm
José Sinatra
Allen Singer
D. Dwight Worden

Photo: Steve Covault
Cover design: Chuck Schiele



Dear Troubadour,

Love your publication! And Dwight Worden's "welcome mat" on Bob Cox was just great. It brought back some memories for me that I thought I'd share with you all that, if you want even more to say about this wonderful guy, you can share with your readers.

Back in the mid-nineties, Tim Flannery was moving from bit playing with Buffed Out, the Jimmy Buffet tribute band, to having his own original presentation. He had released his first CD and was working on his second, *Secret World*. I played drums on that CD and subsequently became a member of his live band that also featured none other than Banjo Bob Cox.

The band was far from being considered bluegrass at that time, but you could tell that style was firmly implanted in Flannery and eventually came to fruition a couple of years later with the various Celtic style line-ups he's had over the last 10 years or so. But it was Bob Cox that truly added that wonderful good time feel to the songs he played on while in the Flannery band of the mid-nineties.

He would come in to rehearsals in Leucadia or at the various gigs we played, open up his banjo case, tune up, and just go to town when the time came. Sort of a quiet guy - whenever he had something to say, it was well worth listening to. But man, could he pick! I always recall backing off the drum whenever he played his solos so as not to even think about stepping on his playing. What good times those were.

So here's to Bob in his retirement from a guy who was very privileged to have played with him years ago. The best to you, Bob. Your spirit will always live on!

George Nelm s La Jolla

Dear Lou [Curtiss],

I'm writing to tell you how much I enjoyed your *Troubadour* article on Merle Travis. Great interview, great writing, and some great stories about one of my musical heroes. You must have put in a lot of work, but it was worth it as you created a classic!

Dwight Worden

FAREWELL TO RON JACKSON

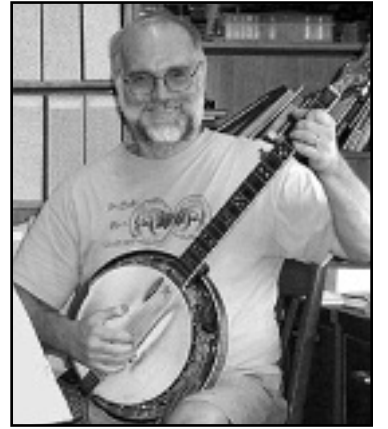
by Dwight Worden

Life is wonderful, fickle, and cruel. It gave us Ron Jackson who enlightened the lives of thousands of his music students, band mates, and fans over his more than 30 years as a music teacher and performing musician, and then it took him away without warning on October 14. Ron, who was walking near his home in Carlsbad suffered a massive heart attack. A bicyclist passing by stopped immediately as Ron went down and administered CPR until the paramedics arrived, but the attack was too massive and Ron was dead on arrival at the hospital from a severe rupture of his heart. He was 57. He is survived by his wife Lisa, stepson Greg Uke, and son in college Nick Jackson.

Anyone who has taken acoustic music lessons in North County, or who has been into Buffalo Brothers music store in Carlsbad, has probably seen Ron, who taught lessons at Buffalo Brothers for many years. Prior to that, starting in 1971, Ron was the music teacher at Blue Ridge Music in downtown Old Encinitas. Ron leaves 79 currently active students behind who will cherish their time with him but who must now find another teacher as well as and hundreds if not thousands of students he has taught over his long career in North County.

Ron knew music. All kinds of music. Klezmer, blues, jazz, Celtic, classical, bluegrass, and pop, and he could and did play and teach it all. I remember him playing "Wipeout" and other surf music on his banjo in the late '70s and coining the phrase "bubble-grass" to describe this new genre of acoustic music. Ron was top notch on acoustic guitar, banjo, clarinet, and mandolin and could hold his own on several other instruments as well. If you had an obscure tune you wanted to learn about, he was the "go to guy." Ron was a living breathing archive of musical information and knowledge. He would probably know who wrote that obscure tune, the year it was written, all 15 verses, and likely had the tab and music in his "office."

For those who didn't take lessons from Ron, you probably saw and heard him perform in any number of bands over the years. He first played full time with Molly Stone's New Honky Tonk Band and then played regularly with Squatters Rights in the '70s and '80s at the Stingaree in Encinitas and at the Old Time Café in Leucadia among other gigs. Squatters Rights was the first band ever hired at the Belly Up Tavern in Solana Beach.



Ron Jackson

Ron also performed with Fancy Peaches, and from 1979 up to as recently as last summer he played with the Unstrung Heroes. From 1979 to 1988 Ron was a regular performer and the adjunct musical advisor at the legendary Old Time Café in Leucadia, according to its owners Bill Goldsmith and Pearl Wolfe. Ron was also a founding member and key element in the Opossums of Truth, a scientific gospel band that has played throughout the West. You will find Ron prominently on all four of the "Possum" CDs, playing guitar, mandolin, and banjo and singing about science and the oddities of the real world. Showing his diversity of interests, Ron also played in a Klezmer band called the Big Jewish Band and could wing out the country and pop with the best of them when called upon to fill in.

Ron was also a true intellect, interested in everything from genealogy, which he studied intensely, to local politics and everything in between. A "music" lesson with Ron was also a life experience as there were always vibrant and memorable discussions about a variety of topics that always left the student wondering how Ron knew so much. It is hard to imagine that all that knowledge, talent, and good humor are gone. Ron will be missed and will not be forgotten.

A memorial jam session in honor of Ron was held at Buffalo Brothers on November 18, attended by many prominent local musicians, including store owner Bob Page and his staff, Steve White, Banjo Bob Cox and wife Karen, Dwight Worden, Given Harrison, and many others. The group passed tunes and stories around a circle, with each player sharing a tidbit about his or her experience with Ron and then calling a tune. It was a fitting farewell to a wonderful friend, teacher, and musician. A memorial service will be held for Ron on January 6. Contact Buffalo Brothers for information.

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from the publishers of the
San Diego Troubadour

We wish to thank our dedicated staff members, writers, columnists, delivery helpers, and our readers for helping to keep this publication alive and well.



TOM PAXTON: A Gift of Song and Much, Much More

by Allen Singer

Oklahoma must have something really special considering all the great storytellers and folk singers-songwriters the state has produced — Will Rodgers, Woody Guthrie, and, in addition, the unassuming, button-down-shirt, sport jacket-wearing Tom Paxton, who moved to Oklahoma at age 10 and calls himself an Oklahoman. In the 1930s Oklahoma was a dust bowl belt state with a significant Native American population, a place where people farmed, raised cattle, sharecropped the fields, and wild-catted oil. Oklahoma was also a real Bible belt state filled with folks who lived their lives dodging the dusty winds that would drive many of them out of their homes to relocate in California.

After Tom Paxton graduated from the University of Oklahoma as a drama major, he headed east to find his muse. Along the way, he served a six-month stint in the army at Fort Dix, after which he, like many singers and songwriters before him, found his way to New York's Greenwich Village. Paxton tried some acting but was drawn to folk music, which had piqued his curiosity while he was still in college. He had been interested in music from an early age and got his first "tough to play" guitar from an aunt when he was 16.

New York's Greenwich Village had always been a Bohemian haven for writers, poets, actors, and outsiders who lived to tweak society's rules. Sundays in Washington Square during the 1950s was a gathering day for the local folk crowd. You could see a multitude of folksingers down at the Square: Woody Guthrie, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Carolyn Hester, the Greenbriar Boys, Dave Van Ronk, Billy Faier, Len Chandler, Peter La Farge, the New Lost City Ramblers, Oscar Brand, and countless unknowns and wannabes. The late 1950s fed the early 1960s Great Folk Revival, or Folk Scare, as it was later to be renamed by Utah Phillips. Paxton became attracted to the Village folk scene and found many kindred spirits in the odd mix of locals and drop-ins. There he entered an unscripted new cultural beginning during an earth shattering time of testing our culture's psyche and human relationships, and of questioning the status quo in many more ways than could have been predicted. One would have to wonder how he must have felt, coming out of a strict conservative state of Bible thumpers, range-riding cowboys, and dust-blown folks who eked out a living on small share-cropped farms.

A city of many different ethnic groups, immigrants, languages, food, theatre, and

music, New York was also a wellspring for the creative artist. In Greenwich Village, with its coffeehouses, old Bohemian haunts, bars, and off-Broadway theatres, a group of folk singers was gathering, haphazardly at first, to seek out roots and play traditional American music. The main instruments of voice, guitar, banjo, fiddle, and autoharp became the keys to open the door to the music's source. In the years that preceded the 1960s, Woody Guthrie took up his pen and guitar to capture the real American landscape of a post depression and labor conflicted society, where fear and human desperation could give voice to hope. For Guthrie, folk music was a great organizing tool, a way to gather people around issues, to solidify the progressive movements of the time, and to bring about changes in the human condition.

Tom Paxton walked into an evolving musical scenario. He was already primed by Woody's writing, the success of the Weavers and Burl Ives, and the popularity of recorded media and television. This music scene was comprised of a group of fine songwriters who were creating outside Tin Pan Alley, in the places not touched by the urban concrete jungle. Jimmy Rodgers and the Carter Family had already sung folk songs about the human condition, railroad trains, busted lives, salvation in the bottle, religious recollections, and the persistence of hope. Paxton was unique, because he ventured beyond singing other people's songs; he began to write his own material. Bob Dylan was still channeling Woody Guthrie through Ramblin' Jack Elliott while Paxton was experimenting with finding his own muse and writing about the lives and times he was traveling through. The traditionalists were researching and playing the old style music, but Paxton was taking the traditionalist instinct and updating and refining this roots music into his own material. Down at the Gaslight, a club on MacDougal Street, among such folksinger-songwriters as Bob Dylan, Peter La Farge, Len Chandler, and Phil Ochs, Paxton was the first to do his own songs in his show sets. The Village musicians were traditionalists at first and regarded new material with suspicion. Paxton was writing topical songs and love tunes. He had a special gift for direct writing that went straight to the heart of the matter. His lyrics weren't written in the free word association style of the 1950s' beat generation of Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. Paxton's songs hinted at the traditional melodies, with verses and choruses that seemed like songs written in the old times. Songs like "Ramblin' Boy," "Bottle of Wine," and "Last Thing on My Mind" all rang true and felt authentically "folk." These were songs you could sing and grasp right away,

songs that spoke directly to you, not through you. Paxton's song "Marvelous Toy" played to all ages. He stuck to his songwriting by hearing and seeing the world around him, always remaining just himself.

The early 1960s was fueled by antiwar sentiment, the civil rights movement, the brutality of Vietnam, changing male-female relationships, and the assassination of President Kennedy. These times also fanned the creative flames in New York's Greenwich Village. Paxton took it all in and wrote it down like a true troubadour. As a chronicler of our lives and times, he became our voice, dressed in a sweater and plaid shirt. Paxton was America singing, like Woody Guthrie before him. Milt Okun, Paxton's mentor and manager of the Chad Mitchell Trio, had Paxton try out for the group, but his voice didn't fit the mix. Okun heard his original songs and became one of his main musical supporters. In the summer of 1964, I spent some time with noted folklorist and song collector Sam Easkin. We went to a party in Woodstock at the home of one of the publishers of the *Daily News* and I played some Guthrie and Dylan songs. At some point during the party, the publisher put a piece of paper in my hand and asked if I could sing a particular song. I was in a setting that wreaked of old wealth, a big stone house with heavy woody furniture, old oil-cracked portrait paintings, a place a working class city boy like myself had never been in or imagined. The song was Tom Paxton's "Daily News," a tongue-and-cheek play on the jingoistic nature of the paper. I looked down at the words, all the while contemplating my escape, and started to sing Paxton's song.

*Civil rights leaders are a pain in the neck
Can't hold a candle to Chiang Kai-Shek
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News
Ban the bombers are afraid of a fight
Peace hurts business and that ain't right
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News*

*Daily News, daily blues
Pick up a copy any time you choose
Seven little pennies in the newsboy's hand
And you ride right along to never, never land*



Tom Paxton

*We got to bomb Castro, got to bomb him flat
He's too damn successful and we can't risk that
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News
There's millions of commies in the freedom fight
Yelling for Lenin and civil rights
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News
Seems like the whole damn world's gone wrong
Saint Joe McCarthy is dead and gone
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News
Don't try to make me change my mind with facts
To hell with the graduated income tax
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News
John Paul Getty is just plain folks
The UN charter is a cruel hoax
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News
J. Edgar Hoover is the man of the hour
All he needs is just a little more power
How do I know? I read it in the Daily News.*

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As I sang, Paxton's words quieted down the room. You could have heard a pin drop. My blood pressure was ticking up, my head was floating, and I was feeling trapped. I ended the song and the owner brought me a stiff, straight

shot of Jack Daniels. Everyone laughed and I realized how subversive and sophisticated Paxton's writings really were. His music had gotten a group of blue blood, Mayflower ship survivors to open up their ears and really listen.

Luckily for us, Paxton is still on the road, a singular man, proudly writing and singing his songs and sharing them all over the world.

Paxton's website, www.tompaxton.com, is a window into his life's musical journey. He maintains a free download section on his web site called "Short Shelf Life Songs," which are topical songs, with Paxton's view of life's everyday occurrences as he sees them with his own eyes, hears them with his own ears, and continues to perform and play them on his guitar.

On Saturday, December 1, at 7:30pm, Tom Paxton will play a rare local concert for the San Diego Folk Heritage at the San Diego United Methodist Church in Encinitas. Admission is \$18 (\$15 for SDFH members). For ticket sales, go to: www.ticketweb.com. For further information, call 858/566-4040 or go to www.sdfkheritage.org.

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Recordially, Lou Curtiss

ANOTHER HANK IS GONE

When we had Hank Thompson out to the 1996 Adams Ave. Roots Festival, he shared memories with us about being stationed in San Diego in the 1940s with the US Navy. He told us how he wrote his first hit song, "Whoa Sailor," after coming back to barracks from leave on San Diego's lower Broadway in its heyday as a liberty port. Hank continued to tour and perform up until a week of his passing last month. He was 82. The story I remember best about Hank is the time I saw him at a El Cajon club where the band that had been provided was a lot more in the so called modern country style and not at all

suited for Hank's western swing style. Hank put up with the backing on a couple of songs and finally reached over and turned off the lead guitar players amplifier, quietly saying, "I'll play lead," leaving the guy standing there for the rest of the set and proceeding to do just that. Hank is one of very few entertainers who managed to work and make recordings over a period of seven decades and had chart items in five of those. Songs like "The Wild Side of Life," "A Sixpack to Go," "Humpty Dumpty Heart," "Your Tears Have Washed I Love You from the Blackboard of my Heart," "The Older the Violin, the Sweeter the Music," and so many more. Hank bridged the gap between Texas and Oklahoma Swing and the Nashville Honky Tonk

Photo: Bill Richardson



Lou Curtiss

country. Even though he was a member of Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame," he refused to live and work in that part of the country, preferring the West. He'll sure be missed (at least by this good ol' boy and I think by many more folks, too).

RACY MUSIC FROM THE 1890S

Let me tell you about some dirty songs from the dawn of recorded sound (since we're dishing dirt today) and I'm talking about smutty recordings from the 1890s. Now you might ask just how smutty can something be from the 1890s? Well, without going into details, let just say this anonymous feller who sang most of these songs did some stuff that would make a rapper blush. This is the real thing even though it was an actionable offense to sell or play them back in those days. A recitation to form a "Whores' Union" is downright hard even for this dirty old man to listen to. This CD put out by the folks at Archeophone include sides done under that anonymous persona by well known vaudevillians of the day. Archeophone is a label dedicated to preserving recordings from those very early days of recording. Check out their website for the complete recordings of early performer Bert Williams and more rare recordings by the likes of Billy Murray, Eddie Morton, Marion Harris, and others.

I was listening to some of the early Folk Festival recordings and came upon a story about Alfred Packer, the only man in America to ever be convicted of cannibalism, who is memorialized at the University of Colorado by having the

campus snack bar named after him. Rosalie Sorrels tells the story about how Alfred Packer and a group of mountain men were stuck up in the Rocky Mountains somewhere with little to wear and nothing to eat. They were feared lost but come spring Alfred Packer showed up fat and sassy and feeling fine. Later on, the bones of the other mountain men were found and Alfred Packer was arrested and accused of eating them. The local Judge who tried him was noted to have said, "Alfred Packer, you voracious son

CD REVIEW

RAY BIERL: ANY PLACE I HANG MY HAT



I wanted to sum up feelings about coffee houses back in the 1960s when I was first going to them and particularly about my favorite of the old time coffee houses of that era: the Heritage in Mission Beach. One performer always stands out in my memory and that's Ray Bierl. Now, I grew up with country music and old timey sounds and there was always plenty of that in any Ray Bierl program. Although Ray moved to the Bay area many years ago, he maintains a group of friends and followers here and often returns for a festival or concert or just to hang around and talk about old times and maybe pick a little. There's never been enough of Ray on record. There was a cassette that came out awhile ago that finally drifted onto a CD, but there was always a need for a lot more. So now we've got a brand new CD with a fine bunch of songs mostly about traveling and moving around as a general theme.

highway in his voice."

The musicians around him are among the best and many of them (Mayne Smith, Tom Rozum) have played music with Ray for some time. Others (Mark Graham, Penelope Critchlow, and others) I admit I don't know as well, but everyone does an outstanding job and adds rather than subtracts from Ray's voice, guitar, and fiddle. Laurie Lewis handles the production chores, helps Ray with the arrangements, and even plays a little fiddle on a couple of numbers. The package is nice to look at, the notes are informative, and the music is good. What more could you want? This guy has been around for awhile and if you haven't heard from him before, get ahold of this one. By the end of the first listen you'll have made a new friend. You can get this CD from Greasy String Productions, P.O. Box 10605, Oakland, CA 94610 or www.raybierl.com. I suggest you do that and ask him when the next one's coming out. — Lou Curtiss

of a bitch, there were only five democrats in the whole county and you done et four of them."

PORTER WAGONER

Finally a word about Porter Wagoner, who passed away recently. Porter had a TV show in the early '60s that ran for a goodly time here in San Diego and always had guests of note on each show (I remember seeing Sara and Maybelle Carter on one show and Sam and Kirk McGee, who were among those Grand Ole Opry performers that date back to the 1920s and who played at the ninth San Diego Folk Festival in 1976. I always gave him credit for giving his guests a good part of the limelight and not hogging it himself. Some of those performances can be seen on YouTube including the two I mentioned above. For me that will always be the most important part of his legacy.

Recordially,
Lou Curtiss

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Ida Garcia Loves to Swing

Photo and story by Paul Hornick

"Are you ready to swing, Mister Calloway?"

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Every Saturday morning at ten o'clock, Cab Calloway belts out this full-bore, solid swing tune on the radio, introducing San Diego to another session of "Rugcutter Swing," three hours of hopping, jiving, and, of course, swinging. "Rugcutter Swing" takes you back to Benny Goodman, Woody Herman, and Tommy Dorsey, back to when men wore fedoras, cars had running boards, and a suit could be a zoot.

And asking the above question that starts the show is "Rugcutter Swing" host Ida Garcia, who has been bringing the show to San Diego for the last ten years. Recently I was lucky enough to join Garcia for her Saturday session in the studios of KSDS. Between cuts of Jimmy Dorsey and Doris Day, Garcia and I talked about her show and all the swing that she brings to our city.

Although the inspiration and mainstay of Garcia's show are the swinging bands from 60 or 70 years ago, you'll hear Big

Time Operator, Brian Setzer, and others who currently carry on the swing traditions. "I try to keep it so everybody has something to enjoy. I'll play three songs from the '30s and '40s, then a few songs from today," she says. Garcia keeps the kids in mind, too. Every once in a while you'll hear "The Bear Necessities" and other tunes from the Disney's *Jungle Book* soundtrack; other cartoon tunes get a play from time to time as well.

Garcia peppers her on air banter with the hep sayings and expressions of the old swing bands and music, such as "all reet." And she always calls her listeners her "cats and kittens." As she introduces the show, and again at the end, she announces the jive word of the day; she has culled this lingo from slang reference books given to her by friends and fans, but for the most part she learns them from old movies. Chances are that if a tough guy played by Edward G. Robinson or James Cagney said it, Garcia has featured the lingo on the show. Today's jive word of the day is "slip me some skin." Okay, it's a phrase, but let's not get picky here. Garcia tells us that "slip me some skin" means to shake hands.

Back in high school Garcia knew that she wanted to work in radio, but as is their mandate to destroy all the fun in life, her

high school career counselor steered her to business administration. She nonetheless continued to love the airwaves and went to local radio stations looking for work. "I told them that I'd do anything, that I would volunteer. I just wanted to work in radio," says Garcia. "Then my mom said to me, 'Why don't you try KSDS? They're down here at the college. They play jazz, and I think you'd be happy there.'"

Garcia recalls her meeting with Tony Sisti, KSDS station manager, as not being the most encouraging. She says, "He was really busy. There were people all around wanting his attention. I didn't think I had a chance." Sisti nonetheless remembered her and called Garcia in to work. She started at the station, performing mostly administrative tasks. Later, when Sisti asked if she wanted to go on the air, Garcia jumped at the chance. She hosted a one-hour show that floated around from Tuesdays, to Wednesdays, to daily drive time. She was, and continues to be, a big fan of "Honkin' and Screamin'," a paean to the howling high spirited blues that you'll hear on KSDS late on Friday nights, and told Sisti that she wanted to make a similar show that featured swing music. She prepared some sample tapes of how she conceived the show and, after working out some of the



Ida Garcia, host of Jazz 88's Rugcutter Swing

kinks, "Rugcutter Swing" was born.

Garcia is diminutive, with coal black hair that shines like a vinyl LP the first time you take it out of the sleeve. Today she's wearing a Rugcutter Swing tee shirt and black and white two-tone dance shoes that look as though they are ready to bunny hop at any moment. Her love of swing, plus seeing Madonna cut a rug in the movie *A League of Their Own* inspired her to learn swing dancing. Garcia also deejays her swing sounds for weddings and parties. She notes with some pride the warm reception she has received, treated as much like a guest as the disc jockey for the occasion. Some of her longtime fans are couples who have said "I do," then cut a rug while Garcia spun the platters.

Garcia's enthusiasm is palpable. We talk about Nat King Cole, Mel Torme, and June Christie; at the mention of each, her eyes light up or she swoons with delight. As long as we're talking about swing, it seems like the conversation could last all day. Garcia has always been a music fan. In high school she had a transistor radio that she would put under her pillow, falling asleep to the latest top of the charts. She loved pop music as a teen and into adulthood. "Then, this was the mid-'90s," she recalls. "I heard Ella Fitzgerald singing 'They Can't Take That Away From Me,' and I was hooked." She

estimates that 90% of her CD collection is swing.

Today, as we chit chat, Garcia plays cuts from a number of the classic jazz singers and swingers of the '50s and '60s like Bobby Darin and Anita O'Day. And we also get a dose of the Rat Pack. Dino, Sammy, and old Blue Eyes get their share of time on the play list as well.

Speaking of Sinatra, Garcia noticed that she was playing about 20 minutes of the Chairman every week. She bumped it up to a complete half hour to make a weekly "Session with Sinatra." Recently, after talks with management and her fans, she now features Sinatra every other week, and on the alternating weeks she features another great swing artist, usually a singer such as Billie Holiday or Chris Connor.

It's getting close to one o'clock, when the format changes from swing to Latin jazz. My time with Garcia is just about up. She reminds us that the jive word of the day is "slip me some skin." She thanks all of the fans who have called in and ends with some jive advice, the first an admonishment from Ol' Blue Eyes to his children, and the other from James Cagney to Pat O'Brian in *Angels With Dirty Faces*: she says, "Stay awake out there. And don't be a suckah!"

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The Most Recorded Drummer in History JOHN GUERIN (1939 – 2004)

by Bart Mendoza

San Diego has been very fortunate to have many world class artists call the area home. Most are familiar, with such hit-makers as Frankie Laine, Jim Croce, Tom Waits, Stephen Bishop, Blink 182, or Jewel. However, there is a less well-known group of players who have performed on more hits than the above names combined. They are the session musicians. Generally anonymous on hit recordings, they trade the limelight for a paycheck and the variety of the music they get to perform. Even in a city whose talent includes Barney Kessel (Jefferson Airplane: "White Rabbit," Beach Boys: "Good Vibrations," Elvis Presley: "Return to Sender") and Nathan East (Kenny Loggins: "Footloose," Destiny's Child: "Survivor," George Harrison: "Live in Japan"), a musician like John Guerin stands out.

While Guerin isn't well known to the general public, you've been listening to his work for years. He's been called the "most recorded drummer in history" by the likes of the *London Telegraph* and like Kessel and East, he's played on so many hits it's almost impossible to keep track. Joni Mitchell, Frank Zappa and Madonna all relied on his services. The Brady Bunch "Sunshine Day" – that's Guerin. But so is "Monk's Blues" by Thelonious Monk, as well as Seals and Croft's "Diamond Girl." His best known work? Take your pick. That's him on the themes to the TV classics "Jeopardy," "Laverne and Shirley" and "Hawaii 5-0."

John Payne Guerin was born in Hawaii on October 31, 1939, relocating to San Diego as a toddler. He was introduced to the drums by his uncle, who played with small time groups in the area. He learned his craft by playing along with his father's big band records and was soon playing with local combos. A resident of Hillcrest, Guerin spent his spare time working on music and tracking down rare jazz discs, but even in his teens his drumming was considered special. In 1955 he was a featured player in a San Diego High School assembly called "The Battle of the Drums." More important, he was part of a now legendary band/circle of friends that included pianist Mike Wofford, saxophonist Gary LeFebvre, trumpeter Don Sleet, and bassist Bill Lenhart. The group had a residency of sorts at the Beacon Inn, located in Cardiff By The Sea.

In 1959, at the age of 20, Guerin made his national debut with clarinetist Buddy DeFranco's quartet. He remained with the group long enough to make his album debut with 1961's *Presenting the Buddy DeFranco & Tommy Gumina Quartet*. By the time of 1963's *Polytones*, he had moved to Los Angeles and soon took over the drummer's position with George Shearing, working with him from 1965-1966. He soon re-teamed up with old friend Wofford,

recording three albums with him, *Strawberry Wine* (1966), *Summer Night* (1967), and *Sure Thing* (1967).

It's notable that while jazz remained his lifelong love, he did not discriminate when it came to recording. Throughout this time he had taken part in session work – notably the theme music to "Jeopardy" (1964) – but following his departure from Shearing's band, he became a standard fixture in Los Angeles studios, particularly for studio and movie work, and was instantly in the big leagues. In 1967 he began an association with another former San Diegan, Frank Zappa, appearing on the album *Lumpy Gravy* (1967), *Hot Rats* (1969), and *Chunga's Revenge* (1970). It was also during this time he worked on three projects with Elvis Presley: *Live a Little Love a Little* (1968), *Charro* (1969), and *The Trouble with Girls* (1969). A workaholic, the same period saw Guerin taping the "Hawaii 5-0" theme as well as recording with Frank Sinatra, Lou Rawls, and Ella Fitzgerald.

Guerin only intensified his work load in the 1970s. One of his earliest triumphs that decade was his work for composer Lalo Schifrin on the movie classic *Kelly's Heroes*.

In 1972 Guerin became the fourth of five drummers to occupy the drummer's throne with the Byrds. Guerin's time in the band came to an end on Feb. 10, 1973, when he and bassist Skip Battin left, just two days prior to what would be the group's final show. The band continued on with original bassist Chris Hillman (also a former San Diegan) and Joe Lala, who were recruited to fill in. Though the stint was short lived, Guerin and the band taped an episode of the NBC-TV show "The Midnight Special" (1973) and had a pair of songs ("Roll Over Beethoven," "Mr. Tambourine Man") included in the film *Banjoman*. Following his departure from the group, Guerin continued to work with the various members, including Gram Parson's *G.P.* (1972), Skip Battin's *Battin* (1972), and both Roger McGuinn's *Ist* (1973) as well as *Born to Rock 'n' Roll* (1994).

Guerin wasn't out of a band for long. In 1973 he co-founded L.A. Express with Tom Scott. While the band had major success with their own albums, they found equal fame as Joni Mitchell's touring band, also showing up on every album she released from 1974's *Court and Spark* through 1982's *Wild Things Run Fast* – and every subsequent compilation. Notably he co-penned "The Hissing of Summer Lawns" with Mitchell.

By the mid-1970s Guerin had also branched out into producing, working with O.C. Smith and Terry Garthwaite. In August 1976 he scored his biggest hit in this field when



John Guerin

he produced actor Keith Carradine's album *I'm Easy*. The LP was issued to coincide with the then current hit movie *Nashville*. The film included both Carradine and the album's title track, helping push "I'm Easy" to number 17 on the Billboard Top 40 charts.

In 1974 Guerin teamed up with Zappa once again, though he wasn't aware of this until the album *Apostrophe* hit the stores. In the ultimate honor, the notorious perfectionist Zappa had taken left-over drum tracks from the *Hot Rats* sessions and constructed a song, "Excentrifugal Forz," around them.

During this time frame he recorded with – to name just a few – Melanie, Bonnie Raitt, Walter Murphy, and the Oakridge Boys. He also worked with a pair of former San Diegans. Guerin collaborated on several albums with Michael Franks, co-authoring the song "Don't Be Blue." Meanwhile, 1976 found him in the studio with Stephen Bishop, contributing to his hit album, *Careless*. A few days later he taped the immortal theme to "Laverne & Shirley," "Making Our Dreams Come True."

In the late 1970s he began performing alongside Sleet once again, this time at a bar in Los Angeles called Snooky's. By the mid-1980s he was in the midst of Linda Ronstadt's re-invention as a torch singer. He can be heard on the albums *What's New* (1983), *Lush Life* (1984), *For Sentimental Reasons* (1986), and *Round Midnight* (1986).

In 1988 he was part of an ensemble that

Mike Wofford and John Guerin

Pianist Mike Wofford is legendary for both his work alongside the likes of Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughn as well as an illustrious solo career, but his humble beginnings in the music world were as a San Diego teenager playing school assemblies during the 1950s. He first encountered John Guerin at such an event while still in high school, Wofford at Point Loma High and Guerin at San Diego High. "I met him at a concert at San Diego High that we ended up playing together on," Wofford recalled. "He was Johnny then. It was around 1955 or '56, and [he] was several years younger. I had already begun playing little gigs around with other kids – you know, school dances, stuff like that – and I began hearing from other guys our age about this amazing young drummer, John Guerin." Also performing with the pair that day was legendary trumpet player Don Sleet, then attending Helix High. "That was my introduction to John, one morning at a school assembly concert at San Diego High. He was a very small guy when I met him, and I remember he was barely taller than his bass drum, which was the old-school size of a marching band bass drum."

The pair worked together off and on during and after high school, eventually heading to Los Angeles in their early twenties. While still here, both were part of a group of musicians in a house band at the Beacon Inn (now a Chart House.) located in Cardiff-By-The-Sea. "We played a lot with Don Sleet and a wonderful saxophonist, Gary LeFebvre, but we had no set band name to speak of," Wofford explained. "It was a steady weekend job that lasted about a year and a half. John and I worked with Don, Gary, and various bass players." The band was actually led by another saxophonist, Woody Isabel, "an older guy from whom we learned a lot about playing and being pros," Wofford said. "It was a great jazz scene at that club and I think the Beacon Inn has become sort of legendary for those old enough to remember it. "It was probably the last job John and I worked before leaving San Diego. Around 1959 I went to L.A. and John went on the road with clarinetist Buddy De Franco's quartet. We were still both just kids."

While no recordings from that era are known

to exist, Wofford and Guerin soon teamed up again. "John and I had stayed in touch, and when I got an offer to record in L.A. under my own name I called him immediately." Two albums resulted. 1966's *Strawberry Wine*, with bassist John Doling, and 1967's *Summer Night*, with bassist Monty Budwig. "I'm really proud of both those efforts. John played so beautifully on both, and brought, as he always did, such a great feel and creativity to everything he did. A magic guy."

Wofford and Guerin continued to work together in the years up until his death. "We [performed] together in all kinds of varied musical situations and settings, such as studio recording session work, TV and film, even in country-rock singer Roger McGuinn's touring band after the Byrds had broken up and Roger went solo. John actually recommended me for that job," Wofford noted.

He maintains Guerin's personality matched his talent. "Besides his amazing playing, John had the kind of persona that really lit up a room, whether it was a recording studio, club gig, or concert stage. Although he never seemed to have the desire to actually become a leader, he very well could have. He had an easy, naturally infectious charm with people, a great sense of humor, and the ability to make even the most difficult musical situations comfortable and relaxed for everyone around him. I saw these qualities time after time over the years knowing John."

As far as Wofford is concerned Guerin maybe the greatest drummer of all time. "It sounds like a pretty incredible statement on the face of it. But, think about it. John could drive a big band like almost nobody else, sight-read the arrangements with the best, then go play with a jazz piano trio somewhere and do that superbly. He was a truly great bebop player [his true love] who traveled at one point with Thelonious Monk's quartet and yet was one of the earliest exponents of what was first called in the 1970s jazz-rock, and later fusion, with such people as Frank Zappa and Tom Scott. He was the most flexible and adaptable drummer I've ever heard or known, yet he never sacrificed his own identity or sold out. John brought an authenticity, an honesty to every musical situation he was ever in. My admiration for him as a creative artist is endless."

put together the soundtrack to Charlie Parker biopic, *Bird*. The core group of musicians also included 2004 Lifetime SDMA Winner, saxophonist Charles McPherson.

During the 1990s, Guerin slowed things down, at least where studio work was concerned, to concentrate on his love of sports and his horses. He still recorded, but at a less brisk pace. Look for him on recordings from this period with Ray Charles, Oscar Peterson, Sonny Rollins, and more.

During this time frame he achieved ProEmeritus status by winning the National Academy of Arts and Sciences' M.V.P. award for a fourth year. He also mentored a new generation of musicians as a clinician for the D.W. Drum Company and authored, *Jazz + Rock = John Guerin*, a book on drumming.

But he could still be found behind his kit

in clubs around the Southland. Ironically, although he was recording (slightly) less, his output had increased threefold as the CD revolution saw an explosion of re-issues, anthologies, and compilations. Sadly, he passed away on January 5, 2004, of heart failure at a hospital in West Hills. He was 64. As recently as a week before his death, he had been gigging with singer Steve Tyrell at the Catalina Bar & Grill in Hollywood.

Though Guerin may not be household name, his impact on popular culture is incalculable. One of the studio lynchpins responsible for a large chunk of hit music over the past 40 years, it's clear the soundtrack to our lives would've sounded much different without him.

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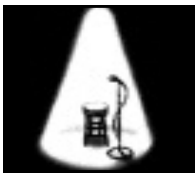
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by Raul Sandelin
photos: Steve Covault

"It's close to one in the morning and it's snowing right now in Memphis, the kind of snow that Memphis hasn't seen in quite some time..."*

Someone once said that singing the blues is an old man's game. "To sing the blues, you've got to live the dues." Isn't that what CSNY proffered? The thinking here is that it takes a good half-century to properly ferment the vocal chords for moaning about love gone bad, several decades of roadhouse smoke to brand the skin a journeyman's leathery yellow-brown, a 20-year stint on Parchman Farm or at Angola Pen to petrify the agony of a crooked lawman's gun into memory. Rock 'n' roll is for the young. Pop is for the pretty. Jazz is for the studios. But, the blues is for those who have felt too much for too long.

This is why it's remarkable that a duo such as Nathan James and Ben Hernandez is so good – the former is still in his twenties and the latter only recently became a 30-something. When you listen to these guys, they sing like old men. And, that's a good thing.

What else is remarkable is that James and Hernandez were born far from the Delta swamps and southern jukes from which they conjure their ghosts and demons. Both are California kids, James from Fallbrook and Hernandez from the Central Valley.

Equally compelling are the eclectic stops on this duo's blues highway: Denmark last year. (At the time of this writing, they're in Taiwan playing that country's national Blues Bash.) This is truly country blues played in a post-modern era, an era in which the rules of the game are being reworked for a new, larger international audience that is looking back to older, regional musical genres that depended more on the human soul, an element too often missing today.

Yet, they've traveled the old road too, winning the International Blues Challenge in Memphis last February. They're also living out the traditional road warrior's journey, making a living as full-time musicians, determined to keep traveling down that highway and those railroad tracks toward an unknown point well beyond the horizon line.

"The room was pretty dim... There was a pool table right about the center..."*

The two first got together about seven years ago and have been playing live wherever the SoCal blues circuit takes them. Many fans have found them through larger events such as the Adams Avenue Street Fair. Others first spotted the duo at bonfire parties along the beach or by snagging a hand-me-down CD from a friend. Along the way, they were written up in the *Southland Blues Magazine*. Their career together has also gotten help from veteran bluesmen such as Dr. John for whom the duo recently opened. Whether it be from regional exposure, word of mouth, or the solid backing of the old stalwarts in the blues community, these two young players are gaining quite a following and turning many heads and ears.

Besides the many shows that the duo plays each week, gigs that range from the San Diego County bar circuit, festivals, and contests to informal jams and parties, they have also churned out a steady stream of recorded material, in which time they've put out two albums together in addition to solo efforts, collaborations, and even video work.

"We were soon being introduced to 'River Rat' Smith..."*

The CD *Make a Change Sometime* was released three years ago to critical acclaim. The album explores the full range of regional acoustic blues, isolating and sometimes mixing blues styles – Delta, hill country, Piedmont, and jug band – with ragtime and gospel. Nickel Creek's Sara Watkins provides her bluegrass fiddle for the occasion and Gene Taylor adds additional depth on piano. With the standard lineup of Nathan on guitar and Ben on harp and vocals, the duo switches things around from time to time with Nathan coming out to the microphone to sing and play harmonica on a number of songs. All the while, Ben's ever-growing selection of pocket instruments – kazoo, jug, washboard, washtub bass, and spoons – gives the tracks that early-century flavor and authenticity. In 2005, the CD was nominated for Best Blues Album at the San Diego Music Awards.

In 2006, *The Carl Sonny Leyland Trio Meets Nathan James and Ben Hernandez* was released. This pairing, in which Nathan and Ben stare across the divide at the boogie-woogie pianist and his small combo, brings together the best of two incredibly different worlds, even while many may associate the two styles with American, pre-war roots. On one hand, there is the lushness of Leyland's piano, on the other, one hears the gritty hammering of percussive guitar and the animal calls of the harmonica. One side speaks of this country's early pop culture, a time during the '20's, '30s, and '40s when people were starting to buy records and dance. The other speaks of the pains of rural life, the racial divide, and agrarian minimalism. One speaks of the dancehall, the other the shotgun shack. One speaks of gyrating bodies, one of a tomcat moaning in the courtyard outside the window. When the duo meets the trio, both sides of the chasm meld perfectly. From one side comes the rhythm, from the other, the blues.

The duo has also found time to work on side projects. Nathan's *The Road Is Mine* is a collection he first recorded some five years ago, featuring his solo work from a point in his career when he was on his own, playing guitar and singing. Long-time friend and blues giant James Harman produced the CD for the Pacific Blues label. Ben is often featured in his emerging role, not as a sideman on the album but as Nathan's equal partner. Harman also joins in on harp and vocals.

More recently, the duo played a major role in the making of Robin Henkel's *Awesome Possum* (2007). Nathan recorded it in his Oceanside studio, while Ben sings and plays harp on several tracks. Says Henkel of Ben's performance: "I joked around with Ben saying that in my opinion, his vocal performance on this recording is so great that *Awesome Possum* should be a Ben Hernandez CD."

In addition to studio work, the two have even put together a video called *Live: Until They Put Me Down*, much in the format of the so-called "RocDocs" that are shown on VH1 and other music stations. Professionally produced, the 15-minute documentary shows the duo performing live in a number of venues. Again, the post-modern irony kicks in as Ben sings in a gutsy groan while the sailboats and wispy sun of a Southern California marina flutter in the background. But, a gutsy groan is a gutsy groan no matter if that setting is far from a smoky juke. The documentary also showcases, in a subsequent string of live clips, the duo in all its versatile, instrumental glory. Besides Ben on harp and Nathan on guitar, there are also clips of Nathan playing harmonica, Ben blowing jug, and both alternating on vocals. Interlaced throughout are clips and photos of the two growing up and interviews in which the duo's roots philosophy is fully explained. Thanks to that cyber juke joint known as the Internet, *Live: Until They Put Me Down* can be viewed on YouTube in two parts.

"After about 10 minutes, Miss Cora called us back into the Kitchen, 'All right, c'mon back and get something to eat..."*



It's been said that you can tell you've hit the big time when what you used to measure in months and years is now measured in days and weeks. This seems to be how the past year has treated the duo. Given all the hard work and the many credits mentioned above, the duo's career seems to have reached a critical mass in 2007.

Coincidentally, or not so coincidentally, the duo has marked its seventh year together. For musical acts, like married couples, the seven-year itch is a milestone. For those bands destined to break up, the seventh year is a good time to do it. For those destined for fame and fortune, the seven-year mark is one of those times to stop and ask, "Have we made it yet?"

For Nathan and Ben, things seem to be breaking in all directions. And, that's a good thing!

The duo's second CD – *Hollerin'* – has been released and is opening many doors. (For more on *Hollerin'*, please see the actual CD review on page 13.) But, for now, it's safe to say that the duo has pulled out all the stops. Alone, just like they appear



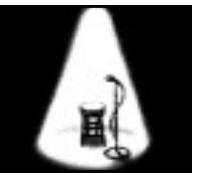
COUNTRY BLUES IN A

on stage, there are no obstacles in the performance. There is even a live cut that captures the brute energy of a Nathan James and Ben Hernandez live show. The two musicians employ every instrument in their arsenal. Nathan plays a variety of guitars from acoustic to 12-string to slide to electric. He also plays many percussion instruments from foot drum to coffee can. Ben, of course, comes fully equipped with his many found instruments. Both musicians share vocals. And, there's plenty of surging harmonica to whip a freight train.

Over the course of 13 songs, mostly original compositions, the duo explores the gamut of pre-war and early post-war song structures from country blues and early Chicago to gospel and ballads.

"It's pretty darn cold here... I brought a scarf from San Diego..."*

The two began their individual musical journeys as if destined to become kindred spirits finally to meet up in their early 20s. Unconventionally, during their high school years, when most kids are gravitating toward the various niches of pop and



NATHAN JAMES AND BEN HERNANDEZ



POST-MODERN WORLD

the appropriate lunch hall cliques, Nathan and Ben were both plunging headlong into pre-war Americana.

"Of course, there was an initial interest in Metallica," says Nathan, a Fallbrook native, who picked up the guitar at 13 and started out in the rock scene of the 1990s. But, Nathan had always been enamored with the acoustic guitar, its purity and intimacy. "The acoustic allows you to project yourself organically," Nathan continues. So, soon Metallica was taking the stage exit in favor of Allman Brothers, CSNY, and the acoustic side of classic rock. These soon segued to their own precursors, especially country blues. Playing with a number of North County and area bands through his teens, including the Blues Pharoahs, Billy Watson, and Johnny Dyer, Nathan met James Harman and went out on tour as a sideman for the blues veteran at the ripe age of 18. It was a great way to see every corner of the country as well as some gigs in Europe, Mexico, and Canada, explains Nathan.

In addition, Nathan has racked up a resume that includes Johnny Rover, Big Mo' Band, Nena Anderson, Blue Largo, Janiva Magness, Gary Primich, Hollywood Blue Flames, Rick Holmstrom,



and many others in the Southland blues scene.

After a few years of touring, Nathan was ready to step out of the sideman's role. So, here and there, he would climb on stage at the occasional blues jam and open mic back here at home. It was through mutual friends, while playing in L.A., that Nathan and Ben were introduced in 2000. They've been playing together seriously ever since.

"And it turns out that it's the same store that Sonny Boy Williamson used to buy his harmonicas from..."*

Like Nathan, Ben also bucked the teenage music trends of the 1990s, falling head over heels in love with the blues while still in high school. "I'm a singer first, harmonica player second," Ben observes. His vocal influences read like a who's-who of the American South, including not only pre-war country blues but folk, country, and gospel. In fact, Ben to this day prefers the terms Americana or roots over the blues since those terms better define the earlier time-period that has become the duo's palate. "Blues means electric blues to most people. We're much more about Tampa Red and Leadbelly, John Estes and Hammie Nixon, people like that." His influences now expand to include Sonny Terry, Peg Leg Sam, John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson, and Noah Lewis.

Singing and playing blues harp in the Sonny Boy Number One format, Ben left the Central Valley after high school and headed to Los Angeles where

he continued to hone his skills while making a number of in-roads into the L.A. blues scene. At this time, he fronted his own bands including Brickyard Jones and the Double Fives. He also began adding various new instruments to his repertoire. The kazoo, jug, washboard, washtub bass, and spoons may seem little more than a novelty, even a bit comical, to many in this day and age.

But, before World War II, when people entertained themselves using the "found" instruments of their everyday lives, these instruments not only provided much needed percussion to small, traveling combos that couldn't lug around a drum set, they enhanced the music by allowing for a number of textures and sound effects that today would be acquired through sampling or studio overdubs. These funny instruments, then, became the color that allowed guitar and harp duos to sound much larger and complex than they actually were.

As Ben's reputation grew, it wasn't long until his L.A. admirers introduced him to another hungry Bluesman, who was headed out on his own — Nathan James.

The two soon decided to make San Diego's North County their home base. Nathan was already from here. And, this would set them up only a stone's throw from L.A. in the event the big city and its music industry came a-calling.

"They say that Beale Street isn't what it used to be..."*

Last February, the duo headed to Memphis to compete in the International Blues Challenge, an event that draws some 150 acts each year from every corner from the globe, not to mention the best of the best from here in the States. As two California boys, Nathan and Ben were definitely in tough company since not only was the entire field top-notch but many Memphis solo artists, duos, and bands also were regulars at the event, inevitably holding the home field advantage. Besides, need it be said that the duo was heading into the homeland of the blues.

Sponsored by Blues Lovers United of San Diego, the duo landed in Memphis during a winter colder than most. The year before, they had competed. But, as already stated, the competition was fierce, especially for two California kids, far from home, on their first pilgrimage to Mecca.

By the time each act arrives in Memphis, it has already shown its wares at dozens of competitions at the regional level. These various blues battles take place over several months starting in the the summer prior. As the regional winners advance through these preliminary events, they must face stiffer and stiffer competition and go toe to toe against the best the world blues community has to offer. After a grueling climb through these ranks, the finalists are showered with an array of prizes, including cash. Winners and participants of the event — who in the past have included Michael Burks, Tommy Castro, Albert Cummings, Larry Garner, Zac Harmon, Richard Johnston, Matthew Skoller, Susan Tedeschi, and Michelle Wilson — are also awarded the well-deserved and universally recognized prestige from which to propel their careers to the next level. An awards ceremony closes out the three days. The Blues Foundation "touts the three-day event as the world's largest gathering of blues bands."

The duo honed its nerves (they'd already honed their skills) at the 2006 competition. Then, on February 3, 2007, on an unseasonably snowy Saturday, especially for two guys from California, first place in the solo artist/duo category was announced: Nathan James and Ben Hernandez!

"I hadn't been on a plane for about 11 years..."*

Yet, winning the prize of prizes wasn't all that the duo won. They had traveled to the land of the blues, had met not only their peers but their idols, and were now internationally recognized bluesmen. During their trip they also visited many of the

haunts both on and off Beale Street that blues heroes of the past hundred years have frequented. Ben, in fact, began writing a travel log in order to record their various sojourns. Excerpts from that journal are included throughout this article.

After a triumphant return to SoCal, the duo maintained a demanding performing schedule. As Ben reminded me: this is how they make their living. There are no paid sick days or vacation days for the full-time, professional musicians. First prize or not, if they don't work, they don't eat.

In April they left the country for the first time as a duo, touring Denmark for three weeks. In June, they flew international again, this time to Italy where several blues festivals awaited them. In July they headed to our own Northwest for Portland's Waterfront Blues Festival. During the summer, they found time to double up and work as sidemen alongside percussionist Michael Tempo in James Harman's Bamboo Porch Review.

Now, it's off to Taiwan to perform at the Taipei Blues Bash. Since the Taiwanese blues scene is short on the very best players, yet has an abundance of enthusiastic listeners, musicians from the States are very much appreciated over there. It's the real deal, Ben explains. Not only are Nathan and Ben the real deal, they are the top blues duo in the world according to their win in Memphis.

In the meantime, Nathan and Ben are working on their third album as a duo, which they will record and produce themselves and release on their own recording label.

And, with that label — Sacred Cat Recordings — up and running, the duo has the tools in place to carry their talent and careers for a long time to come. (Hey, they'll never have to worry about being dropped by their record company.) But, seriously, a lot has changed since the world heard Blind Lemon Jefferson and Big Bill Broonzy. Now, one can sing the blues and still gain some degree of empowerment and control over his destiny. As Nathan and Ben are proving: the blues isn't just for old men anymore. And, that's a good thing!

*** Excerpted from Ben Hernandez's Travel Journal, which was written during the duo's trip to Memphis to compete in the International Blues Challenge.**

Raul Sandelin is a San Diego writer who teaches composition and cultural criticism at Grossmont College and SDSU. He is also a guitar instructor at Moze Guitars in La Mesa.

WHERE TO SEE NATHAN JAMES AND BEN HERNANDEZ

Monday, December 3, 8-10pm
Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub and Grill
850 Tamarack Avenue, Carlsbad, CA

Sunday, December 9, 5pm
Hollerin' CD Release
Dizzys @ San Diego Wine & Culinary Center
200 Harbor Drive, Ste. 120

Monday, December 10, 7:30-10:30pm
Humphrey's Back Stage Lounge
2241 Shelter Island Drive

Saturday, December 15, 5:30-8:30pm
Miramonte Winery
33410 Rancho California Road
Temecula, CA

Sunday, December 30, 10pm-2am
with the Carl Sonny Leyland Trio
Rhythmic Arts Festival
Claire de Lune
2906 University Avenue

Friday & Saturday, January 18-19, 2008
Eighth Annual Roque Valley Blues Festival
Ashland, Oregon

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
www.nathandjames.com
www.myspace.com/njbh



Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



JAMES KING UPDATE



James King

The San Diego Bluegrass Society presented the James King Band in concert last month in Pacific Beach, and a great concert it was. Sadly, shortly there-

DAVID PARMLEY AND CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

The San Diego Bluegrass Society also presented the great band David Parmley and Continental Divide last month, and they too put on an outstanding show. David Parmley, of the famous Bluegrass Cardinals, leads the band with the strong singing of new addition Ron Spears (Rhonda Vincent and the Rage, and Special Consensus).

CHERRYHOLMES

The Escondido Center for the Arts presented the Cherryholmes band last month as well. This outstanding family band has won many awards, including the International Bluegrass Music Association's highest award, Entertainer of the Year, in 2006. It is reported that Cherryholmes put on a great show with excellent singing, instrumental work, and even some buck dancing thrown in.

INFAMOUS STRINGDUSTERS

The Infamous Stringdusters, this year's Emerging Artist of the Year and winner of Song of the Year and Album of the Year for the song and album named "Fork in the Road," performed last month in nearby Dana Point and Mission Viejo. With concerts on Friday and Saturday night in small venues, those lucky enough to get tickets enjoyed an intimate show with one of the hottest bluegrass bands currently on the national circuit. Look for an SDBS/ Del Mar Foundation co-sponsored Infamous Stringdusters concert in Del Mar in March 2008, and be sure not to miss a chance to see this outstanding band. Those who saw the Infamous Stringdusters at Summergrass in 2006 will remember just how hot they are, and they have lots of new material since then, along with an outstanding new guitar player, Andy DeFalco. Andy DeFalco is a Winfield flat picking champion, and the band has not missed a beat since Andy replaced Chris Eldridge, who left the Dusters to join Chris Thiele in his new band the Punch Brothers (Chris Thiele on mandolin, Noam Pekelny on banjo, Gabe Witcher on violin, and Greg Garrison on bass).

What a pleasure it is to have all this great bluegrass coming to San Diego. Look for even more next year, including a great Summergrass Festival in August.

RESOSUMMIT



San Diego's own Betty Wheeler, working with Rob Ickes (nine-time win-

ner of the IBMA award for Best Dobro Player of the Year and current holder of that honor), organized and completed the first ever ResoSummit last month in Nashville. Rob and Betty assembled the best collection of dobro greats ever pulled together to serve as faculty for the three-day event, including Rob Ickes (Blue Highway, Three Ring Circle), Jerry Douglas (Alison Krauss and Union Station), Mike Auldridge (Seldom Scene, Emmy Lou Harris), Cindy Cashdollar (Asleep at the Wheel, Bob Dylan), Andy Hall (Infamous Stringdusters), Phil Leadbetter (Grasstowne and 2005 Dobro Player of the Year), Michael Witcher (Missy Raines and the New Hip), Randy Kohrs (Randy Kohrs and the Lites), and the two top luthiers making dobros, Tim Scheerhorn and Paul Beard. This first ever ResoSummit was sold out at 80 students, with a long waiting list. The students were not disappointed. There were daily classes on a variety of dobro subjects, with concerts held at a sold out Station Inn in Nashville each night featuring, in order of appearance, Three Ring Circle, the Infamous Stringdusters, the Claire Lynch band featuring Mike Auldridge, and Missy Raines and the New Hip. Classes also included a tour and hands-on recording experience at one of Nashville's top recording studios as well as sessions with the luthiers. Whew! It almost makes me want to take up the dobro. Word is that ResoSummit 2 is already in the planning stages for next year.

EMMA RADCLIFFE MOVING TO MINNESOTA



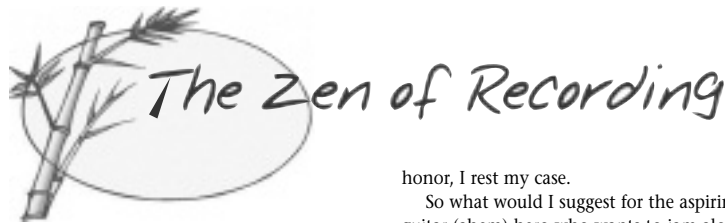
Emma Radcliffe

San Diego's "Queen of Bluegrass," Emma Radcliffe and her daughter Dee Dee have decided to move back home to Minnesota in September 2008. After 30 years of life in San Diego, running weekly jams at her house along with weekly fiddle sessions and her active playing in Emma's Gut Bucket Band, Queen Emma and Dee Dee are going home to Appleton, Minnesota. They have family there so they will be in good hands. We will miss them and wish them well. They have contributed much to San Diego's bluegrass scene.

URBAN SOLACE SUNDAY BLUEGRASS BRUNCH

A new café with great food and ambiance has opened in North Park on 30th Street just south of University called Urban Solace. Not only is the food great, but every Sunday features a bluegrass brunch from 11am to 2pm with a different live bluegrass band each week. Stop by to enjoy some great music and food (I recommend the portobello sandwich) and say hello to operators Scott and Trish and their staff who are working hard, and succeeding, in making this a great place that features good food and drink at reasonable prices and bluegrass music on Sundays.

Happy holidays to everyone, and keep on picking!



by Sven-Erik Seaholm

HOLIDAY BOOTY

Strewn amongst the candlelight and tinsel, the baked goods and confectations, the hugs and handshakes, the gifts given and the memories held, some unrelated thing is always casting shadows farther reaching than any one of us might care to admit: we all, at some point or another in our lives, have wanted to be a rock star. Oh, maybe not as a full-time profession, mind you. Maybe we'd just like to live in one of their houses or be driven to the Grammys in one of their limos or maybe just heed the call of 100,000 or so of their biggest fans to deliver just *one more* encore. Whatever. The bottom line is that if it weren't true, there wouldn't be any market for, or indeed any such thing as, *Guitar Hero III*.

Now, I know lots of you just LOVE this video game. In fact, I predict that attendance of karaoke nights at local bars will suffer a bit in the coming months to make room for public video smackdowns commandeered by plastic controller wielding wannabes who need to blow off the huge head of steam one accrues by being the "only person" in their workplace who truly "understands" the beating silicon heart of a computer. Such is the nature of American pop culture in these halcyon days of blissful musical ignorance.

It's not like it's a difficult target. For instance, there is no direct "musical" input from the game's users. There are just a few buttons that you need to click in sequence with reasonable timing along to a song that someone else is actually playing. Based upon that paradigm, veterans of this game may not be able to play a guitar when all is said and done, but they'll more than likely make a great lighting person.

Meanwhile, back on planet Earth (for now), some of us are actually trying to figure out how to play the real thing. Or maybe write an actual song. Or how about this: Put on your *Guitar Hero* controller and stand in front of a mirror and give your best Pete Townshend windmill strum and follow it up by hoisting some index and pinky devil horns above your head. Now do the same thing with a real Les Paul electric guitar. Enough said on that one, no?

Sure, it maybe doesn't *sound* as good at first and your fingers will hurt when getting started, but who wouldn't rather have guitar calluses than Xbox ones anyway? Your

honor, I rest my case.

So what would I suggest for the aspiring guitar (ahem) hero who wants to jam along to a great rhythm section? The same thing I would recommend for the home recordist who wants to infuse the sound and feel of top session players into their recordings: Big Fish Audio's *LA Bass Sessions* (\$99.95) and *LA Drum Sessions vol. 2* (\$99.95).

I've been using these a lot in the studio recently, for a project with singer songwriter Sam Bybee called *8am*. We've been using a lot of loops, etc., even utilizing his human beat-boxing skills to trigger real drum samples with, but sometimes you just want some good, old fashioned skins beatin'.



One song titled "Her Life" presented just such a challenge. It starts off in a very subdued ambient vibe and gradually builds into a huge symphonic rock rampage, complete with twin guitar solos, cellos through Marshall amps, and the desperate need for a full-on pugilistic assault on the drums. This last bit is not easily achieved through the use of drum loops alone, and the tendency in that situation is to pile on complexity in the absence of power.

After tracking the other instruments to a click/loop combination, I muted the percussion and rendered a submix of them, along with a scratch vocal. I then imported that drum-free mix into Sony Acid, making sure to set the project tempo to same one we've been using (81bpm). I was now ready to audition some different loops and feels against the tracks we'd recorded.

The *LA Drum Sessions* disc is conveniently laid out in a series of folders that are listed by tempo, ranging from 50, 70, 80, 85 bpm's all the way up to 170. Within each of these folders, you'll find additional folders that contain different grooves and fills that utilize the specified meter. Some have just a few, while others have enough stuff to build four or five completely different performances from. I say performances, because that is essentially what most of these are, complete with "a" and "b" sections, with and without cymbals, alternate grooves, fills, and stops.



Sven-Erik Seaholm

Additionally, all of the loops come in three distinct flavors: "dry," "wet," and "room." The dry is unprocessed, the wet has the room mics mixed in for a more "produced" sound, or one can use a combination of the room and dry sounds to dial in their own reverb recipe.

I went straight for the "80" folder and imported everything it had into my Acid project. We quickly decided we liked the huge Bonham-like timbre of the "wet" tracks and began structuring out the arrangement. When we got to the song's climax we knew we were going to need some over-the-top fills and, man, did we get them. There were a dozen of them and I think we used them all! At the end of the session, we had achieved a great drum performance that really made the song come alive. On another track, we went for the dry loops and then added just a taste of reverb. It was very easy and sounded great.

We did not have the same luck with the bass loops, so we had to play that ourselves; but this was because it's much more difficult to integrate pitch and groove specific information into a preexisting song, not due to its wonderful performances, the choice of amped or dry tones, and it's excellent organization, which is identical to the drum collection. In fact, the performances on *LA Bass Sessions* are designed to be used with the *LA Drum Sessions vol. 2* grooves, and in that context they work *phenomenally* well.

Which brings us back to *Guitar Hero*, sort of.

In the past few days I have taken a liking to building songs made up of loops from both of the first-rate *LA Sessions* collections. You take 20 minutes or so to set up the structure and *Shazam!* Instant power trio. A great drummer and bass player are ready to back me up on my imaginary hotel-trashing tour whenever I get the six-string itch, and at the end of the day, I'm a better musician for it. Let's see a video game do that!

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent producer and performer. He wishes everyone a holiday season filled with peace, love, and happiness. Websites: www.kaspro.com, www.svensongs.com.

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GARY TILLERY



Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

PUDDLES OF YESES

An engaging, important overseas letter I recently received was flawed only by the few handwritten lines that had been added as a postscript. Although the ink therein was a charming *chartreuse* and the cursive script quite pretty, it held an implication of nervous fear. My correspondent expressed concern regarding my current mental state, citing my columns in the last two issues of the *Troubadour* as evidence of a possible, pervading sadness that of late had seemed to be getting the better of my "legendary (albeit naive) optimism."

The writer, I decided, was out of line on two accounts. First, I'm capable of deciphering the craftiest of inferences; to suggest that I've begun to crack up recently does disservice to the hard-won, obvious insanity I've exhibited consistently for the last six years on this page. Second, inferences of this kind – so unexpected and sophomoric – tend to make me really, really sad.

So, I will state for the record (or the CD, but that's where I draw the line) that yes, my sadness is real, caused inadvertently by a few ill-chosen words in a letter. And for now it has diverted my attention from the abnormally miserable suffering I've experienced previously (particularly during these past months), which is itself a relief. The year may now end in modified delirium.

The official part of the letter brought glad tidings of great Joy – Joy Latour, in fact, an editor of the stylish *Tannenbaum Press* of Paris. In conjunction with the *Lycée d'Escargot*, they were anxious to publish a compendium of my "Hosing Down" columns from this very journal.

Initially I felt quite flattered before soon becoming immersed in the famous Seven Stages of Fortune, which I invented by randomly naming them as they occurred. I decided that I was thrilled, happier than I'd been in months, smiling so hard my lips bled. This was Compromised Body Image, when only the sunshine convinced me I wasn't Dracula. Next came Doubt, entailing the sort of "Do I deserve this? Am I worthy?" bull dookey that I was quick to remember having outgrown by the age of four, and which I now easily discarded.

Following fast was Exultation, which caused me to phone everyone I know and accept their congratulations (always aware of their pathetically concealed jealousy, which I enjoyed imagining them carrying along the years to their graves). The climax was Acceptance, a period in which I avoided people altogether in order to spare them further feelings of inadequacy but primarily because, for some reason, they suddenly seemed of little value. The time this afforded me to learn to love myself again was sweet and surprisingly erotic.

Then, inevitably, came the final stage: Bargaining – in this case, the necessary negotiations with the publishers. I got on the phone and began warning them (in my most picturesque Queen's English) that, even though they



José Sinatra

were French, surely they must be able to understand through my writings the full measure of my personal strength, my absolute intractability, the obvious fact that I was used to having things done the only correct way: my own.

When they replied (en Français) that they didn't understand what I was talking about, I hung up the phone, feeling embarrassed as the victim of a sick French prank. It seemed to confirm that those frog-eaters were exactly what I suspected since I was two years old: a society of bidet-bathing foreigners too self-centered to learn English and improve their lot.

Yeah, that's it. That's . . . I called back, speaking French this time and apologized. Do whatever you want with the book, I said. I would demand one thing and one thing only: the text would be printed not only in the original English as well as in French, but also entirely in American Sign Language for the benefit of the hearing impaired, educated peoples of the world. That's the way I've always been; there's some value even in those lesser than ourselves.

Published as *Le Oui-Oui d'Hose* in a limited edition of just over 13, it became the talk of the hour and sold out almost immediately. The 10 copies that I personally had the foresight to obtain will be going to my dearest friends this Christmas with a generous discount off the cover price. (Postage not included. Void in Mississippi).

I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize to the publishers of the *Troubadour* if I may have overlooked clearing all of this with them in all the excitement. I'm just a bit too giddy to do so at this time.

This year-end sigh might serve as an afterword to *Oui Oui*. Shall I decide to continue living, Volume 2 will begin its germination in the new year just ahead. May 2008 bring Peace on Earth and continued bargains for all men at Goodwill.



RADIO DAZE



by Jim McInnes

TALK SHOW

Only twice have I considered doing anything on the radio besides spinning music and interviewing rock stars

The first time was around 1986, when talk radio started to become popular. I convinced the powers at KGB to let me try a combination talk-music-interview show on Sunday evenings, to be called "Input Live."

I did the show for about six months. I had some great guests: concert promoter Bill Silva, TV and radio mainstay Larry Hill, comedian/entertainer Marshall Silver, many musical artists and producers, and several civic and charitable organization honchos.

It was during a discussion with a representative of the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation that I finally realized that "Input Live" wasn't connecting. After 15 minutes of discussion with my guest about child abuse in general and the function of the organization in particular, I asked the audience to call in with questions or comments.

Here is a typical call...
M: "Good evening, you're on 'Input Live.' What's on your mind?"

Caller: "Um, yeah. Is this JM?"

M: "It is. How are you? What's up?"

Caller: "Hey, dude, why don't you guys play more Black Sabbath?"

M: "Sorry, pal, what does that have to do with child abuse?"

Caller: "You suck, man! And this show is sh@t!"

M: "F@k you! You're a f@king moron!"

Caller: "You're an as@ hole, McInnes!"

M: "Pay attention, you stupid f@k!"

Hey, he started it!

The next time I imagined being a talk show host was when my wife came home from a spring 2006 lunch with KOGO/KLSB program director Cliff Albert. She must have planted in his mind the idea that he audition me to be a weekend liberal talk show host on the then Air America affiliate, because in July I got the offer! I spoke with Mr. Albert and assured him that I was indeed politically qualified to rouse the rabble!

Wrong.
After mulling over just what it would take to do a two-hour rant about the wars, Bush, and all that crap, I switched the topic to *entertainment*. The day before the broadcast I called my old radio pals "Shotgun" Tom Kelly and Jeff Prescott, asking them to join me for a two-hour chat about how great KGB *used to be*. The show went very well and many people called in to offer their opinions and to say how nice it was to hear me back on the air and that they'd listen every Sunday from then on.

Oops!
After listening to the audition, Cliff said he thought I didn't have the *right stuff*. End of talk show career!

On October 22 of this year, the second day of the recent wild fires, KFM B program director Dave Sniff called me at home and told me he needed me to "step up" for him. Assuming he meant more in-depth news stories, I said that would be no prob-

continued adjacent →



Philosophy, Art, Culture, & Music STAGES

by Peter Bolland

WWNYD?

Life is hard. You're not getting the results you'd hoped for. Your relationships are muddled. You've lost focus. You don't even remember exactly why you started all these difficult projects. Your best effort never seems to be enough. And on your worst days, you don't even care anymore. You're looking for the door. The whole world is staring at you with those disappointed eyes, you know, the eyes of a child who's just been told that no, they do not get to go to McDonalds. As you face the challenges of being a musician and a human being ask yourself this simple question: What would Neil Young do?

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Music, like life, isn't supposed to be so complicated. Don't show off. Avoid flash. Let your love take the form of light, not heat. And don't try to control every single element. Allow the beauty of the music, and of your life, to reveal itself to you, and try to stay out of the way.

TRUST YOUR FRIENDS – FROM EVERYONE ELSE GET A RECEIPT

You know who your real friends are. They don't want anything from you. They like you just the way you are. When they're around, you feel safe. Try to be smart about who you form alliances with. Choose creators, not victims. Creators see themselves as the architects of their own lives. Victims blame others for their lack of success. Life's "interesting" enough without this needless drama.

LET YOUR SONG BE ENOUGH

Love yourself just the right amount. Know that your gifts are immeasurably valuable, even if no one around you at the moment appreciates them. Never before in the history of the universe has there ever existed someone with your exact combination of talents, sensitivities and experiences. You don't have to try to be unique. You are. Your best is good enough.

LEARN YOUR CRAFT

When it comes to cultivating mastery, leave nothing to chance. Give yourself the gift of discipline. Learn your instrument, learn the recording process, become a business person, even if being a business person is the last thing on earth you ever thought you'd be. Push yourself. Learn how to cook. Learn how to grow roses. Get your hands dirty. Stay far away from your comfort zone. Nothing good ever happens there.

NEVER FEAR FAILURE

There's no room for fear in a beautiful, purposeful life. Take huge chances. Think impossible things. The universe has no choice but to respond to your intentions. There is no such

thing as failure. Failure has no reality. Failure is just evidence of growth and progress. Failure is a good sign. If you never experience failure, check your pulse – you're probably dead.

LOYALTY IS GOOD – LOYALTY TO DESTRUCTIVE PEOPLE IS BAD

Form deep bonds with the good people in your life. But don't look for approval from disingenuous people – they only warm up to you to gain some advantage. Avoid drama, be compassionate, but be fearless and decisive when it comes time to cut ties with the destructive people in your life.

AGE GRACEFULLY

Embrace whatever age you are. Every day of every month of every year is a sacred opportunity to see with new eyes and sing with a new voice. A powerful truth: you are always exactly the right age.

STAY PLAYFUL.

There's more to life than pain and sadness and anger and injustice. Get silly and mindless from time to time. Play with toys. Dance like a crazy person. Give your full attention to kittens. This is an essential step because it safely and sweetly dislodges your intellect from its moorings, creating a delightfully disorienting haze of sublime creativity.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR CHILDREN AND OTHER THINGS YOU CREATE.

Your children are your sacred charge. Let them have full access to your humanity. Don't hide. Finally grow up, embrace accountability and let your selfish ego fade away. See with clear eyes. Develop the habit of kindness. Cultivate wisdom. You owe it to your children. Bring this same level of intimacy and care to everything you create.

PLAY MUSIC WITH UTTER ABANDON

Yes it's a craft, yes it's a business, but before all that, music is mystical, spiritual recklessness. With an unfettered heart, let songs leap from you like doves from a cage, carrying our collective dreams on the backs of their wings.

KEEP SHOWING UP READY FOR WORK

Consistency and persistence will get you more than luck every time. Come prepared and eager to be a part of something great. Expect success. Intend to be amazing. But stay humble. Know that this process is bigger than all of us. We are simply agents of a great unfolding, a creative process without beginning or end. In our brief time on this life stage, step into the light and be brilliant. It doesn't have to be perfect. In fact, it'll be better than that. It'll be real. That's what Neil Young would do.

Peter Bolland is a professor of philosophy and humanities at Southwestern College and singer-songwriter-guitarist of The Coyote Problem. You can complain to him about what you read here at peterbolland@cox.net. www.thecoyoteproblem.com is the ethereal home of The Coyote Problem.

lem. When I got to the station I was surprised to find morning show host Rick Roberts was still on the air, five hours after his show was to end. "Jeez, Rick's still on the air! What's up with that?" I asked. Sniff said, "We're covering the fires, 24/7." "Well, who's going on after Rick?" I pondered aloud.

"You are, JM. I want you to take calls and keep the listeners updated on the fires until midnight."

"Meh? I'm not a talk show host," I exclaimed. "You are now, man," said the program director.

And indeed I was.

For the next three days, for eight and a half hours each day, I listened to tales of bravery and grief, I listened to the fear in people's voices, I let them air their feelings, and I tried to maintain a sense of community. It was hard work and I was exhausted each night when I got home, but that was nothing compared to the poor folks who had lost or were about to lose their homes.

It was trial by fire in more ways than one! Now I can say I really *was* a talk show host!

Happy holidays!

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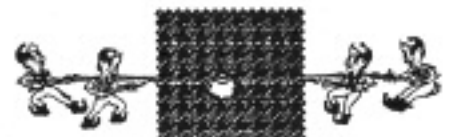


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Cary Brothers, Honestly

by Tim Mudd

With his heartfelt, melodic songs influenced by everything from '80s British new wave to '70s folk, Nashville native Cary Brothers achieved critical and commercial success with the independently released *All the Rage* (2004) and *Waiting for Your Letter* (2005) EPs on his own Procrastination label; both of which hit the top of the iTunes folk charts. In May of this year he released his first full-length album, *Who You Are*. His songs have appeared on the NBC sitcom "Scrubs," FOX mystery "Bones," WB's "Smallville," and the successful medical dramas "Grey's Anatomy" and "ER," but it was his lyrical ballad "Blue Eyes," which was featured on the platinum-selling, Grammy-winning soundtrack to the hit indie film *Garden State*, that started to bring the wider critical and commercial acclaim he obviously deserved to garner.

Having found his musical voice playing regularly as part of the talented musical community at the Hotel Café in Los Angeles after leaving a film production company he founded to do what truly made him happy, he has since blazed his tremendous live show across America and Canada, touring with such acts as Liz Phair, K.T. Tunstall, Aqualung, Imogen Heap, and the Fray. On December 13, San Diego will have its own helping of Cary Brothers as he co-headlines a North American tour with Australian indie songwriting sensation Ben Lee.

I caught up with Cary over the phone as his tours bus pulled into Cleveland . . .

Hey Cary, this is Tim Mudd from the San Diego Troubadour . . .

Hey, can I call you back, dude? Our bus just pulled up to the venue and everyone's piling over each other to get out. I'll call you right back when everyone's out and I can breathe again.

Sure, no problem, man . . .

Thanks.

Fifteen minutes later

Sorry about that man – that's always one of the highlights of the day.

No problem, I totally understand. So how's the tour going so far?

Great! It's been really fun out here with Ben [Lee]. I've been on the road since April, so this is the last leg before the holidays.

I was pretty shocked when I saw that you

were headlining a tour with Ben Lee; I've always thought of your music as more naturally emotive against his "anything-for-a-laugh" pop-stylings. How did that come about?

I've been a fan of Ben's since his '90s pop stuff; the *Grandpaw Would?* album he did when he was a kid was just awesome. He writes great pop songs. When he called me to do this I thought it'd be a really good idea. We've got two different styles for certain, but somehow the shows work; the spirit of the people on stage really comes across. Just because I'm performing more emotionally-upfront songs doesn't mean that a sense of humor is absent.

So are you performing anything together on this tour?

We're feeling out our sets in general because we're both working with a more stripped-down band for this tour. When I was out headlining this summer I had a full band, but this time out I've just got Jason [Kanakis, guitar] and Justin [Glasco, "mad genius" multi-instrumentalist], then I'm playing piano and guitar. We've all been working up a cover of Silverchair's "Straightlines," which Ben and I play together.

That's a great song.

Oh man, it's an awesome song! So far we've got some guitar and percussion parts down. The lyrics are still a little shaky [laughs], and we're working on the bass line, but who knows; by the time we get to San Diego we may have the whole thing dialed in.

Your first full length release is *Who You Are*, however I've been enjoying your music since the *All the Rage* and *Waiting for Your Letter* EPs. Despite *Who You Are* comprising a number of songs from the first EPs, I did notice changes and additions to the songs. It's almost as if you're building your recordings as you're building your career. Is this intentional or just my innocent bystander point of view?

It's financial. When I went into the studio to make the EPs, I just worked as hard as I could to make the money, then I'd go in and record one song in one day. Whatever was done by the end of the day – that was the song. When it came to making the album, I had the opportunity to re-do the songs exactly as I wanted to do them. The songs had naturally evolved and grown on the road, which is where instances such as [the coda to] "Ride"

became much bigger animals. The opportunity to add a real string section in there was really nice.

I have to admit, I was kinda bummed when I saw the track-listing to *Who You Are* because a large part of me felt, "Hell, I've got most of these songs; why would I buy them again?" Then I ran into a few tracks on MySpace and thought to myself, "Wow, this is a bit different! I gotta have it!"

Well, that was the big question for me when it came time to record the album; I had to ask myself, "Am I putting these songs on here for me or for other people?" At the end of the day, the majority of people don't buy EPs, so their first exposure to an artist is the first album, so that kind of settled it for me.

Well it's a great record. Another part of my life is graphic design and I've found that *Who You Are* is a really good record to drive me through long nights of creativity.

That's awesome. I heard somewhere that recorded music is a big driving force for people to create other things artistically, such as painting, and that's a huge thing for me – being part of someone else's [artistic] life. I know that personally, music – and especially melody – always acts as a marker for me and in the future reminds me of how I felt at that point in my life and what I was going through.

Do you have much time while you're traveling to check out aspiring songwriters?

I really don't have a whole lot of time to sit down with other people's music, but I do make a point every few weeks to sit and listen to some of the CDs from people who take the time to come out to my shows and hand me personally, especially considering my position from an organizational standpoint on the Hotel Café Tours. If someone comes across unfriendly when they meet me, then that CD's going in the trash before I even leave the venue, but if someone seems nice, then I'll always try to give it a shot.

I realize that the environment's "buzz" status in the press is probably starting to have a little bit of a yawn factor associated with it for many socially conscious artists and readers alike but interestingly, I was chatting with Seattle songwriter Ian McFeron a few weeks ago and he mentioned how instead of inspiring new material, time out on the road has left him considering different ways he could minimize his bands environmental impact while



Cary Brothers

still keeping food on the table. Is this or something of a similar nature anything you've pondered as you wind your way through the Midwest?

I've only recently got up to speed on the options out there for touring artists in terms of bio diesel fuels, etcetera, and I'm definitely working as hard as I can to make the next Hotel Café Tour as green as humanly possible. It's true though, only when you actually get out here can you see how environmentally destructive a band can be on the road.

Are there any other social issues that you like keep close in heart and mind?

I really respect Bob Dylan. However I don't let politics get in the way of a song for me. It kills the art. On the last tour I was very vocal about my disapproval of some aspects of the current administration no matter where I was; there were some nights when it got pretty ugly down in the South, but I was feeling that I'd rather say what I wanted to say and take the hit than say nothing at all. What happened though is I had a few different conversations with people after some of those shows and those who disagreed with me were saying, "We understand your point of view, but what you're not getting is this is mine and this is what I really believe." They'd go on to say that they were sad because they wouldn't be able to enjoy my music in the same light now that they knew we had these differences personally; suddenly there's a disconnect. Now, I know a lot of artists who would say, "Oh well, I don't want those people buying my music anyway," but that's not me; I want to sell my music to anyone who enjoys it because that's essentially what it's all about. So now, I'm more into keeping [my politics] private and keeping the music clean.

So what's next for Cary Brothers once you guys wrap up the tour here in San Diego?

I'm going to take January off and head into the studio because I've found a lot of inspiration on the road and have some new tunes I want to get down. Then we'll be gearing up for the Hotel Café Tour across the U.S. in March and then we're taking it to Europe in April through late May . . . And so it

goes and before you know it it'll be the holidays again and I'll wonder where that year went too!

Seriously, I know how that goes! Well, I suppose with the holiday season truly upon us, it's fitting to ask what's topping your Christmas list for Santa Claus this year?

Hmmm, wow . . . [to himself] What's Santa going to bring me this year? . . . Well, I was going to buy myself a new Gibson J45, but then Gibson gave me one recently so I guess Santa came early . . . and his name was 'Gibson!' [Laughs again]. I've never had a back-up guitar before and I'm always breaking strings on stage so that was really nice.

Naughty or nice?

Oh, I don't know; I'd have to say generally nice.

And that was about it. I left the conversation with the usual pleasantries and Cary Brothers left me to ponder the year. Many of the songwriters I've talked to and interviewed in 2007 have come across less and less like the archetypal rock stars and more like savvy business people with sensitive streaks of creativity. For someone who has been experiencing a fair amount of doubt regarding my own abilities and agendas in this business, this thought brings me some much needed hope at just the right time of year. If this is an upswing for the better then long may it continue! The music industry in general could use far fewer egos and many more movers like Cary Brothers who take responsibility for the direction of their career and through their actions encourage others to do the same.

Cary Brothers and Ben Lee's co-headlining tour will wrap up at the House of Blues on December 13. Doors open at 7pm. Cleveland songwriter Kate Voegelé opens.

Don't worry, chickens! Despite a slightly depressing conclusion to this piece, Tim Mudd is not ready to go postal in your local coffee shop anytime soon; but he could definitely use a Christmas hug, so if you see him around, please comply :-)

Happy holidays!

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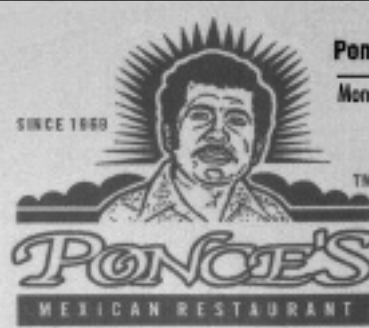


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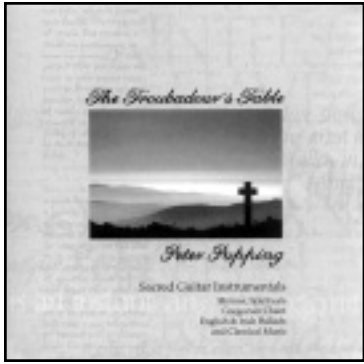
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PONCE'S



Peter Puppung The Troubadour's Table

by Mike Alvarez

Peter Puppung unites a wide range of styles on his album *The Troubadour's Table*. Subtitled *Sacred Guitar Instrumentals*, he plays hymns, spirituals, Gregorian chants, English and Irish ballads as well as classical music. This varied assemblage of songs is tied together by a theme of Christian faith. Most listeners will find many familiar melodies among the selections, particularly if they've ever attended church. For me, the ones that stood out the most were "Holy God We Praise Thy Name," "The Water Is Wide," "Down in the Sally Garden" (also popularly known as the traditional Irish tune "The Minstrel Boy"), and "Gymnopédie no. 1." Oddly enough, I'm familiar with the latter two because they were featured on episodes of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," but I digress! All of the selections were arranged or adapted by Puppung, who exhibits a genuine gift for finding their essence and communicating it through his playing.

The overall effect of this album is soothing. The gentle, unhurried delivery of the songs coupled with the warm timbre of the instruments creates a contemplative mood that is perfect for listening and reflection. Puppung is a masterful guitarist with a deft touch. The notes leap resonantly from his guitars as he effortlessly plays what are often challenging pieces. He easily shifts between musical styles, giving each the full benefit of his considerable talents. I found his interpretation to be spot on in every instance. It is precisely this that forms the connection between his very eclectic choices. The result is a varied and interesting collection that holds together quite well.

The recording is natural – at times one can even hear him breathing as he plays! This imparts a certain humanity and credibility to the listening experience. The song sequence is based on feel rather than genre, so there is a nice "story" told by the shifts in mood. Puppung's use of several steel and nylon-stringed instruments adds a number of facets to the sound. While mainly a solo effort, local musical icon Tom Griessgraber adds even more tonal variety with his contributions on guitar, bass, and Chapman Stick.

Given the theme of *The Troubadour's Table*, it's understandable that there is an overall niceness to the proceedings. Each song is tastefully arranged and impeccably performed. There is a mannered craftsmanship apparent in every note. How could anyone expect any less when playing songs that were written in praise of The Almighty? Yet those not of the faith should refrain from dwelling on this too much. This is an album that will appeal to fans of good, melodic guitar music.



Dawn Mitschele Town of Trees

by Tim Mudd

We don't experience a vast seasonal difference here in the Southland, but for those of us who have known a brisk winter or three, I do believe I may have just discovered the perfect soundtrack to quietly falling leaves, a romantic fire-side intimacy, or a solitary crackling on the crispy ground.

There are few artists who can draw and retain a listener's attention using minimal instrumentation to cradle a perfectly emotive voice. There are even fewer who leave you wishing someone had seen their brilliance and afforded them the opportunity to record a full-length album as opposed to a six-song EP. With *Town of Trees*, New Jersey native Dawn Mitschele has swept through my deliberately random criteria and delivered far their expectations.

Although I always endeavor to avoid clichés, the magic of *Town of Trees* is not simply what is there but what isn't. The air that holds Mitschele's sleepy vocal melodies and tastefully picked acoustic guitar is just as important to the overall vibe of the recording as is the slide guitar, banjo, and mandolin accompaniment of producer Aaron Bowen.

On the subject of Bowen, he has once again placed his own honed style to one side and worked collaboratively with the artist toward supporting the songs at hand (which is, um, what a producer should do). The end result is a piece that sits comfortably in the line of recent recordings which should shine his neon sign as one of the most consistent production talents working in San Diego today.

Lyrical, Mitschele is searching for something and, like many of us, probably isn't quite sure what that something is; there is, however, definitely something missing. Be it in her heart, her life, or her soul; like the air in the production, her tiring search as an artist – and as a person – becomes her gift to the listener. The "search" is a human trait; it's just pleasant once in a while to be reminded – be it musically or otherwise – that we're not alone.

So where's the critique? Well, there's little I can say. From start to finish, *Town of Trees* is a great record that's rounded in all the right places. I could say that I didn't care for the rim-tap "drums" in "At the Station" and I'd swear I caught a bum guitar note somewhere in track three. But what I hope does come across here is that Mitschele has unveiled just about as perfect a first step as a recording artist as one can give.

From the knit sweater charm of "Float like a Feather" to the desperately long night of "Far to Go," *Town of Trees* does its best with what it has. It is a treat to be disarmed in this capacity by an artist before they garner more wherewithal to grow into a larger studio environment with more at their disposal. Where Mitschele, I'd be worried to pass her next effort by way of this reviewer because from this point forward, she has a lot to live up to.



Martin Storrow Matches

by Tim Mudd

Allow me to set the scene: it's 8:30 on a Tuesday night. I say to my roommate, "Let's go for a drive – I've got some music to review." I grab the keys and set off for a peacefully undisclosed residential lookout that provides the absolute best night-time view of San Diego I've ever seen.

Once we'd settled into the shimmering lights, the pulse of Harbor Island's lighthouse, and the repetitive motion of the planes landing at Lindbergh Field, Martin Storrow's *Matches* gets about 30 seconds in to track three when we look at each other and impart the same general comment, "Wow, he's really running the gamut of musical styles." From the barn-burning hoedown of the title track through the R&B pop gloss of "Beginning of Again" to the bossanova of "In Light of a Song," the first 12 minutes left us wondering where Storrow would be going next.

Acknowledging the genuine excitement of this listening experience (which I haven't felt in a long time), I couldn't help but wonder if this diversity in writing and song structure was a deliberate artistic decision or the footprint of a young artist who's experimenting his way toward his true musical voice. Judging by Storrow's years (from the copious portraits inside the intricate packaging), I'm inclined to surmise the latter. Were I to disregard the lyrics, which don't impart a huge amount of wisdom, acting more like a diary of encounters with the opposite sex, I do detect a growing soul of experience behind each song and story, which suggests otherwise. Time will tell.

One of the more interesting critical elements to *Matches* is that the production of its 11 tracks are split almost equally between Stepstone Studio's Dan Diaz and Peter Sprague's Spragueland with the man himself behind the board. I cite this because the stylistic back-and-forth between each producer's tracks is very clear; by the middle of the record I didn't even need to look at the album credits to guess who'd produced which track and be right. To my surprise, I found the Diaz-produced tracks to be less compressed and more open-minded as to what each track called for. Despite the predictability of the instrumentation and techniques incorporated in his tracks, Sprague's touch on more acoustic numbers such as "Midnight Daydreams" was noticeable and expectedly gratifying.

Matches is an enjoyable, professionally recorded album that will go far to further the blossoming career of a young songwriter. It will also act as a great extension to Storrow's famously energetic live show. However, the last element waiting to be unveiled is where Storrow's musical heart truly lies. If the strength of the melodic hook of "Beginning of Again" (soaring through my head days later, 500 miles away) is anything to go by, I hope he focuses on his youthful spirit and dimpled So Cal charm while quietly growing into the musical maturity he is so obviously capable of.



Nathan James & Ben Hernandez Hollerin'

by Raul Sandelin

If you flashed past the cover story in this issue, there's a real buzz going around the blues and roots community these days for a two-man band from North County: Nathan James and Ben Hernandez. Although more accurately categorized as a duo, the "two-man band" moniker actually paints the correct sonic picture as to what these two guys can do both on stage and in the studio. The basic set up of the two is Nathan James on guitar, Ben Hernandez on harmonica, while both trade off vocal duties. Add to this a variety of homemade instruments, and the end result is a regular, dirt road, moonshine orchestra. Ben has added a rigor of sounds to his standard harmonica and vocal parts. The two-gallon whiskey jug, jazz kazoo, washboard, wash tub "gut bucket" bass, and hand claps like an old-time gospel choir all supply surprising flavors to this lean-and-mean tour de force. Then, add to this Nathan's versatility – from electric (vintage war-time) and acoustic guitars to banjo, suitcase foot drum, and other percussion including kick drum, foot snare, and high-hat – and you really have the quintessential "one-man band" times two. Not that they haven't in the past. But the duo really pulls out all the stops on this latest release. On one hand, *Hollerin'* describes the musical period from which most of the CD finds its muse: early blues and country styles not long removed from the field hollers from which they sprang. On the other hand, *Hollerin'* sets the tone because of the full-volume attitude that it exudes.

Those used to listening to old-time records cut on ceramic in ultra-thin mono might assume that America's music of yesteryear was tame compared to the sonic onslaught that a later, amplified rock era would usher in. The fact is that a two-man band could fill a juke or small dance hall with enough aural strut and pomp necessary to get the crowd off its feet and onto the dance floor. And, as the two demonstrate, there was a lot of dancing going on in those smoky roadhouses. The duo instills that excitement throughout this CD with a rock-steady groove created, thanks in no small part, to the various percussive instruments that the duo employs. Eleven of 13 songs are originals. Most moan or groan about love gone bad, or at least love gone sad with titles such as "Don't Forget It" and "You Better Learn." Yet, some are more optimistic about the whole Adam and Eve thing with songs like "Sweet Mama" waltzing through that eclipse called love. The duo describes themselves as country blues. Yet, there is enough gospel, ragtime, and straight folk influence at work to elevate the sound out of any singular genre.

CD release on Sunday, December 9 at Dizzy's temporary location: SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., Ste. 120, 5pm.



Bartenders Bible

by Chuck Schiele

The cover art of the new CD from Bartenders Bible – which shows a Los Angeles-style pall bearers doing their duty in an old western ghost town – couldn't be more befitting of what happens when you pop this baby in.

I'll begin by saying that I've been playing this CD on and off again for the better part of the last five months. As a guy who receives on average one CD a day, it is odd that I am drawn to one of them so.

Bartenders Bible is a great CD. Call it Americana if you will. Somewhere, Johnny Cash is in the inspiration of this project. Yet, somewhere, something very inventive is happening here as this band (comprised of Jason Corbin on vocals and guitar; Arabella Harrison on vocals; Matt Parker on guitar and lap steel; Matt Strachota on vocals, banjo, guitar, lap steel, and keys; Jim Austin on upright bass; Richard Larson on vocals and drums; Paul Jenkins on saw) takes familiar musical and lyrical themes and spins them in a way that is delightfully odd. It's dark, yet funny. Wry with wit while remaining down-right silly.

It's light and fun. It's kinda spooky. I think of the grit and honesty of Johnny Cash mixed with the joie de vivre and gusto of Gomez Adams.

It's a bare bones production that relies on killer arrangements with a few subtle moves. All songs were expertly written by Jason Corbin who manages to take simple, unassuming traditional chord changes and melodies and turn them into something altogether "new." This is a case where someone took something familiar and worked it into something totally risky, slightly stepping out of bounds in a way that charges no foul. I will take a stab as to why this is and attribute it to artistic attitude by way of the writer's own self-sense of unique character. Perhaps these guys have just seriously coped with their own matter of style as a band.

What? Hatever. The result is a creepy-fun ride through what I like to call desert music, as it is definitely suitable for repeated play while binge-driving to Barstow and back. Regardless of whether or not you're a bartender, no music library is complete without this little bible.





DECEMBER CALENDAR

Saturday • 1

Sharon Hazel Township, Turquoise Coffee, 841 Turquoise St., 10am.
Chet & the Committee, S.D. Harley Davidson, 5600 Kearny Mesa Rd., noon.
Meals on Wheels Holiday Benefit w/ Coastal Communities Concert Band, California Ctr. for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., 2pm.
Robin Henkel/Kellie Rucker, Miramonte Winery, 33410 Rancho California Rd., Temecula, 5:30pm.
Brews & Blues w/ Chet & the Committee, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main St., El Cajon, 6:30pm.
Tom Paxton, San Diego United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Eric Marienthal & Chuck Loeb, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Lucy Kaplansky, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Kenny Eng/Stasia Conger/Skyler Stonestreet/Carlos Olmeda/Melissa Vaughan, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Jim Earp/Kev, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 8pm.
Bobby Rock/Kensington Garage Jazz/Tom Griessgraber, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Misty & the Mobys, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Sunday • 2

Second Delivery, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 10:30am.
Becky's House Benefit w/ Lisa Sanders/Steph Johnson/Joannie Mendenhall/Sara Petite/Régina Dawn/Evan Bethany/Anna Troy/Michael & Nan/Chelsea Fior/Julie Mack/the Flimz/Married by Elvis/Molly Meekin/Lou & Virginia Curtiss/Cathryn Beeks, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 6pm.
Nadro John, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Tim Flannery, Canyonfolk House Concert, El Cajon, 8pm. canyonfolk@cox.net
August @ Jarrell Quintet, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Blues Traveler/Jesse Malin, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Sue Palmer & the Blue Four, Patrick's, 428 F St., 9pm.

Monday • 3

Hollis Gentry B-Day Tribute w/ Mark Hunter/Kevin Koch/Tom Aros/Evan Marks/Rob Whitlock/Bob Weller/Brad Steinwehe/Steve Dillard/Michael Kelleher/Jason Weber/Daniel Jackson, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Charlie Hunter, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Adrienne Nims & Spirit Wind, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Leucadia, 7:30pm.
Chet & the Committee, Patrick's, 428 F St., 9pm.

Tuesday • 4

Charlie Hunter, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Sue Palmer Quintet, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Gabriella, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Deborah Harry/Kristoffer Ragnstam, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Diablo Dimes, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Wednesday • 5

Charlie Hunter, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Peace Alliance Benefit w/ Joe Rathburn/Michael Tiernan/John Foltz/Peter Bolland/Alan James/Barbara Nesbitt/Cahill & Delene, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Adrienne Nims & Spirit Wind, When In Rome, 1108 S. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7pm.
Ahmad Jamal Jazz Trio, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
EJP/Matt Jennings/Mike Vitale/Wes Kirkpatrick, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Thursday • 6

Open Mic w/ Sweet Joyce Ann, Turquoise Coffee, 841 Turquoise St., P.B., 6pm.
Paragon Dance Band, La Mesa Adult Ctr., 8540 La Mesa Blvd., 7pm.
Ahmad Jamal Jazz Trio, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Mara Levi/Thomas Hodges/Martin Storrow/Ernie Halter, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Jim Earp, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Tim Egan/Stephen Ordenez, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 8pm.
Gilbert Castellanos Quintet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine

Friday • 7

Adrienne Nims & Le Jazz Hot, Prado Restaurant, Balboa Park, 5pm.
Paragon Dance Band, La Mesa Adult Ctr., 8540 La Mesa Blvd., 7pm.
Ahmad Jamal Jazz Trio, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Mara Levi/Thomas Hodges/Martin Storrow/Ernie Halter, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Jim Earp, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Tim Egan/Stephen Ordenez, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 8pm.
Gilbert Castellanos Quintet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine

Advertisement for Sweet Joyce Ann Hosts Open Mic, featuring a photo of Sweet Joyce Ann and text about the event.

& Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8:30pm.
Gene Johnson B-Day Bash, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
The Grams/Deadline Friday/Joey Harris & the Mentals, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9pm.
The Stiletto's, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Saturday • 8

Robin Henkel, Chateau Orleans, 926 Turquoise St., P.B., 6:30pm.
Happy Barbershop Holiday w/ the California Note Catchers, Monte Vista Auditorium 2211 Massachusetts, Lemon Grove, 7pm.
Ahmad Jamal Jazz Trio, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Yale Strom & Hot Pstromi, Congregation Beth El, 8660 Gilman Dr., La Jolla, 7:30pm.
Dawn Mitschle/Longsleeves/Bob Wayne/Dauida Price/Saddle Tramp, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
The Grams, Handlery Hotel, 950 Hotel Circle North, 8pm.
Christiane Lucas, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 8pm.
Oliver Lake Organ Quartet, Athenaeum Studio, 4441 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Aaron Bowen/Jesse Harris/Priscilla Ann, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Marc Cohn/Amy Correia, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Ron's Garage, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Sunday • 9

S.D. Folk Song Society, Old Tim Music, 2852 University Ave., 2pm.
Nathan James & Ben Hernandez CD Release, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 5pm.
Moutin Quartet, Anthology, 1337 India St., 5:30pm.
Mikal Blue/Reggie Ginn/Shannon Hurley/Ted Friedman, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Tuesday • 11

Paragon Band, The Orchard, 4040 Hancock St., 6:30pm.
Chet & the Committee, Patrick's, 428 F St., 9pm.
Brian Culbertson's Soulful Christmas, Anthology, 1337 India St., 9:30pm.

Wednesday • 12

NSAI Songwriters Showcase, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 7pm.
Big Bill Morganfield, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Amy Kuney/Sean McConnell, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Cowboy Mouth/Joe Firstman, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Mitchell Cornish & Mojo Nixon, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Thursday • 13

Joe Rathburn & Joel Rafael, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Jingle Bell Jazz w/ Mesa College Big Band, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Ben Hernandez & Robin Henkel, Beachfire, 204 Avenida del mar, San Clemente, 8:30pm.
The Knitters/Dead Rock West/Cheep Leis, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Reeve Oliver/Spell Toronto, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Friday • 14

Adrienne Nims & Spirit Wind, The Beach House, 2530 S. Coast Hwy. 101, Cardiff, 6pm.
Hot Rod Harris/Williamson Brady/Garden Road, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 7pm.
Kenny Eng, Lollicup Cafe, 119 E. Grand Ave., Escondido, 7pm.
Janiva Magness, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Open Mic w/ Sweet Joyce Ann, Bella Roma, 6830 La Jolla Blvd., 8pm.
Martin Storrow, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
J&L, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Gene Perry Latin Jazz Sextet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 2nd Ave. & J St., 8pm.
Etta James, 4th & B, 345 B St.
Coyote Problem/Lisa Sanders/Patty Blee, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Ron's Garage, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Saturday • 15

Dave Mason (7:30pm)/Ronnie Baker Brooks (9:30pm), Anthology, 1337 India St.

Eve Selis Holiday Show, Seaside Church Auditorium, 1613 Lake Dr., Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Jim Kweskin & Geoff Muldaur, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
EJP/J Turtle/Lindsey Yung, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Gay Men's Chorus Holiday Concert, Museum of Contemporary Art, 700 Prospect St., La Jolla, 8pm.
Afraid Not Scared/Whitney Lockert, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 8pm.
Vanja James Purple House B-Day Bash, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Young Dubliners/Drowning Men, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Jones Revival, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Sunday • 16

Gay Men's Chorus Holiday Concert, Museum of Contemporary Art, 700 Prospect St., La Jolla, 2pm.
Jamie Laval/Ashley Broder, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Randi Driscoll/Noah Heldman/Lisa Sanders, Challice Church, 2324 Miller Rd., Escondido, 7pm.
Mikan Zlatkovich Tribute to Joe Zawinul, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Cydney Robinson/Donnis Trio, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Monday • 17

Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.

Tuesday • 18

CSNY Retrospective Fire Victims Benefit w/ Berkley Hart/Tim Flannery/Eve Selis/Peter Bolland, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.

Wednesday • 19

Alan Morphew/Tami Gosnell/Molly Jensen, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Thursday • 20

Sue Palmer Trio, Sunset Market, Tremont St. betw. Civic Ctr. Dr. & Main St., Oceanside, 7pm.
Venice/Michael Tiernan, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Gregory Page, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Friday • 21

Count Basie Orchestra, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Primasi, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Ben Varela/Ernie Halter/Martin Storrow, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Kenny Eng/Wrong Trousers CD Release, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Ron's Garage, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Saturday • 22

Count Basie Orchestra, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Brian Levy/Mikan Zlatkovich, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Brenda Xu/Flowerthief/Isaac Cheong, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Cash'd Out/Deere Johns, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Jump Start, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Sunday • 23

Count Basie Orchestra, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Murrugun the Mystic/Numskul/Sanu, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Thursday • 27

Joe Rathburn & Jeffrey Joe Morin, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Cash Kings, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Friday • 28

The Smart Brothers, E St. Cafe, 238 W. E St., Encinitas, 6pm.
Binational Mambo Orchestra, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Katie Christine, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Billy Watson, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
David Vidal/Shannon Hurley, Hot Java, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 8pm.
City Limits Band, Red Eye Saloon, 1448 S. Mission, Fallbrook, 8:30pm.

WEEKLY

every sunday

Shawn Rohlf & Friends, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.
Adrienne Nims & Raggle Taggle, Dublin Square, 544 4th Ave., 10am.
Bluegrass Brunch, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 10:30am.
Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., 12:30-4:30pm.
Celtic Ensemble, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 4pm.
Clachan Boys, R.O. Sullivan's Irish Pub, 118 E. Grand Ave., Escondido, 5pm.
Z-BOP!, Flying Bridge, 1105 N. Coast Hwy., Oceanside, 5:30pm.
Sole e Mar, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7:30pm.
Troubadour Open Mic w/ Phil Harmonic, O'Connell's, 1310 Morena Blvd., 7:30pm (no open mic on Dec. 16).
Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss, 8-10pm, KSIDS (88.3 FM).
José Sinatra's OB-oke, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9:30pm.
The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice, 10pm-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every monday

Blue44, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 7:30pm.
Tango Dancing, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 6875 El Cajon Blvd., 8pm.
Pro-Invitational Blues Jam, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 8pm.

every tuesday

Open Mic, Cosmos Coffee Cafe, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa, 7pm.
Flamenco Nova, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Patrick Berragain's Hot Club Combo, Prado Restaurant, Balboa Park, 8pm.
Shep Meyers, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Salsa dancing, WorldBeat Cultural Ctr., 2100 Park Blvd., 8:15pm.

every wednesday

MUSIC at Ocean Beach Farmer's Market, Newport Ave., 4-7pm.
Dan Papaila, The Lodge @ Torrey Pines, 11480 N. Torrey Pines Rd., 5pm.
Patrick Quillin, Jolly Roger Restaurant, 1900 Harbor Dr. N., Oceanside, 5pm.
Beginning djembe drumming, WorldBeat Ctr., 2100 Park Blvd., 6pm.
Folk Arts Rare Records Singers Circle, Kadan, 4696 30th St., 6pm.
Tomcat Courtney, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Elliott Lawrence Quartet, J Six Restaurant, 435 6th Ave., 7pm.
Chet & the Committee, Blues, Swing &

Eleanor England w/ the Shep Meyers Trio, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Sue Palmer & Blue Largo, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.
Mad for Mary, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

saturday • 29

Adrienne Nims & Spirit Wind, Robbie's Roadhouse Grille, 530 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Leucadia, 7pm.
Pete Escovedo Orchestra, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Kenny Dorham/Hank Mobley Blue Note Records Tribute w/ Gilbert Castellanos & Brian Levy, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8:30pm.
City Limits Band, Red Eye Saloon, 1448 S. Mission, Fallbrook, 8:30pm.

Boogie Night, Mission Valley Resort, 875 Hotel Circle S., 7:30pm.

Open Mic, Across the Street (Mueller College), 4605 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Brazilian percussion class, WorldBeat Cultural Ctr., 2100 Park Blvd., 8pm.
Open Mic, Joe & Andy's, 8344 La Mesa Blvd., 9pm.
Open Mic, Dublin Square, 544 4th Ave., 9pm.

every thursday

Dan Papaila, The Lodge @ Torrey Pines, 11480 N. Torrey Pines Rd., 5pm.
Open Mic, Turquoise Coffee, 841 Turquoise St., P.B., 6pm.
Open Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main, El Cajon, 6pm.
Z-BOP!, Epazote, 1555 Camino Del Mar, 7pm.
Esencia Jazz Trio, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 6875 El Cajon Blvd., 7pm.
Joe Rathburn's Folkey Monkey, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.
Moonlight Serenade Orchestra, Lucky Star Restaurant, 3893 54th St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7:30pm.
Open Mic/Family Jam, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 8pm.
Tokeli, Manhattan Restaurant, 7766 Fay Ave., La Jolla, 8pm.
Jazz Jam, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 9:30pm.

every friday

California Rangers, McCabe's, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.
Dan Papaila, The Lodge @ Torrey Pines, 11480 N. Torrey Pines Rd., 5pm.
Franco Z, Tommy's Restaurant, 1190 N. 2nd St., El Cajon, 6pm.
Andy Villas-Bôas, The Living Room, 2541 San Diego Ave., 6:30pm.
Tomcat Courtney/Jazzilla, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Amelia Browning, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 7pm.
Jazz Night, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.
Brehon Law, Tom Giblin's Irish Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 9pm.

every saturday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., 12:30-4:30pm.
Dan Papaila, The Lodge @ Torrey Pines, 11480 N. Torrey Pines Rd., 5pm.
Tomcat Courtney/Jazzilla, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Vintage Vegas w/ Laura Jane & Franco Z, Martini's, 3340 4th Ave., Ste. 200, 7pm.
Tokeli, Manhattan Restaurant, 7766 Fay Ave., La Jolla, 8:30pm.

Josh Damigo B-Day Bash, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Mad for Mary, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

sunday • 30

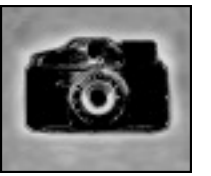
Pete Escovedo Orchestra, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Claire Stahelecker/Happy Ron/the Smart Brothers, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 31

City Limits Band, First Night 2008, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., 7pm.
Rev. Horton Heat, House of Blues, 1055 5th Ave., 8pm.
Mad for Mary, Island Sports & Spirits, 104 Orange Ave., Coronado, 9pm.

Advertisement for Phil Harmonic Sez featuring a cartoon Santa Claus and a quote: "Without music, life would be a mistake." - Friedrich Nietzsche.

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