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ROUBADOUR

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



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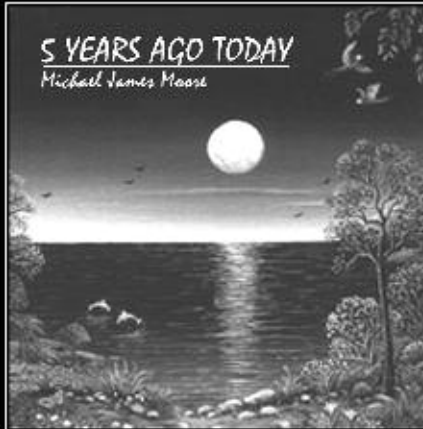


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The San Diego Troubadour is dedicated to the memory of Ellen and Lyle Duplessie, whose vision inspired the creation of this newspaper.

SAM HINTON'S FOLK SONG SOCIETY TURNS 50

by Allen Singer

Sam Hinton has worn many hats in his life. He's an original — a folk singer, a songwriter, a scientist, an artist, a father, and a great diatonic harmonica player. On March 31, when Hinton celebrates his 90th birthday, the San Diego Folk Song Society will be approaching its fiftieth year. The San Diego folk music community already misses Sam since he moved up north, but they're treasuring the time he lived and sang among us. Sam moved to Berkeley in December to be near his daughter Leanne. His legacy is still here in the people he brought to folk music, his students, and the countless performances he gave us.

It was back in 1957 that Sam Hinton suggested to some of his students enrolled in an American folk music class he taught at UCSD Extension that they create a local group or association devoted to folk music. The inaugural meeting of the San Diego Folk Song Society was held that May, attended by seven members. By 1958, the SDFSS had two chapters, 45 members, and had already held its first Hootenanny, with Sam as emcee. Like a band of wandering minstrels, members held meetings in people's houses. A theme was chosen for the first go round of the song circle to bring in new songs and ideas. The second time around folks could pick and sing whatever struck their musical fancy. We still follow the same format at our SDFSS meetings.

Rise Up Singing was SDFSS' original song book. Today songs come from everywhere and anywhere. The Folk Song Society meets on the second Sunday of each month, 2-6pm, at the Old Time Music Store in North Park, on the corner of University Ave. and Utah St. Meetings are open to anyone, including folk singers, song writers, and anyone who just wants to listen. Themes are wide and deep, sometimes borrowed and sometimes blue. The SDFSS has a great newsletter, edited by Tanya Rose, that



Photo: Peter Figan



Sam Hinton

includes everything you need to know about local concerts, musical performances, and SDFSS meeting updates. My column, "Ramblings," usually touches on burning issues in folk music and musical skill building. Membership costs \$15 per year but is not required to attend meetings. Our group is eclectic and ageless, a real cross section of musicians and non-musicians alike who play folk music, bluegrass, traditional old time songs,

country blues, and original material. Members play many different instruments at all skill levels and we encourage everyone

from amateur to professional to be a part of the group each time we meet. We leave nobody behind in the musical dust. You can either just sit and listen or you can play alone or with group support. Over the years Sam's dream has helped enlarge our local folk music community. The Folk Song Society is Sam's extended family, now approaching age 50, with multiple generations of satisfied, creative people doing what Sam Hinton wished: getting together to sing, play, and share in the gift of folk music. So when the next second Sunday rolls around, come over to a SDFSS meeting at Old Time Music and join with us in Sam's everlasting dream.

San Diego Folk Song Society
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GUNS, GHOSTS, AND GUITARS

by Mike Hayter

Kenny Newberry, Gram Parsons, and Sneaky Pete. The names rattle around in my brain like dusty picks dropped in an old guitar. Turn it upside down and shake vigorously until they come out. Dust them off and play those great old songs again.

I first met Kenny Newberry and his musical partner, Ronnie Long, sometime in 1974. I was a rock 'n' roll refugee and they were like a breath of country fresh air. They had a great band called Stagecoach and played all the old honkytonks here in town. They were different than your regular country homeboys and I found out how different real soon. Kenny and Ronnie played alt country, or anti-Nashville country, before such a thing existed for the rest of us. Songs by Willie Nelson, the Flying Burrito Brothers, Commander Cody, and the late great Gram Parsons. Songs with those pure harmonies and plenty of back beat to match. Songs with an authentic Americana feel but with a new California vibe. After I joined the band, I was rewarded with lots of novel musical influences that were just beginning to coalesce but would someday be part of the essential lexicon. I was just a Bay Park bass player who knew some Buck Owens tunes. The drummer, Scott Elam, was a San Carlos funkster. Mark Trainer played pedal steel. Kenny and Ronnie did all the singing and traded lead guitar duties. After spending a month in Santee practicing, we were ready for the bright lights.

We played our first gig at the Lakeside Hotel, which had to be the oldest standing hotel in town — and still the roughest. One night — I think it was on a Sunday night — there must have only been ten people there all night long. Once in a while a patron would turn around from his sloppy perch on a bar stool and glare at us. We played our four sets and collected \$15 each. When we played there again a couple of months later, everything had changed. With plenty of gigs under our belts, we were sharp and rockin' at that point. That particular night a menacing looking cowboy came up and asked Ronnie something between songs. Ronnie bent down to hear him, shaking his head in agreement. "Our next song is a

request for Proud Fairy," Ronnie spat out. The cowboy turned, looking at Ronnie with the coldest eyes I'd ever seen. Ronnie and Kenny just took it in stride and fired up the Creedence song. The following night someone either got shot or knifed and died right there in the bar. It could have been *Deadwood*.



Stagecoach, ca. 1975

There was always an entourage of ladies that followed us, meaning Kenny, Ronnie, and Mark. Word had it that Kenny would go out between sets and get acquainted. Ronnie, being a slow starter, would wait until after the gig was finished. They told me that cowgirls aren't afraid of much and can be very patient. I would just order a beer and wait my turn, which never seemed to come.

Stagecoach used to perform at the free concerts held at the Starlight Bowl in Balboa Park. On one occasion Kenny and Ronnie led us through our best songs along with some Beach Boys to boot. The crowd ate it up. Although we only played there twice, we had the crowd up and cheering. I still have the reel-to-reel tapes we made on my old Teac. They still sound fantastic.

Although most of the venues where Stagecoach played have been closed for years, they still have a special place in San Diego's musical heritage — the likes of Wild Bills, the Lakeside Hotel, Kentucky Stud, and Mikes in El Cajon won't be seen again. "Mister, keep your bullets off my snare drum and pick up that gun you just dropped." A guy with a machine gun under his duster comes in and looks carefully at the band and the bartender. Not recognizing anyone, he leaves. Nothing unusual in East County during the 1970s. The

band would play for a couple more years with some new members and then slowly disappear from the local scene. Sadly, we lost Ronnie Long 15 years ago to lung cancer.

Kenny eventually dropped out of professional performing for about a decade. He even sold his guitars. But like any musician, he is hard-wired to play and sing. He started playing again when his girlfriend asked if he would record some of the songs he was playing in his living room. One by one other players joined in and a new band was born.

A few months ago I caught up with Kenny following a show at the Belly Up Tavern in Solana Beach. Sin City Revue was billed as a tribute to Gram Parsons' music, although it was not strictly limited to his music alone. The show featured San Diego acts that Kenny had hired to play at the annual Gram Fest in Pioneertown, located in the high desert near Joshua Tree. Always the efficient networker, he corralled prominent local artists Eve Selis, Berkley Hart, and Tim Flannery into performing regularly at the Gram Fest and now at the Belly Ups tribute show, which looks like it might become a regular musical fixture. Kenny was also in the process of helping put together a memorial concert for Sneaky Pete (Kleinow), which would also take place in Pioneertown. A close friend of Kenny's, Sneaky Pete also played steel on the Stagecoach album, which was recorded in the 1970s. So after Pete died in January, Kenny naturally got the call to honor this music legend. Back in the 1970s, when Kenny traveled to Nashville to shop his music demo, Sneaky Pete and his longtime producer were two of the first people Kenny contacted. He spent a while doing the Nashville thing and was well received. The enormously exclusive Bluebird Cafe and other haunts saw him perform with a combination of band members and Nashville studio stalwarts. Kenny also made the rounds in L.A., including a stint at the Palomino Club. Guitars, Cadillacs, and another connection made. Check.

Fast forwarding to the present day, an upcoming studio recording of Kenny's current band, the Slidewinders, will be done by Sneaky Pete's longtime producer who owes Kenny a favor and is happy to oblige. Contrary

to many, Kenny eschews the idea of a home demo because he wants the best ears in the business to engineer his project. Look for something special when it arrives. Besides single-handedly moving the state of alt country forward for the benefit of local performers, Kenny has lent his pen as well, having written articles about the Gram Fest, Eve Selis, Heather Myles, Berkley Hart, and Tim Flannery for a local publication. Check out his interview on BerkleyHart.com by clicking on "reviews and press." It's great copy and reflects another facet of the man's musical passion.



Kenny Newberry

The Slidewinders came together like most bands do. Somebody knew somebody and that guy knew someone else and pretty soon the band was born. Kenny's partner, Dennis Challman, is the former steel player from Stagecoach. John Kuhlken drummed in the MacAnanys and with the Rugburns. Alex, Charlie, and Tim round out the guitar, pedal steel, and bass slots. When Kenny and Dennis reconnected, the universal laws of musical physics applied. Calling their music California country, these two talented singer-players are greater than the sum of their combined musical parts. It's all sweet harmony and effortlessly smooth story telling coupled with a restrained confidence, resulting from years of performing together. All of the band members are able songwriters; they will rock hard one moment and adroitly switch to an authentic country swing the next. Doing it fine and in time, these guys do it all and do it well. "Professional, musical, and just right" is how one music professional described the Slidewinders. I think Kenny's voice is about as rich and pure as you are going to hear. If you



Kenny Newberry & the Slidewinders

don't believe me, listen to the sample of him singing Jack Tempchin's chestnut "Learning to Dance." This band must be doing something right, because anyone who hears them live becomes an instant believer. Jim Soldi, one of San Diego's best ever, told them, "You guys are good, no, I mean really good." Typically, Kenny is modest about his success and questions whether he is as good as he used to be, say, five years ago. Trust me, Kenny, you sound better than ever.

The Slidewinders have planned a trip up to Santa Cruz later this year to play at a radio show there as well as continue their regular gigs at Pappy and Harriett's in Pioneertown. They have opened for Pete Anderson, Dwight Yoakum's long time producer and guitarist, as well as Heather Myles. Kenny is planning a mid-summer show at the Belly Up with Heather and Jim Austin. I can't wait for that one.

An austere beautiful and eerie place, the high desert holds a special connection for Kenny and his band as well as many a performer. Gene Autry and Roy Rogers filmed there and Gram, who later died there of mysterious circumstances, partied on the town with Keith Richards. The song "Wild Horses" was written about Gram and his untimely demise. When Tim Flannery recently booked the same hotel room as the late Parsons, a sleepless and rattled Flannery had to leave the room to wander in the unknown desert until somehow he found the flat rock where Parsons was reported to have been cremated. Shaman's magic on a dark night.

And so, the nexus continues. Celluloid cowboy heroes, cocaine hippies, and today's musicians share a tug for a special place and a common bond, with music and place coming together to reinvent a unique legacy. The West is the best and beneath that endless horizon, the music is reinterpreted and then reborn — it's always new but somehow always familiar and true. Kenny, we owe you for that one. Can you sing that song once again?

Visit the Slidewinders on the Internet: www.slidewinders.com and on YouTube.com.

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MIKE SEEGER

I guess the first time I met Mike Seeger was at the 1959 Newport Folk Festival. Up until that time country music for me was the kind of stuff I heard and saw around Southern California like *Town Hall Party*, Cliffie Stone's *Hometown Jamboree*, and San Diego's Smokey Rogers, etc. Folk music included a pretty wide range of stuff — from the Weavers and Oscar Brand to Ewan MacColl and the Kingston Trio. Then I saw the New Lost City Ramblers and heard the word "old-timey" connected to a kind of music I'd only heard smatterings of before. (I think I saw Cousin Emmy at a *Town Hall Party* show and heard Grandpa Jones, the Crook Brothers, and Stringbean on the Grand Ole Opry.)

Mike Seeger, John Cohen, and Tom Paley made up the first NLCR group I heard, and I saw as much of them as I could that weekend and later at a place called Pinewood Camp where I heard others who also played this kind of music (Jean Ritchie, Frank Warner, and others). But it was the NLCR that I was most impressed with and I had a chance to talk a bit with Mike and John. When I went back to Newport in 1960, I saw them again and when I came back to San Diego that year, I was bound and determined to get an old timey string band together. Unfortunately, no one I knew in San Diego played that kind of music or had even heard it. So, I took up the kinds of folksongs that were around then.

A couple of years later, when I was a student at San Diego State, I heard that the New Lost City Ramblers were going to play in town. Of course, San Diego's right wing nut



Mike Seeger

jobs were having hissy fits because the band would be performing in the Hoover High School auditorium. Of course, Mike Seeger was Pete Seeger's brother and Pete, of course, was still in the process of being blacklisted, since he was a Communist, so the concert was held amid some picketing. We later brought the band out to San Diego State for a noontime concert, so I got to hear more of this good old-timey music and a lot of other folks did too. I think some of the rightie crowd were disappointed that they couldn't confirm more of their suspicions (which is often the case with those folks).

Over the next few years I saw the NLCR often. They played at San Diego's Sign of the Sun bookstore. Mike also did a solo weekend

Recordially, Lou Curtiss

Photo: Bill Richardson



Lou Curtiss

there and invited many of us to play tunes with him. In 1963, 1964, and 1965, he performed at the UCLA Folk Festivals, several times at the Ash Grove in L.A., at the Berkeley Folk Festival where I saw him, and back East again at Newport and at a Friends of Old Time Music concert in New York City. I also saw Mike with Tex Logan at the Philadelphia Folk Festival and at a place called the Second Fret.



The New Lost City Ramblers: John Cohen on guitar (in the back), Seeger on fiddle, and Tom Paley on banjo

Tommy Jarrell; Nimrod Workman; Martin, Bogan, and Armstrong; the Highwoods String Band; and so many others, including his own Strange Creek Singers (with Alice Gerrard, Hazel Dickens, Lamar Grier, and Tracy Schwarz). When Mike played at a festival with old timers he knew, he'd get them to play tunes they didn't often play. Along with Mike's musicianship, you also get his knowledge of the genres of old-timey folk and country that he's always been involved with.

Mike is going to be with us at the upcoming Adams Avenue Roots and Folk Festival in April. I recommend that you take in his show and, if you get a chance, thank him for the support he's given to this festival and so many others like it over the years. Mike and his NLCR compatriots sold me an old-timey music book 48 years ago when I heard them for the first time. I know my life and career in music would be much emptier had Mike Seeger not been a part of it. I'm glad he was and still is.

For those of you who haven't heard Mike or the New Lost City Ramblers, I should mention that there are many records and CDs (some rare, some not so rare) out there to listen to. You can buy nearly every recording the NLCR recorded on Smithsonian Folkways, for which Mike has also done solo LPs. He also recorded for a variety of other labels, including Mercury, Vanguard, Rounder, one from Japan (I forget the label name), and a couple from Europe (including one with his sister, Peggy). Mike is one of those performers you can start listening to from most anywhere in his career and always be assured of consistent quality.

I should also mention that Mike is responsible for seeing some of the best of the old timers who made records. His great recordings of Dock Boggs, Sam and Kirk McGee, and the True Vine albums on which he plays with a variety of old timers are a delight and belong in any old timey record collector's library. Mike Seeger and the New Lost City Ramblers

have amassed a collection of old-time songs on vinyl and CD, which is probably the greatest source of tunes and songs in existence. They were able to get old timey music going during the lean years when country music had turned its back on its roots by getting people playing this kind of music again. They created links with the old timers who were still around, forged links between the folk song and bluegrass communities, and over the years have continued to make converts to old time song.

At a time when the Adams Avenue Roots and Folk Festival has had to cut back on so many of the regulars who have made its reputation, it's good that they are still interested in bringing out a musician who has meant so much to the festival over the years.

Recordially,
Lou Curtiss

P.S. Check out the Festival website (www.AdamsAveOnline.com) or FolkArtsRareRecords.com for information on this year's festival (April 21-22), and I'll see you there.



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The Harp Guitar

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by Derek Shaw

This enchanting story begins in Europe during the romantic era when western civilization was on the rise following the age of enlightenment. However, a movement away from those norms resulted in a period of intellectual and artistic rebellion. The turn of the nineteenth century saw legitimization of the individual imagination as a critical authority that allowed freedom from classical notions of art, instead stressing emotion as the source of aesthetic experience.

Society became spellbound by the folk music that resonated throughout this vibrant epoch. Metal strings allowed for greater amplification as the guitar was rediscovered and reformatted in the lyre, lute, and mandolin. These manifestations beautifully complemented the flamboyant virtuosity and lyrical melody of the romantic age, contributing distinctive sensory and tonal colorings to the dreamy music.

Roma gypsy music and Spanish flamenco emerged as the most popular styles of the mid-nineteenth century. France, Russia, Austria, and



The Knutsen family, 1900

Italy went nuts for folk, securing the guitar's mainstream popularization once and for all.

The harp guitar was the most outlandish of free-form instruments developed during that period of cultural awakening and inventive fortitude. An extended-range guitar, unfettered and unfretted, the harp guitar is an arena for boundless combinations of polyphonic notes, unconventional melodies, and complex chords.

Remarkably independent from European tradition, the harp guitar was refashioned in the United States during the late nineteenth century. Chris Knutsen's hollow-arm guitar, featuring an extra sound chamber to support floating harp strings, remains characteristic of

the Pacific Northwest.

Seattle's exploratory spirit, frontier mentality, and taste for fine craftsmanship contributed to the development of the American harp guitar. Knutsen showcased uniquely shaped bodies reminiscent of Victorian and Edwardian-style homes. Beautiful inlay with ornate designs and elaborate carvings suggest higher artistic ideals.

The W.J. Dyer & Brothers and Larson Brothers companies licensed the production of the harp guitar and proliferated Knutsen's models throughout the Midwest and Southern California. Gibson and the Jenkins Company later introduced harp guitars with jumbo bodies and sub-bass strings attached to a supplemental neck or extension.

These American instruments responded to a need for greater volume and diffusion of sound. The parlor era of acoustic guitars was forsaken with the rise of twentieth-century country western music as more performers pumped up the decibels.

The city-slick 1920s and 1930s introduced the world to big band, swing, jazz, and blues. The dawn of radio forever changed the face of music as loud electric sounds gained favor over understated traditional styles.

It wasn't until the cultural upheaval of the 1960s when America was again ready to appreciate the subtle splendor of extended-range acoustic guitars. San Francisco was the hub of democracy and experimentation, shifting to an inner quest for spirituality, consciousness, and lucidity. Music defined identity, and the guitar became the revolution's spokesman.

The modern resurgence of the harp guitar was spawned from the movement by ingenious artists who began looking for new ways to improve on old classics. The harp guitar was rediscovered and honed to meet the needs of contemporary music. The focus shifted away from synthetic styles and industrial development toward refined artisan expression, craftsmanship, and natural settings.

Musical mavericks again flocked to the harp guitar to satisfy urges of originality and exploration. A new generation rallied around



Photo: Liz Abbott

Part of the incredible exhibit at the Museum of Making Music



(photos courtesy of Gregg Miner and Harpguitars.net)

the harp guitar to ensure its preservation, expansion, and legacy.

Harpguitars.net is an amazing website founded by renowned expert Gregg Miner. The popular domain provides the most comprehensive information about this rare instrument on the Internet. It's supported by hundreds of voluntary subscribers, which keeps the website devoid of ads, banners, or pop-ups. And it's all-access except for the interactive forum, which links harp guitar enthusiasts around the world.

"This instrument, unlike any other, embodies a free inventive spirit," said Miner, collector and specialist on American harp guitars. "Due to the broken canons of instrument design, it lends itself to creative self-expression."

Because of its inconsistent features and many names, the harp guitar thus lacks precise form from a musicological perspective and remains difficult to define from the point of organology. It's so uniquely diverse that a variety of artistic hybrids and related forms simply defy classification.

The instrument's innovative design encourages imagination and improvisation. The additional open strings are usually supported by an extra arm or attached to the guitar frame. The unstopped notes accommodate individual plucking, sympathetic vibration, intricate picking.

Harp Guitars: Passion, Imagination, and Artistry is currently being showcased at Carlsbad's Museum of Making Music in Carlsbad. The exhibition explores the origin

and popularity of this special instrument, focusing on the history of its development in Europe, reinvention in America, and modern rediscovery. It features hundreds of ancient relics, unbelievable designs, and beautiful guitars.

The exhibition is accompanied by a series of three solo concerts by contemporary harp guitar heroes Stephen Bennett, John Doan, and William Eaton. Miner provides historical and interpretive introductions at the performances. Concert admission is \$18 (\$15 for members), which includes a wine and cheese reception.

Bennett is a premiere musician and founder of the Harp Guitar Gathering. Showcasing an eclectic blend of traditional and contemporary styles, he presents original compositions as well as Beatles tunes and Dvorak arrangements. Inherited from his great grandfather, Bennett's knack for precision and artistry is testament to decades devoted to the craft of harp guitar playing.

"I acquired my great grandfather's 1909 harp guitar in 1988 after it had sat in a basement for 20 years following his death," Bennett recalled. "As a solo guitarist, it took me less than five minutes to realize the enormous possibilities inherent in the instrument...the sounds that emanated from the beginning intrigued me, and I was aware that compositions were going to flow forth from it."

His solid musicianship, charming wit, and relaxed demeanor make him a delight on stage. He's performed to critical success in France, England, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

On Saturday, March 24, Oregonian John Doan will perform 20-string portraits of sound, taking samples of everyone from John Fahey to Jimi Hendrix. With his playing, his audiences are taken on an international odyssey that traces the roots of harp guitar and reinvents its contemporary applications. Playing on a rare three-necked harpolyre, a predecessor of the harp guitar, Doan evokes a time when people used to dream without the help of film, television, and the Internet.

Finally, William Eaton will dazzle crowds on Saturday, April 21, on his custom-built double-neck electric harp guitar. An accomplished luthier (guitar maker), Eaton is acknowledged as one of the world's greatest designers of guitars, harp guitars, and stringed instruments. From quantum physics and string theory to the one-string shaman's bow, Eaton has written scores for chamber orchestras and world fusion ensembles.

A panel discussion is planned for sometime before the exhibit closes on July 30. It will be facilitated by luthier, sound engineer, and musician Rick Turner who partnered with Miner in bringing this exclusive collection to San Diego. For tickets or additional information, go to www.museumofmakingmusic.org or call (760) 438-5596.

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Steph Johnson Sings the Truth

by Kate Searcy

It was just after dark in the back of Solana Beach's long revered Belly Up Tavern, when she took the stage. Above the hum of dinner conversations, floating waitresses, and clangs of martini glasses, Steph Johnson and her band spread out comfortably across the stage to open the evening for legendary Latin jazz artist Poncho Sanchez. The rest is fuzzy.

As soon as her musty-sweet, down and delta voice released from the speakers and onto the crowd, the reaction was joltingly instantaneous. It was as if her microphone chord was frayed where it touched the ground, while the crowd was ankle-deep in water.

Backed by her relaxed, solid band and backup singers, Johnson may have put on one hell of a hip shaker that night, but none of it was a show. Instead, she kept it real, inviting the audience in to share with them a few things she's learned along the way.

As the set danced on, the audience wasn't merely in front of her but also hanging off her every word, laughing at her inter-song jokes, reacting to her coersions for them to dance, and always applauding her ability to bend and hold notes at the most striking and surprising junctures.

When she huddled with her band to pick a cover tune to plug the extra minutes at the end of their set (they settled on Sade's "No Ordinary Love"), Johnson joked with the crowd that they'd had their "little band meeting" on stage and were ready to play again. It's this gutsy, unedited approach that endears her to the crowd and allows them to share in the good, the bad, and the unexpected.

Like a pin to a balloon, Johnson's "rooted in reality" personality collects energy off the crowd and uses it for fuel to propel her melodies, which explode as they touch the surface. A true lover of jazz, her sultry, blues-tinged vocal meanderings take off in the most unexpected directions, carrying the crowd along with her at all stops. In what looks

almost painful to get out at times, Johnson winces in what she calls her ugly face while reaching down deep to pull out her melodies, coming up to release them into the air like a charge of lightning before going back down again.

A week later, as she settles into her chair at a local Ocean Beach coffee shop to talk about the point where music and her life intercept, it becomes disarmingly clear that, with her, there are no pretenses. What she offers on stage is simply an extension of her life, with a few spotlights turned on.

Without even saying a word, Johnson comes off as a lady to be taken seriously. With relaxed shoulders and soft features, which she often employs to accentuate her points, Johnson uses her commanding spirit to put others at ease. A strong, maternal brunette, Johnson's deep brown eyes are as all encompassing as her vocal abilities. The only thing she leaves at the door are formalities.

She talks about growing up around music, and how, although she's only been singing in front of crowds for a few years, it's been part of her life ever since she can remember. Throughout her youth, she tried her hand at learning different musical instruments in order to accompany her voice, but says she never really got past lesson one with any of them. It wasn't until her early twenties that she seriously took up the guitar.

Photo: Henry Diliz



Steph Johnson

On her website's bio, she talks about how quickly she was able to tumble into the role of singer. "I took a few vocal lessons. Then, literally a month later, I was a member of a jazz gospel choir and was hired to sing with (upright bass player) Glen Fisher," she explained. "All of a sudden I was sitting in with amazing jazz players including musicians who had backed Ray Charles and Frank Sinatra."

Johnson uses the well-worn resonance in her voice to belt out classic tales of woe with all the sincerity of a woman scorned once or twice, herself.

In her song "True Love," she sings the oh-so-true tale of a woman who has it bad for the wrong man. She accentuates the pain and frustrations that are so real at times, it's difficult to accept the fact that she's only a woman of 26 years. She nails the emotions to the air, bending her voice to punctuate each and every turn.

In 2004 Johnson released the EP *A Demonstration* to a stellar reception. Her efforts were also rewarded with a nomination for Best Acoustic Performer at the 2005 San Diego Music Awards. Her debut album, *Genesee Avenue*, showcases her powerful voice and its ability to blend jazz-infused riffs with old blues sentiment.

As for her next album, Johnson has big ideas. First, she wants to release her new set of songs in a slicked-back, refined two-to-three minute radio-friendly format, and then dress it down into extended, more accentuated renditions for a remix album. She likens the first to music you'd drive to work singing along to, while the other will fit better as boogie down, love-making tunes for the background.

As is the case with most working musicians, Johnson straddles two different paradigms, at times — the real world and her music world. She is the beginning and end of every aspect of her music career, propelling it along with the same solid work ethic she uses at her day job to make rent and pay the bills. It's this dichotomy toward which she expresses some weariness. But what makes all the questionable gigs, bad times, and tumultuous circumstances worth all the pain is the singing. She uses it as her own personal release valve. It's her therapy. And all are invited along.



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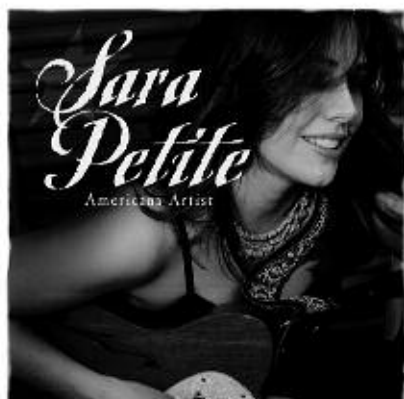
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by Simeon Flick
Photos: Gail Donnelly-Seaholm

sotto voce: a conversation with

Go up to Sven-Erik Seaholm's home studio sometime (there's literally a professional recording studio in his house) and take a look around. It's a shrine, a chapel dedicated to the worship of every aspect of writing, recording, performing, and enjoying music. CDs and old vinyl LPs line the walls on carefully organized shelves. Microphone stands mill about on the living room's hardwood floors and pal around with amplifiers in the directly adjacent spare bedroom. Guitars sit attentively on a rack, patiently waiting for the next bit of inspiration to hit their owner. One boom stand quietly holds an important looking mic; a pop screen stands guard in front of it, and the whole rig is still set up high enough for whoever last sang into it. There's an anteroom adjoining the living room that houses a versatile PC, handling everything from official Kitsch & Sync Production business (self-designed album graphics and websites for clients interested in more of an entire development package, not just the audio capture) to lyrics, this month's "Zen of Recording" column, photos, and more.

Wander back into the second of three bedrooms and you'll find the ad hoc control room, home to another PC armed with the SONY Vegas digital recording platform, a mixing console, various pre-amps and processors, and more musical instruments. Underneath the desk housing the computer is a box with reams of as-of-yet unused lyrics on miscellaneous scraps of paper (which comically ends up being dubbed the "bridge box"). Cables line the floors, meander down hallways into other rooms, and disappear under carpets, carrying their musical signals back and forth as electric inspiration.

You'll also see dozens of posters and memorabilia depicting various bands, some legendary, some obscure, many of whom Sven has recorded. Some of them promote past gigs of his own projects, such as the Wild Truth, maybe even E-Ticket. There's one of a younger-looking Switchfoot, a few of the

Beatles, and one of the late Buddy Blue, a longtime friend who recorded there on several occasions both solo and with the Farmers.

You'll see some of wife Gail Donnelly-Seaholm's photographs in the main hallway, vibrantly colorful and visceral live portraits of locals like Gregory Page and Peter Bolland, who both stopped in to contribute cherished aural tchotchkes to Sven's new solo album, *Sotto Voce* (which drops at the Belly Up Tavern on tax day, April 15).

I recently made the pilgrimage to interview Sven at this musical Mecca in Allied Gardens and found a man still young at heart, happy and healthy, basking in a wide circle of dear friends, brimming with enthusiasm in the continuing fulfillment of his life's passion, and anxious to be seen as a singer/songwriter for a change, instead of "local producing legend," as he has sometimes been labeled. *Sotto Voce* should go a long way in this regard, since being a singer/songwriter is at the heart of everything he does.

TROUBADOUR (T): Okay, we're here with Sven-Erik Seaholm, solo artist, engineer, Belgian beer acolyte, one quarter of the Wild Truth, award-winning record producer [etc.]. Tell me a little bit about where you come from geographically and artistically, a little background if you will.

SVEN-ERIK SEAHOLM (SE): My grandfather was a steamboat captain through the fjords of Sweden, and he was also an engineer and architect. When the U.S. was developing the Panama canal, they put out an open call to locate different people with the kinds of skills they needed, and locks were part and parcel to [my grandfather's] experience. They offered him a deal to come down and help them design the Panama canal, and they rewarded him with citizenship. So afterward he moved to New York and had three kids — my dad and his two sisters.

My dad grew up through the depression. He was one of those guys who hopped trains and went



from place to place, boxed and did different things, and when [World War II] happened he joined the Navy and was stationed in Europe.

He eventually came back and got a job working for Preston Tucker [as in the movie of the same name, starring Jeff Bridges]. He ended up being a commercial artist for the auto industry, an independent at a time when there weren't a lot of independents — they all worked for one company or another. When one of those companies needed to meet a deadline and their employees weren't getting it right, they hired my dad to come in and do it.

And he met my mom, and they had a very romantic, passionate relationship for a couple of years, but his lifestyle as far as working long deadlines . . . he'd work four or five days at a time without sleeping, which affects your personality [laughter]!

Eventually he helped her move out here, relocating to San Diego when I was two. I grew up in Southeast San Diego, off of Skyline Drive, up until the time I was ten. I was going to Fulton Elementary School, and somebody came to school one day and pulled me out of class, brought me to the principal's office and gave me a verbal test. Next thing you know, a couple weeks, later I was moved to Encanto Elementary, which was the first school in San Diego at the time to have a gifted program.

When I was about eight years old I remember playing on the monkey bars and suddenly hearing Marvin Gaye's version of "Heard It Through the Grapevine." I let go of the monkey bars and I stood there transfixed, just listening . . . I was eight years old and I knew what I was going to do with my life.

Shortly thereafter, I started writing little songs in my head, and I would walk around singing these. I had piano lessons eventually when I was about 12 or 13, and when I got into high school I

wanted to continue with music but they didn't really have anything that involved piano. They told me they needed trombone players. So for four years I played trombone, and during my senior year I was in the district all-star band on trombone.

I'd picked up guitar a little bit in my junior year. I don't play much better now than I did then, because as soon as I could play a song, all I needed the guitar for was to accompany myself and sing the song.

It's not like I was always involved in music, it was more like music was always involved in me. Just always compelled to write some song or record something. Record production and songwriting to me have always been kind of hand-in-hand. I didn't really start one necessarily before the other; I did both at the same time. Some people write the lyrics first, some people write the music first, but sometimes they come at the same time, and recording has been like that for me since I was a kid.

My first recording experiences consisted of taping one song, mixing it onto another cassette, and then putting another song on, and making mix tapes before there was really the technology to do it easily. Then I found things where you could have sound-on-sound recordings, where you could record something and then sing along to it . . .

T: Overdubs.

SE: Yeah. So I was always doing both those things at the same time.

At one point I had a roommate [George Seibert] who had a bunch of recording equipment,



Seaholm in his living room.

"My career has been not so much becoming than actual. I already v

— Sven-



At the same time, Paul Simon's *One Trick Pony* album was out, and Stevie Wonder's *Hotter Than July* was out, and I would listen to them every single day, over and over again, and it was like my mind was opening, and my body, my hands couldn't work fast enough to keep up with all of the inspiration that I got from that music.

I spent a concentrated period of time writing very scholastically, writing for the sake of writing, trying to perfect it structurally, lyrically, melodically, chordally. I was maybe showing somebody a song here and there, or maybe I'd go someplace and do an open mic and play three songs. But my 23rd birthday was the first gig I had with my first band, Sven-Erik and the E-Ticket Rollers. There were a lot of jokes that went into making that name, and within a year or so we became E-Ticket.

Then around the time I came back from L.A., I met a girl [Jeanne Wooster] who was an artist, a singer/songwriter too, who really opened my mind to discovering who I was as an artist. I knew who I was scholastically as a musician and a singer and a songwriter. But she really opened me up to finding out who I was and how to express that.

She was really integral to opening the door. She showed me that not only can you write a song, but you can also write it *about* something, you can address some of the issues that you're carrying around. Recently I was talking to an old friend and told him I must have really had a chip on my shoulder when I was younger; He said it was more like a *weight*. Being able to not only write songs and be directed musically, but to also be able to use it as a vehicle for alleviating that weight was really cool. The first two Wild Truth albums came out of that and I stayed on that path from there.

T: Sven, tell us about your new record.

SE: The genesis of this particular record starts with the Gandhi Method. When we [Sven, Cathryn Beeks, Chuck Schiele, and Scott Wilson] started the Gandhi Method, we didn't have any songs that were written for the Gandhi Method. Each of us had songs we were contributing that we couldn't fit into some other project and would easily be transformed into this vehicle.

And then we all began to write songs for the project and that totally affected my writing style; I started trying to open up the space for harmonies and other things.

After the Gandhi Method came to a conclusion, when I was playing rock stuff with the Wild Truth, I still had these songs like "Turn Away" and "Cry Baby Blue" that are on the record . . . and "Acquiesce" was one I wrote then that just started me on this whole thing of diving into the world of altering my voice.

It's an interesting record to me because of the way it turned out. I'd be working all day and playing loud music with people or recording loud music, and I would pick up the guitar at the end of the day and Gail's like, you know, it would be really cool if you played something really soft and quiet, and she just likes when I sing softly, anyway. Hence the title *Sotto Voce*, which also means to say something under your breath.

Ultimately, I made this album for Gail. This album is the most cohesive musical statement I've made because I set parameters that I tried to stay

within. If there's any eclecticism about this album, it's just in the difference of the songs' impetus, not in the production style.

One of the overall themes in making this record was the celebration of my friends. I was talking to my mom a few years ago, and she said, "You know, one of the things you're going to find as you get older is that it gets harder and harder to make new friends." And I've already seen that somewhat. But we're just so blessed with the people we have in our lives here. We know so many awesome people that we consider close friends.



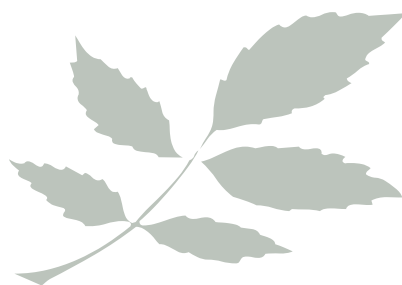
So a lot of this album is an attempt to give back to my friends in the form of a testament to our friendships, so either they're playing on it or I'm addressing them in some way, just acknowledging that bond, and how happy that Gail and I both are here. Marcia Claire came in, Patti Zlaket, my son Drew Andrews, Cathryn Beeks, of course. . . . There were more women who played on this record than men, which was on purpose; I wanted to purposefully stay on the feminine side of things.

T: Any closing words?

SE: Just that it's the most honest record I've ever made. It's been a realization of myself as an artist since 1990. I always start with the song, and the song tells me where it's going to go. So all of my albums and projects have been very eclectic because of it, because I always go where the song tells me. To come to that [on this record] makes it feel very important to me as far as defining myself for myself. I hope it translates to people.

T: I'm sure it will.

Sven-Erik Seaholm and the Wild Truth play at Indie Fest, main stage, March 3, 1:30pm; Sven plays solo acoustic on March 7 at the Aztec Cafe, SDSU, and on March 30 at Hot Java Cafe.



Charlie Loach, Seaholm, Bill Ray, and David Ybarra

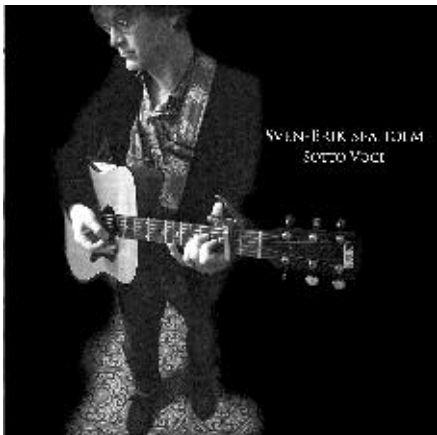
THROUGH THE TRUTH, WILDLY

Like many bands, the Wild Truth has a twisted and gnarled family tree. Since 1990, it has included the talents of four different drummers, three lead guitarists, three bass players, a keyboardist, a sax player — and the guy who writes the songs, sings, and plays rhythm guitar (Seaholm). Whenever Seaholm thinks about the *definitive* lineup, it will always be the current one.

Charlie Loach plays guitar in a fierce style that can only be described as singularly *American*. Among the influences one can browse through in his playing are the Boston-bluesy squall of Aerosmith's Joe Perry, the southern gentleness of Chet Atkins, and the laid-back Californian intensity of Joe Walsh. Amazingly, these disparate inspirations blend into a sound that is simply Charlie.

Bassist David Ybarra (Playground Slap, the Cloud Merchants) would seem to hail from a completely different planet by comparison. Whether he's slapping with funk-inflected panache, laying down the sturdiest of rock solid foundations, or nimbly walking through jazzy gardens of soul, he has been the rock Seaholm depends on for almost 15 years. He's also one of Seaholm's favorite local producers (Meghan La Roque, Marcia Claire), with a crazy sonic signature all his own.

Grammy-winning drummer Bill Ray is a songwriter's dream. Not only does he play a great groove under you, he's deep inside the lyrics as well, underscoring hidden meanings, heightening emotional context, and making things just mean so much more. His deft touch, dynamic sensibilities, and textural colors made him the obvious choice to play on *Sotto Voce*, which, Seaholm says, "is pretty much my musical Dr. Jekyll to the Mr. Hyde I become within the Wild Truth."



and he needed somebody to help him run it anyway, so he taught me how to use all the stuff. I guess from that point on that's all I did; every spare minute was to write songs or record them.

T: It sounds like you became what you were going to become fairly quickly, considering how long it can sometimes take.

SE: My career path has been not so much *becoming* something than actualizing what I already was. And I do all these things now. I'm not running for mayor, I'm not on a quest to corner the market on every single aspect of music making and listening, it's just all connected. I didn't have anybody who could do graphic art for me, didn't have any money to pay someone else to do it, so I learned how to do that. I didn't have anybody that could record me without paying them a bunch of money, so I

became that guy. All those things have been in service of the songs I have in my heart.

T: When did you start writing songs?

SE: Well, I always had what I call jingles in my head, verses or choruses. And then when I was about 12 or 13 I wrote my first complete song, which was an instrumen-

tal called "Ralphie" [laughter], which I then put words to. And then in high school I started writing songs in earnest — I was about 16 or 17 years old.

I was kind of a late starter really. I was already distracted by other interests, like acting. But by the time I was 18, I was a full-blown songwriter. I read this book called *You Can Write a Song*, and it went through the basis of structure, lyrical and musical, and it really turned me on.



Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden

SPRING CAMP OUT



If you've never been to a bluegrass camp out, then it's time you tried one! Everyone is invited to the annual bluegrass camp in Chula Vista, Friday through Sunday, April 20-22. If you plan to attend the Adams Avenue Roots & Folk Festival that weekend, come on down during the evenings. It's only a 20-minute drive. Come in your RV or bring your tent. If you prefer, you can rent a cabin on site. The facility is very close to home, located just off the I-805 in Chula Vista, hidden away in a pleasant tree-filled grassy nook. The KOA campground features full hook ups, a pool, and other amenities. The camp out is casual, with lots of jamming day and night, BBQ cooking, and relaxing. It's a great way to kick back and really enjoy your musical friends, to meet and play with new friends, and to get in as much bluegrass playing time as you want. You can count on a potluck dinner on Saturday with great food followed by jamming and entertainment. Trust me, you'll enjoy this camp out. To sign up, contact Phil Levy at drlevy@pacbell.net, or visit the SDBS website at www.socalbluegrass.org and click on the calendar. If you have questions about the facilities, check out the campground website at: www.koacampgrounds.com/where/ca/05112/.

BLUEGRASS ON THE RADIO



As many of you know, Wayne Rice hosts the *Bluegrass Special* on KSON radio (97.3 FM and 92.1FM in North County) every Sunday night from 10pm to midnight, playing great bluegrass music. The *Bluegrass Special* is the longest-running bluegrass radio show in the country! Wayne has recently embarked on a program, in cooperation with the San Diego Bluegrass Society, to present some of our top local bluegrass bands live on the show. Last summer 117° West and Second Delivery played live on the show and talked about local bluegrass happenings including Summergrass. More recently, the show has featured the Virtual Strangers. Each week Wayne's show is an outstanding bluegrass experience, and now you'll have the added treat of hearing top local talent perform live along with a



chance to listen in while Wayne chats with the band members. Way to go, Wayne!

BLUEGRASS ETIQUETTE: AM I PLAYING TOO LOUDLY?

Bluegrass jamming is great fun as well as a key part of the bluegrass experience. Its free form emphases improvisation that's exhilarating and open to all. There are, however, some important unwritten rules that all players should be aware of and follow. We will discuss some of them in this column from time to time. This column will focus on: Am I playing too loudly?

To answer this question, keep in mind the following:

- The purpose of a jam is to make good music. If one player is too loud, the music suffers as the others cannot be heard.
- When the song being played is a vocal, remember that the vocals must be able to be heard and understood by everyone in the jam. You MUST play your instrument accordingly, lowering its volume to allow the vocals to be heard without the singer needing to scream.
- Likewise, when the quieter instruments such as guitar and mandolin take a solo, the other instruments MUST quiet down so the lead can be heard.
- When playing back up to a singer, remember to play only during the spaces in the lyrics, not on top of the singing. Also remember that everything you do must be subservient to and support the vocals.
- Remember to share fills. A loud banjo, dobro, or fiddle can play a fill in every open spot in a vocal tune, but they shouldn't — give the guitar and the mandolin a chance too! There is nothing more annoying to a singer than an instrument that plays over the vocals. Likewise, it is very annoying to other jam players when one instrument hogs all the fills.

In the final analysis a good rule of thumb is that if you can't hear the singer or the soloing instrumental break, you are playing too loudly. If you play the banjo, do this test at home: turn the banjo so it faces straight up toward your face and play a tune. Note how loud it is — that's how others hear it when you play normally with it facing away from you and toward the group. If you aren't sure if your playing is too loud, discreetly ask someone else in the jam. A tougher question is when to tell someone else, unasked, that they are playing too loudly. Try the polite approach: "you know, you sure play well, but if you would back down the volume a bit, it would be even better for the rest of us!" Have fun out there.



The Zen of Recording

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

FUNDAMENTALS OF COMPRESSION

Well, it's time to get all scholastic on you gentle readers of this column. Yes, the following textual verbosity may be a tad drier than the moist, wholesome entertainment you've become (perhaps unintentionally) accustomed to; but listening to some of the demos and albums I've been sent for mastering and consultations as of late, I think it's high time to address the old "sonic squeeze."

Next to eq, compression may well be the most "go to" of all the available processing choices in the effort to make things sound "mo' better." The fact that the results vary so widely depending on the application, varying parameters, and the characteristics of the source material only serves to underscore the necessity of utilizing it with a sure and practiced hand. You could say it's like cooking with salt — the right amount is the right amount. Too little is still fixable, but too much is potentially catastrophic.

So what is compression and how does it work? Essentially, it's a process wherein the loudest parts of a signal are attenuated (a fancy word for "automatically turned down") to bring them closer in perceived volume to the softer passages. Using the example of a bass guitar track, one might find that while the overall performance is consistent, some notes are "jumping out" at you intermittently. Judicious use of a compressor can tame those peaks, helping the part to "sit" better within the mix.

The judicious part comes from knowing the various parameters of the compression stage and how they affect the signal. Of course, all compressors are not made equally. Many omit some features entirely, while others add some esoteric ones. What follows is the most typical feature set.

Input Gain: This controls how loud the signal you're working on will be. You're not really trying to do much here but make things loud enough for the compressor to see, which is why many don't even have this feature.

Threshold: Okay, now we start to "get it on." The threshold is the point at which the compressor starts to, well . . . compress. Think of it like the height line at amusement park attractions: everything above this line gets on the ride, everything below it remains unaffected.

Ratio: This is how much you attenuate the signal once it rises above the threshold. A ratio of 2:1 means that for every 2dB of volume increase above the threshold, the perceived volume increase is only 1dB. A ratio of 4:1 signifies an even more drastic reduction in volume, because for every 4dB jump in volume, it's being heard as a 1dB jump. Considering that 3dB is essentially twice as loud as 1dB, a ratio of 3:1 renders your peaks half as loud as they would be without compression. Compression ratios of 10:1 or more (up to infinity:1) are actually called "limiting" and can be quite drastic by comparison.

Attack: The time it takes for the compression to kick in. More accurately, it's the amount of transients you're allowing to pass though before attenuating the signal. On our bass track, we may want to adjust this so the initial "pluck" is still heard before the fundamental note is subsequently attenuated. This is what is often referred to as "punch." Other times, we may be trying to tame down some nasty "clickiness" in the note's attack, in which case we would go for the fastest attack possible, which can kind of smooth over those transients.

Release: This controls how quickly the compressor "lets go" of the signal, returning it to its normal, unattenuated state. You may have heard of compressors exhibiting "pumping" or "breathing." This refers to the volume constantly rising up at the end of notes, as the compressor releases the signal. Slower release times make this anomaly less noticeable, but a fast release is sometimes used as a special effect as well.

Knee: There are two basic types of compression "knees," which are labeled simply enough "soft" and "hard." Hard knees are easier to explain, in that they work pretty much as I've described to this point; everything above the threshold gets squashed the amount you've set your ratio to. Unfortunately, this can be less "musical" sounding than a soft knee compression slope. Soft knee means that even though you've set your ratio to 4:1, signals barely above the threshold may only be attenuated at 2:1; as signals rise further above the threshold, the intensity of the compression gradually increases. This makes for a less noticeable effect upon the signal. Used on vocals, the net result might be described as more "natural" sounding. On bass drum however, a more consistent leveling may be desired, so hard knee would be the choice.

Output (or Makeup) Gain: Lots of resources refer to compression as "making



Sven-Erik Seaholm

the soft parts louder." Well, sort of. While it does make the louder parts closer in volume to the softer ones, the bottom line is that all that attenuation is going to make for a signal that is overall not as loud as the unaffected signal. That's where this comes in.

The wonderful irony of all this gain reduction is that it allows us to increase a track's level overall. In the case of our bass line, the notes jumping out at the listener cause us to lower the level of the bass in the mix. This makes us say "where's the bass?" until the loud notes jump out, at which point we go "oh, there it is." This can result in days in frustration over the bass not being exactly right in our mixes.

Let's say the peaks of those loud notes are at -1dB and the rest of the track is hovering around -8dB. Set your threshold at -12dB, with an attack of about 5 milliseconds. Set the release to around 180 milliseconds. Try a ratio of about 4:1 to start, with a soft knee and bring the output to where the volume in bypass is close to the effected signal. This should put you in the ballpark.

Look at your Gain Reduction meter. The average attenuation should be around 2 or 3 dB, with severe peaks at like 6dB. If you're seeing it crunching things at 9dB or more, you may want to back off the input or raise the threshold.

Similar settings can be used for other longer note-type instruments like vocals, keys, or strings but always, always, always use your ears and good musical taste.

I personally use compression most consistently on lead vocals (5:1), backing vocals (8:1), bass (4:1), and bass drum (6:1). Sometimes I compress banjos, dobros, and acoustic guitars a little (2:1). I almost never compress snare drums (blindly compressing them should be outlawed) and, less rarely, electric guitars (the amp compresses it a lot already). In mastering I often compress at a ratio of 1.65:1 with perhaps an additional 1.5dB of post-compression limiting.

The ultimate goal is to tame these all of these elements so that they can be utilized to their fullest musical potential within the context of your work. Think of it as giving your tracks a nice warm hug. Who doesn't like that?

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent record producer who also provides art design, mastering and CD replication services through his company, Kitsch & Sync Production www.kaspro.com

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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

ART AND SOUL

Proper appreciation of the Arts is a concept as deceptive as it is elusive. Just when you think you've got it all figured out, something happens to point out your imbecility and make you feel the need to start all over again. Like the *bon vivant* who is privately enraptured of the same gorgeous blonde at the same bar for seven or eight nights in a row. He takes his time — not to build up the courage to approach her (he's recently had his own middle name legally changed to "Courage") — but because he knows that only through careful, attentive observation will he be able to get a proper measure of those qualities necessary in a partner for the exciting adventures of life, learning, and love-play.

He decides he's satisfied with her credentials on the eighth or ninth evening and introduces himself, inviting her to come up to his bachelor's paradise to listen to some Sister Sourire music, share a couple bottles of Jack Daniels, maybe check out his complete collection of *Hustler* and other art books.

Some delirious hours later, as the two prepare to embark on Life's most precious and promising journey, they divest themselves of their cumbersome attire (or what he calls "antiquated objects of vanity and commerce"). The courageous host discovers that this sublime vision from that blessed bar is not actually Petronella (as he'd been told) but Mike something or other, someone who also surely knows something about courage but far too little of his host's hopes, needs, and decimated dreams.

It's enough to make you want to drink. So it was that Art itself has recently suffered another catastrophic collapse, and only by striving to peer into its honey-moist bowels can any of us even attempt to measure its value, to recognize its price tag, to qualify to purchase its Hope. Or words to that effect.

"Soul" is a word that is overused in these post-postal times, and the latest express delivery has informed us of the passing of another icon who, if not actually having invented its secular definition, spent tireless decades exuding its very essence. In a purely pop sense, any "soul" we feel or groove to or aspire to is a gift from its gifted diplomat who embodied it so fully.

This must have been the hardest-working

celebrity in existence, a real-deal, feel-good sex machine whose impact on the world will surely be acknowledged just as soon as Mankind reclaims its brain.

Yes, the passing of Anna Nicole Smith is a blow to the world of Art, even as it enriches the tabloids who seem to take her superb artistry in an insane, retarded, or maybe just viciously mis-informed manner. Her ongoing one-woman street-theatre performance piece, *Blotto*, took nearly three years to outline and was highly lauded even by Brando when he was alive. "She's changing the nature of theater, of art, nearly every moment she breathes," said a close friend of a cousin of a lady whose sister once met Brando.

And now she breathes no more. The incalculable loss is doling out its own dreadfully strange consequences throughout the Hollywood community. Britney Spears was distraught enough to shave her head, just as several female Family members did when Charles Manson was taken from them. Brad and Angelina plan to move away from Hollywood, such is the palpable vacuity of the town without its goddess.

As global warming increases, should we not recognize signals of an environmentally emotional meltdown as well?

One dreads to imagine the effect Smith's absence is having on those few sensitive nerves within the bloodthirsty maniacs in the Middle East.

Many of whom have weapons . . . Sure, it had to happen someday. But why now? She wasn't even 40. Ah, yet she lived many more lifetimes than other beings, didn't she? Like spiders, for instance, or heiffers.

Too bad it was *now*. Just as the world was beginning to get over the deaths of Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield, we're hit hard again with a hurt that perhaps only Art itself might alleviate somewhat.

Elton John could help us all now. If he could redo "Candle in the Wind" one more time, only this time have it be about Anna Nicole Smith.

Doesn't she deserve it, Elton? Don't we all deserve it?

Okay, okay, "Candle" has been done to death. How about "Good-bye Yellow Brick Road"? I'll even save you and Bernie some time; I'll do the

Photo: Fallon Faraday



The gently twisted Mr. Sinatra

lyrics myself. They'll be sensitive, respectful, and thoroughly "now" (which is what audiences seem to demand more and more) and they're yours at nominal cost, I promise.

BEYOND THE TEAR-SLICKED ROAD

When are you gonna come back? Are things the way you had planned?

Leaving an infant and numerous boy-toys, sayin' they're her old man . . .

Court cases go on forever; plenty of people who'll sue,

Mongrels who all want the baby
"It's not about money," they'll swear 'til they're blue (blue like you/boo-hoo)

So good-bye Anna Nicole, you're the icon no one could ignore

(if only you had done Penthouse, you could have offered us more)

More than the geeks that you left stranded here
Since your crazed circus left town

Oh, the Biggest of Big Tops will sag and die;
The draw was always the clown.

Wow. Perform that in London at some big cathedral; I'll bet Chuck and Camilla would get a kick out of it.

At any rate, if I've managed to take just one person's mind off of the ongoing tragedy of Lady Diana just until you saw her name in this very paragraph, then this column will not have been in vain.

Pain, of course. But no vanity. Not today.



Jim McInnes

KILLER FISH IN CONCERT!

As we all know, the *Troubadour* is a publication for the unplugged community. I've been wondering for years, "Who gives a rat's butt what Jim thinks about anything? He isn't a folk singer or jazz musician. Hell, for 32 years he was a rock and roll radio deejay! Who does this guy think *he* is, anyway, writing for the Troooooooooob?" And it still bugs me, but...

I just dug out a live 1980 recording of my "proto-punk" band, Land Piranha. It was recorded at the Spirit, the hub of all things new in San Diego music, circa 1980s, by a guy named Bob Quick. Bob set up two microphones on stands on the dance floor, about 15 feet apart, and ran them into his battery-powered Sony cassette recorder, which he set on one of the tables near the front. That was it (Sven-Erik, make a note).

Land Piranha was a five-piece band. I was the bass player, although I was ostensibly a guitar player, because nobody else wanted the job. I thought, "Hey, it's only four strings...how hard can it be?" Don Story was the lead guitarist. I still play with Don in Modern Rhythm. He's one of the best. Randy "Dark Fader" Fuelle played rhythm guitar. Randy has recorded and produced a zillion recordings by artists like Buddy Blue, the Beat Farmers, and DFX2 at the now defunct Hit Single Recording Services. The drummer was Larry Kosslyn, aka "Licorice Larry," who was manager of the old Licorice Pizza in P.B., among other things. The singer was Steve Schmidt, who



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Kottke and Lindley: An Instrumental Summit

by Steve Thorn

This month, the Belly Up Tavern in Solana Beach will host two veteran instrumentalists as renowned for their off-kilter sense of humor as much as for their musical prowess. On Thursday, March 8, the stage lights will shine on acoustic guitarist Leo Kottke and Jackson Browne's former musical partner, David Lindley.



Leo Kottke

Musical instruments often served as substitute childhood buddies for Kottke. His family moved to 12 states following his birth in 1945 in Athens, Georgia. After attempts to master the violin and trombone, Kottke decided to learn the acoustic guitar. One explanation of why Kottke didn't participate in the electric blues explosion of the '60s might be due to two incidents of ear damage he suffered during his youth. An exploding firecracker resulted in a severe loss of hearing in his left ear. Kottke later had damage to his other ear, the result of weapons fired in practice drills during his service in the Navy Reserve.

Returning to civilian life, Kottke entered Minnesota's St. Cloud State University but was no more cut out for academia than Robert Zimmerman (aka Dylan) was at the University of Minnesota. Dylan searched for any coffee-house in the Twin Cities that would allow him to play. Kottke, on the other hand, would

ditch school and practice by himself in the St. Cloud State University auditorium.

Kottke's first recorded work was the rare 12-string *Blues* (1968) on the Oblivion label. It wasn't until one year later that Kottke's career was truly launched. He was signed with the Takoma label, a record company owned by John Fahey, a musician best known for his seminal acoustic guitar albums dating back to 1959. Kottke's debut LP on Takoma, *6 and 12-string Guitar*, sports an album cover illustration that is as fondly remembered as the great music on the disc. It is still affectionately referred to as the "armadillo album," a reference to Texas' favorite creature featured on the cover. The armadillo album was an essential record for college dorm students from coast to coast. Mississippi Delta blues appear along side Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring." Can you say eclectic?



Kottke's "armadillo album"

Los Angeles music agent Denny Bruce, who would later oversee the business affairs for San Diego's Beat Farmers, was able to move Kottke from the ranks of the independent label into the major league when he signed the guitarist up with Capitol Records. Kottke's Capitol years (1971-1975) found him

encamped in the singer-songwriter craze of the '70s, and the prerequisite of that musical genre required Kottke to sing.

Kottke's self-deprecating humor and lack of enthusiasm for his vocals resulted in his most famous quotation. His voice, he confessed, was reminiscent of "geese farts on a foggy morning." This is perhaps too harsh of a self-critique, a case where the artist doth protest too much. While Kottke's singing won't make anyone forget Elvis, Roy Orbison, or Dion, his vocalizing has resulted in several moving performances. (Check out Kottke's great cover of the Byrds' "Eight Miles High" on the *Mudlark* album).

In addition to being a frequent visitor on the "Prairie Home Companion" radio show, Kottke has collaborated with a diverse group of artists, including Lyle Lovett, Rickie Lee Jones, and the late Chet Atkins. These days, Kottke has been in the studio and out on the road with bassist Mike Gordon of Phish. Their two CDs, *Clone* (2002) and *Sixty-Six Steps* (2003), are accurate representations of what can take place when a droll acoustic guitarist joins forces with a bassist who worships at the shrine of the Grateful Dead.

A setback with tendinitis in the '80s forced Kottke to adjust his playing technique, but his solos remain inspirational and his tongue firmly in cheek.

Lindley's youth didn't involve living in as many states as Kottke did. Although his personal MySpace web site lists Nashville as his current home, Lindley is a Los Angeles (San Marino) native who was born in 1944. He was an enthusiastic participant in the Great Folk Scare of the early '60s, and the names of the early folk and bluegrass groups Lindley participated in resemble a lineup from the old *Hootenanny!* TV show — the Dry City Scat Band, Mad Mountain Ramblers, and Smog City Trestle Hangers. On five occasions he walked away with first prize at the Topanga Canyon Banjo and Fiddle Competition.

The British Invasion era began the garage music scene in the U.S., and Lindley joined a San Bernardino rock outfit called the Rodents,

one of the hundreds of bands opting for an animal-based name during the '60s. Although their sole recording, a cover of the Beatles' "And Your Bird Can Sing" (backed by "Come and Live With Me" on the B-side), is a 45 record coveted by vinyl junkies, it is apparently a chapter in Lindley's musical history that he'd just as soon forget. In an interview with the British music fanzine *Zig-Zag*, Lindley maintained that he had "never heard of the Rodents."

His next venture would be more suited to his musical talents. From 1966 to 1970, Lindley teamed up with another multi-instrumentalist, Chris Darrow, to form the groundbreaking Los Angeles psychedelic band Kaleidoscope. Although the group would experience a flurry of changes in its group lineup, the original lineup consisted of Lindley and Darrow, Solomon Feldthouse, Chester Crill, and John Vidican. Considering the era, the psychedelic labeling worked in the band's favor. But when listening to the band's four albums today — *Side Trips* (1967), *Beacon from Mars* (1967), *The Incredible Kaleidoscope* (1968), and *Bernice* (1970) — it is apparent that the group was offering a music course in multiculturalism rather than mere lysergic fantasies.

"World music" was a term rarely used in the '60s, but it is a more accurate term to describe a band that was rocking out one minute and dabbling in the sounds of Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the next. With the release of several anthologies during the CD era, Kaleidoscope is now considered (along with Spirit and Love) to be one of the best bands to emerge from the late '60s Los Angeles scene.

Photo: Steve Cahill



Kaleidoscope circa 1967: Chris Darrow, Solomon Feldthouse, Lindley (with harp guitar), John Vidican, Chester Crill

In 1972, Lindley participated in what was the longest overdue debut in the singer-songwriter genre. For six years, Orange County's Jackson Browne toured endlessly (one of his favorite haunts was the now defunct Candy

Company folk club in La Mesa), sung with chanteuse Nico from Andy Warhol's clique, and had singers falling all over themselves wanting to record his songs. Browne overcame his studio phobia and released his first album on David Geffen's newly formed Asylum label. Browne's sophomore effort, *For Everyman* (1973), along with his third release *Late for the Sky* (1974), comprised a remarkable musical triumvirate seldom matched by the singer-songwriters who would follow.



David Lindley

Over the next decade, Lindley spent countless studio sessions and concert tours with Browne. Browne's famous compositions, "Doctor My Eyes," "Jamaica, Say You Will," "Song for Adam," "Take It Easy," "Redneck Family," and "Before the Deluge," all have the trademark Lindley solos, whether he's playing guitar or the violin.

In 1981, Lindley became a concert draw in his own right when he formed El Rayo-X, a band devoted to the same musical globetrotting Lindley had pursued with Kaleidoscope. The single "Mercury Blues" received heavy FM airplay and was enjoyed as a highway anthem by Mercury owners, Chevy drivers, big-rig truckers, and other motorists on America's highways. In recent years, Lindley has collaborated with avant garde guitarist Henry Kaiser, Jordanian percussionist Hani Naser, and percussionist Wally Ingram from Timbuk 3.

Tickets for the Leo Kottke/David Lindley concert are available online at www.bellyup.com.

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Gaskins ‘n’ Gunner Back on Track

by Allen Singer

Back on Track, the new CD from Gaskins ‘n’ Gunner, should come with a warning to hang on to your bar stool, hold on to your church key, and fasten your seat belt as you drive home alone, having lost out on some midnight love. *Back on Track* was born in late night saloons, juke joints, and blues jams, fathered by Border Radio’s mega kilowatt antennas, Wolfman Jack, 1950s’ Chicago blues, rockabilly, country western, T-Bone Walker, Arthur Crudup, Eddie Cochran, Johnny Cash, Ronnie Hawkins, John Lee Hooker, Howlin’ Wolf, and countless girl-driven musical fantasies. The songs are filled with wonderful heavy-bass boogie rhythms, ageless guitar riffs, and words that are just icing on this musical road trip. A ghost of Marty Robbins appears in the opening guitar notes on the song “Time To Stop My Crying.” Mark Knopfler riffs cut through the mix on “Neon Moonlight.” Smoky vocals, Dylanesque phrasing, Chicago blues band riffs, smooth sounds, along with the underlying mother-of-all blues, all contribute to the musical style of this CD. The boys never slow down, even when they take detours or change tempos. As soon as you’re fooled into letting your musical guard down, you’re suddenly shaken by a bass that gets loud in the mix as guitars cut through and somewhere in your ears you hear a boogie piano playing.

Back on Track is well-aged stuff, played by seasoned musicians who have choked on bar room smoke, haven’t gotten enough sleep, and played ‘til their fingers hurt. This is music that takes you to places your parents warned you about. As I listened, I wished I had that old 1958 Buick I learned to drive in, with one mono car speaker blasting, rattling the windows as my car boogied down the road. When you play this CD, play it loud in a dark room with the windows open, so your neighbors know you’ve come home, and be ready to shake your tail feathers and boogie all night long.



Chad Farran Another Ride

by Craig Yerkes

Chad Farran does an excellent job of merging diverse musical influences into his own unique style on his new CD, *Another Ride*. The vibe of this recording is decidedly laid back (think surf folk à la Jack Johnson), but the instrumentation, grooves, and melodic ideas consistently draw on the mysterious and fiery sensibilities of Latin music. Check the credits on the inside of the disc and you’ll find an amazing array of funky instruments employed in creating these sounds (many played by Mr. Farran himself). The layered lead and harmony vocals bring nice texture to the music and reminded me of Sting and Paul Simon.

“Like Water,” “Guiding Star,” and “Another Roll” stand out with their infectious grooves and melodic hooks. I love the way the hooks are not only delivered in the lead vocals (the catchy chorus in “Guiding Star”) but also in the instrumental tracks (the hypnotic harmony flutes in “Another Roll” and the tasty background melody on the chorus of “Come So Far”). “Growing Old” uses a dobro and a cello to create an almost psychedelic sound, and this eerily pretty track reminded me of something John Lennon and George Martin might have cooked up after drinking a couple of mojitos. “Confess” will bring the haunting beauty of “Fragile” (by Sting) to mind, using some beautiful violin and fretless bass work to create the most sonically satisfying piece on the disc.

The title track, at first, bugged me in the way that the tempo and groove suddenly changes mid-way through the tune, but then it grew on me with the way it brings the artist’s more mellow, reflective side into contrast with his more playful, upbeat side. Several San Diego musical heavyweights add their talents to the impressive abilities of Farran on this disc, with Jimmy Lewis’ awesomely tasty lead guitar and Glen Fischer’s amazing bass playing standing out the most. Very enjoyable work here and anyone who digs their music flavored on the Latin side will be particularly turned on.



Alex Esther The Neighbors Are Listening

by Chuck Schiele

The Neighbors Are Listening is a great new CD, featuring acoustic guitar based pop rocker Alex Esther. The album’s 12 tunes are written in the radio-friendly vein, fitting well into the niches and influences of Dave Matthews, John Mayer, and — in the subtlest ways, Squeeze or Elvis Costello — as well as the emblematic sound of the coffeehouse thing.

The production is very nice, “keeping it real” and very clean for the most part, with the occasional well-placed spatial noises that make you turn your head as if to see if something is flying about the room. There is also a very modern approach and attitude about Esther’s music. It is creative without shouting for its own sake. Still, it maintains a casual feeling as if recorded in the breezy living room of someone’s apartment. This combination of sensibilities works very well on this outing in audio.

In addition to writing all the material on this album, Esther also plays guitar and mandolin, and sings. He is highlighted by the tight musicianship of the band. Producer Dave Ybarra is featured on bass, a variety of percussion instruments, E-bow, vocals, and performs some loop programming and other resourceful, less reverent instruments, such as a kitchen sink. Chester Drowers plays steady, big sounding drums and percussion. Yo Gee and Heather Ybarra are credited with backing vocals, and the Backyard Ensemble helps out on oboe, bassoon, and violins.

The songs are fun, simple, smartly written, efficient, and pretty damn catchy, although I think Esther has yet to write his catchiest song . . . and these are pretty catchy. He comes across like a guy who writes a lot and, if that is the case, I think this dude’s onto something. Shaking off the now and then influences on his sleeve, Mr. Esther might find himself singing in the tall grass of a field belonging only to his musical residence. And I say this with the respect that he’s got one foot on the lawn already. There are moments when this music sounds as though he’s singing with his eyes closed, alone in his own place and his own space, which are uniquely special on this CD. The closing song, “Sunrise,” arranged for one guitar and one voice, is a captivating case in point, finding its way to a place inside you as a listener.

And if the neighbors are listening, they probably don’t mind.



Manisha Shahane Peace in Progress

by Chuck Schiele

Here’s a project that easily tugs on my musical heart strings, first due to my affection for the exotic and second, for what the work communicates and how I personally identify with its inspiration.

Peace in Progress features 11 tracks written by vocalist Manisha Shahane who wanders through a variety of songs and compositions. The opening track indicates a very exotic record, heavy with traditional Eastern instrumentation straight outta Bombay. It’s sung-spoken in what I assume is her native language, but it also includes a sort of rap that sounds like it came from the Blondie, CBGB era. It’s way different, and I like it.

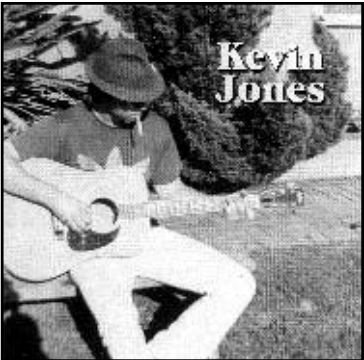
From there, however, Shahane switches to English and runs through a set of songs ranging from pop songs and show tunes to light jazzy ballads that are rendered in a way that makes me feel as if I’m in a small intimate space such as a swanky hippy garden coffeehouse.

Track six, “Nachra Mora (Dance Peacock),” is a children’s song that once again takes us straight back to the heart of India. Its instrumentation is trance-like and tribal and it’s by far my favorite vocal effort.

Another wonderful aspect of this CD is the use of different time signatures as evidenced in track seven, which takes us back to Boston by way of a poppish show tune ditty in 12/8 called “Something in Your Voice.” It opens up in 7/8 with an old-school jazz groove that might remind one of old jazz records from the 1960s. From there, the music enters a territory often traveled by the likes of Loreena McKennitt, with choruses written in 6/8 and the bridge written in 4/4.

What I find most interesting is the material that combines the Eastern thing with the Western thing, because A. I think it sets a good example for the world, and B. I like it when new things are tried. “Love Sheets,” for instance, offers motifs reminiscent of the opening on Miles Davis’ “So What.” But it also shares the characteristic of Middle Eastern clubs and discos (with which I am also familiar). It’s tricky business to take a chance like that, but she does it gracefully and ends up with something new.

This ambitious work covers a lot of territory, which is admirable. The compositions are skillful, the band is very good, and the ideas abound. I don’t think its meant to be a pop record, preferring the interest for artistic documentation. If this were reviewed as a “pop” record, even in the most general sense, I would have to say that it’s too diverse, too wide for the public (the American public anyway). As “art” on its own terms, this CD would make a killer boutique addition to your record collection, fitting nicely into the jazzy, new-age, world-music, torch-singer section.



Kevin Jones

by Raul Sandelin

Don’t be fooled by the Pink Floyd mystronics of the “The Clipping” nor the early-1970s’ Stones/Mick Taylor opening riff on “The Institution,” the first tracks off this self-titled CD. This isn’t a classic rock album...or is it? Neither be fooled by the Nawlins’ bordello rag “Nag Hag” nor by the electronic run at today’s club music in “Industrial Trance.” Kevin Jones isn’t staking a claim to any particular genre but is showing off his versatility. The fifth song, “Mel Ott Blues,” seems to call for a cavalry halt of sorts. Jones is settling in. The band is gone. It’s just Jones and his guitar, priming a Ledbelly-type folk blues that honors the unsung greatness of Mel Ott, New York Giants Hall-of-Famer from the 1920s. It’s a period piece, quirky in its mixing of baseball and barrelhouse. It’s also a story about life, which seems to be where Jones feels most comfortable. He takes us through some 20 songs, most of which follow the rubric settled upon in “Mel Ott Blues.” Jones’ guitar colors in the details of yet another quirky character from the scrapbook of life. Titles such as “Meet Me Where They Play the Blues,” “Hangover Blues,” and “Wooden Nickels” brush streaks of the down home and the down trodden. Ledbelly. Woody. Cisco Houston. That’s where Jones seems to find his mojo. No less than half of the songs nod back to musicians better served by honky tonks, roadhouses, and Okie migrant camps. The other half of this collection might point in a number of musical directions both backwards and forwards. The opening salvos echo back to the glory days of album rock, when musicians were striving for the dense picture and a piece of art more multi-layered, a time when we liked our rock deities to be smarter than we were and fool us over the course of two sides of vinyl. “Love Is on the Way” is part John McLaughlin as Maharishi, part Kurt Cobain In Utero. Its muse is self-referential, a post-structuralist signifier without its signified, yet touchingly beautiful. “Jerry Johnny” is an updated Irish bar chanter sung a cappella, conjuring up a hypothetical soccer match between London and Belfast. “It’s time for a beer, Jerry Johnny.”

The one other dimension not yet mentioned is Jones’ guitar work. Singer, yes. Songwriter, yes. And, just as proficiently, he weaves his six-string flatpicking or Delta slide into almost every composition except the two that feature his equally fine keyboard work. When taken one song at a time, this CD is a series of biographies about the people Jones has met, read about, and invented. As a whole, it is a biography that chronicles Jones’ lucid musical skills, filtered through his soul.

Unfortunately, at the time of this writing, Jones is fighting for his life at Alvarado Hospital after one too many run-ins with the characters he’s dreamt about. This CD is Jones’ gift to all of us. Our greatest gift to him right now would be to listen to it.

Phil Harmonic Sez



“Facts are ventriloquists dummies. Sitting on a wise man’s knee they may be made to utter words of wisdom; elsewhere, they say nothing, or talk nonsense, or indulge in sheer diabolism.”

— Aldous Huxley



MARCH CALENDAR

thursday • 1

Mike Marshall & Hamilton de Holanda, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
John Jorgenson Quintet, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.
Eric James Polyn/Tiffany/Kerri Dopart/Thomas Pellett, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Mermaid's Journey/Citizen Band/Wheel Chair Renegades, Tiki Bar, 1152 Garnet Ave., 9pm.
Cotton Fever, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 2

Toy Piano Band Celebrates Dr. Seuss' B-Day, Geisel Library, UCSD Campus, La Jolla, noon.
Lila Downs, 4th & B, 345 B St., 7pm.
Brenda Panneton/Amy Shamansky/Marie Haddad, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Mike McGill, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.
Sue Palmer Trio, L'Auberge, 1540 Camino Del Mar, 7:30pm.
New City Sinfonia, 1st Unitarian Church, 4190 Front St., 7:30pm.
Boogiemien/Cash'd Out, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7:30pm.
Jim Earp, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.
Band in Black, Cask & Cleaver, 3757 S. Mission Rd., Fallbrook, 8pm.
Andrea Reschke, Borders, 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.
The Clachan Boys, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.
Steven Ybarra, Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio N., 8pm.
ESP, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8:30pm.
Ghost Town Deputies/Erick Macek/Leviticus/Alpine Daze & Boogie Nights/The Gooses, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Starting at the Sun CD Release w/ Will Edwards/Podunk Nowhere/Marie Haddad/Coyote Problem/Barbara Nesbitt/Citizen Band, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 9pm.
Gregory Page, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Michele Lundeen & Blues Streak, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

saturday • 3

S.D. Indie Music Fest (7 stages/70 musical acts), University Ave. between Ray & Utah Streets, North Park, noon-midnight.
Alan James, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.
Wendy Bailey/Annie Dru, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Samite, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Little Big Men, House Concert, University City, 8pm. Reservations: wonderwoman@sanrr.com
Peter Sprague w/ Leonard Patton, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.
Simeon Flick, Aromas Cafe, USD Campus, 8pm.
Teflon, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.
Steve Kowitz/Deborah Smaller & Steve Garber w/ Dave Curtis/Gregory Page/Danny Campbell, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8:30pm.
Peggy Lebo/JR Robison/Aramburo/One Year Yesterday/Green Water District, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Astra Kelly/Justin James/Latham/Audrey Surface/Defect of Character, Triple Crown Pub, 3221 Adams Ave., 8:30pm.
Trevor Davis, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Tom Smerk, De Oro Mine Co., 9924 Campo Rd., Spring Valley, 9pm.

sunday • 4

Ellen Johnson CD Release w/ Rick Helzer/Gunnar Bgoss/Jeanette Kangas, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 4pm.
S.D. Guitar Society Mtg., Old Time Music Store, 2852 University Ave., 4pm.
John Jorgenson, Hornbacher House Concert, Vista, 7pm. Reservations: www.hornbacher-concerts.com
Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh, Holy Trinity Church, 2083 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., 7:30pm.
Band in Black, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.
Cheeky/Tim Mudd, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 5

Albert Hammond Jr., Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Astra Kelly/Sandi Shaner/Bigfellas/Paige Aufhammer, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.

wednesday • 7

Sven-Erik Seaholm, Aztec Cafe, SDSU Campus, 4:30pm.
Ken Peplowski Quartet, S.D. Museum of Art, Balboa Park, 5:30pm.
Hard to Travel Bluegrass Jam, Old Time Music Store, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
Blue Meridian, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 8

Leo Kottke/David Lindley, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Rob Deeze/Shrimphoat Pirates/Kelly/Laura Kuebel, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
4 Way Free/Tommy Edwards, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Mike McGill/Tim Malley/Carl Weathers for Governor/Erik Vice/Russ Wilson, Tiki Bar, 1152 Garnet Ave., 9pm.

friday • 9

Skelpin, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 8pm.
Speak Easy Quartet, Museum of Man, Balboa Park, 6pm.
Melissa Vaughan (6pm)/Alyssa Jacey (8pm) E St. Cafe, 128 W. E St., Encinitas.
Hargo, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.
Stereo Suite/Josh Damigo/Chris Torres, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Randy Phillips & Friends, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 7:30pm.
Winterhawk, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.
Paul Seaforth CD Release w/ Peter Sprague/Bob Magnusson/Duncan Moore, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.
Superstrings, 101 Artists Colony, 90 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 8pm.
Big Rig Deluxe, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.
Terry Matsuoka, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.
Kim Divine, Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio N., 8pm.
The Game w/ Derek Evans/JR Robinson/General Lee, Boat & Ski Club, 2606 N. Mission Bay Dr., 8pm.
Jennifer Cunningham, Borders, 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.
Keith Varon/Sara Green/Northstar Session/Dino/Jon Zucker, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Robin Henkel & Girlfriends, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 10

Balkan Singing Workshop(4:30pm) & Dance Party(8pm), Dancing Unlimited, 4569 30th St.
Robin Henkel Blues Trio, Miramonte Winery, 33410 Rancho California Rd., Temecula, 5:30pm.
Steve Ybarra (6pm)/Julie Mack (8pm) E St. Cafe, 128 W. E St., Encinitas.
Suzanne Shea/Kalimba Kings, Cosmos Cafe, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., 7pm.
Joe Boozie/Paulina Logan, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Jim Earp, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.
Steve White, 101 Artists Colony, 90 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 8pm.
The Donniss Trio, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.
Aramburo/Alyssa Jacey/Drew Gasparini/Steve Ybarra/Silent Partner, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Audrey Session/Poor Bailey/The Mockers, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Chris Duarte, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 9pm.
Band in Black, Hennessey's, 4650 Mission Blvd., 10pm.

sunday • 11

Starting at the Sun CD Release w/ Anna Troy/the Grams/Coyote Problem/Marie Haddad/Blizzard/Christopher Dale/the Shambles/Mark DeCervo & Four Eyes/Citizen Band, Starlight Bowl, Balboa Park, noon.
S.D. Folk Song Society Mtg., Old Time Music Store, 2852 University Ave., 2pm.
Peter Sprague/Keayn Lettau/Bob Magnusson, 101 Artists Colony, 90 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7pm.
El Rayo Guitarworks presents Dan Papaila/Anna Troy/Eleanor England, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 7pm.
Patty Griffin, 4th & B, 345 B St., 7pm.
Steve Gillette & Cindy Mangsen, Templar's Hall, Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Rd., 7pm.
Lowen & Navarro, Dark Thirty House Concert, Lakeside, 7:30pm. 619/443-9622.
Willy Porter, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Low Standards/Steve Beck, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 12

Nathan James/Ben Hernandez, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7:30pm.
Richard Thompson w/ Eliza Gilkyson, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Sara Petite, Clarke House Concert, Normal Heights, 8pm. Reservations: http://clarke-houseconcerts.com
Not Your Mom/Andrew Gil/Josh Wright Project/Audrey Surface/Cowboy Jack, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.

tuesday • 13

Coronado Big Band, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 7pm.
Drum Circle, 101 Artists Colony, 90 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7pm.
Jorge Drexler/Gregory Page, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.

wednesday • 14

Sue Palmer & her Motel Swing Quartet, Croce's Jazz Bar, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Robin Henkel Band, Tio Leo's North, 10787 Camino Ruiz, Mira Mesa, 8pm.
Eric Clapton & Robert Cray, ipayOne Ctr., 3500 Sports Arena Blvd., 7:30pm.
Le Quan Ninh & Frederic Blondy, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.
Joey Pearson/Champion Vinyl/Dawn Mitschele/Austin Jennings/Josh Damigo, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

thursday • 15

Edie Carey/Jane Lui, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Angela Patua/Sharon Hazel/Citizen Band/Cheeky, Tiki Bar, 1152 Garnet Ave., 9pm.

friday • 16

Sue Palmer/Blue Four, Patrick's, 428 F St., 4pm.
Peter Hall (6pm)/Rusty Jones (8pm) E St. Cafe, 128 W. E St., Encinitas.
Aaron Bowen, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.
Larry Robinson CD Release, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Fred Benedetti/George Svoboda, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.
Celtic Celebration w Brian Baynes Band/Eric Rigler/John Christian Edward/Maranna McCloskey, Copley Symphony Hall, 750 B St., 8pm.
Simeon Flick, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.
North County Cowboys, Cask & Cleaver, 3757 S. Mission Rd., Fallbrook, 8pm.
Patty Hall, Borders, 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.
Greg Douglas, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.
Delancey/Erik Vice/Pure Yellow Colour/Matt Ellis, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Peter Mulvey/Nathan Welden, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 17

Temecula Bluegrass Fest w/ Bluegrass Etc/Byron Berline/Sligo Rags/Silverado/Burnett Family/Pac. Ocean Bluegrass/Dave Stamey/Bluegrass Brethren, 11am-7pm. www.temeculacalifornia.com
Johnson, Bosley & Morin, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.
Dave Stamey, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Jim Earp, Upstart Crow, Seaport Village, 835 V. Harbor Dr., 7:30pm.
Celtic Celebration w Brian Baynes Band/Eric Rigler/John Christian Edward/Maranna McCloskey, Copley Symphony Hall, 750 B St., 8pm.
Aaron Bowen, Borders, 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.
Tiamo, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.
Nate Donniss Trio, E St. Cafe, 128 W. E St., Encinitas, 8pm.
Steven Ybarra, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.
The Railheads, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.
Michele Lundeen & Blues Streak, Kaito Restaurant, 1476 Encinitas Blvd., 8pm.
Doug Culp/Jamaica Rafael/The Soulstress/Pam Shaffer, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Allison Lonsdale/SuperUnloader/Travis Larson Band, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Savoy Brown, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 9:30pm.

sunday • 18

Temecula Bluegrass Fest w/ Bluegrass Etc/Byron Berline/Sligo Rags/Silverado/Burnette Family/Pac. Ocean Bluegrass/Dave Stamey/Bluegrass Brethren, 11am-7pm. www.temeculacalifornia.com
Ruby & the Redhots, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 3pm.
Byron Berline, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Chris Ayers/Amy Cooper, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Chet & the Committee, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

monday • 19

Blue Monday Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Astra Kelly/Kim Divine/Grass Gypsies/Donniss Trio/Josh Damigo, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 8pm.

wednesday • 21

Kris Delmhorst, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.
Paolo Nutini, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Mary Grasso/Grass Gypsies/Julia Othmer/Citizen Band, 710 Beach Club, 710 Garnet Ave., 8:40pm.
Robin Henkel/Nathan James/Ben Hernandez/Anna Troy/Byron Hudson, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 22

Rock, Paper Scissors, Athenaeum Studio, 4441 Park Blvd., 7:30pm.
Tim Pahlen/Skyler Stonestreet/Chris Ayer, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Bottle of Justice/Curtis Peoples/Martin Storrow, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Siren's Lure/Bobby Doran/Donniss Trio/Julia Othmer, Tiki Bar, 1152 Garnet Ave., 9pm.
Michele Lundeen & Blues Streak, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

friday • 23

Sheila Sondergard (6pm)/Eve Selis, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 8:30pm.
Big Rig Deluxe, Coyote Bar & Grill, 300 Carlsbad Village Dr., 8:30pm.
Christiane Lucas, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Julia Othmer/Dan Long/JAC/Julia Julez/Guitar Jones, Boat & Ski Club, 2606 N. Mission Bay Dr., 8pm.
Working Cowboy Band, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.

every sunday

Shawn Rohlf & Friends, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.
Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St & San Diego Ave., 12:30-4:30pm.
Sunday Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main, El Cajon, 3pm.
Celtic Ensemble, Twigg's, 4pm.
Open Mic, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7:30pm.
Salsa Night, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 6875b El Cajon Blvd., 7:30pm.
Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss, 8-10pm, KSDS (88.3 FM).
José Sinatra's OB-oke, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9:30pm.
The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice, 10-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every monday

Open Mic, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 7:30pm.
Open Mic, E St. Cafe, 128 W. E St., Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Tango Dancing, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 8pm.

every tuesday

Open Mic, Cosmos Coffee Cafe, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa, 7pm.
Jazz Night, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 7pm.
Jack Tempchin & Friends, Cafe Calypso, 576 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Hot Club of San Diego, Prado Restaurant, Balboa Park, 8pm.
Open Mic, Portugalia, 4839 Newport Ave., 8pm.

every wednesday

Music at Ocean Beach Farmer's Market, Newport Ave., 4-7pm.
Jaime Valle Quartet w/ Bob Magnusson, Tuto Mare, 4365 Executive Dr., La Jolla, 6pm.
Old Timey Night, Folk Arts Rare Records, 2881 Adams Ave., 7pm.
High Society Jazz Band, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 7pm.
Tracy Johnson, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 8pm.
Open Mic, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Open Mic, Dublin Square, 544 4th Ave., 9pm.

every thursday

Robin Henkel, Terra Restaurant, 3900 Block of Vermont St., Hillcrest, 6pm. (except Mar. 22)
Open Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main, El Cajon, 6pm.
Zydeco Night, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa, 7pm.
Joe Rathburn, Folkey Monkey Thursdays, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., Ste. B, 7pm. (except March 1)
Moonlight Serenade Orchestra, Lucky Star Restaurant, 3893 54th St., 7pm.
Wood 'n' Lips Open Mic, Borders Books & Music, 159 Fletcher Pkwy, El Cajon, 7pm.
Open Mic, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7:30pm.
Tokeli, Manhattan Restaurant, 7766 Fay Ave., La Jolla, 8pm.
Open Mic/Family Jam, Rebecca's Coffeehouse, 3015 Juniper St., 8pm.
David Patrone, Croce's Jazz Bar, 802 Fifth Ave., 8pm.
Jazz Jam, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 6875B El Cajon Blvd., 9:30pm.
Swing Thursdays, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.

every friday

California Rangers, McCabe's, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.
Franco Z & Friends, Tommy's Italian Restaurant, 1190 N. 2nd., El Cajon, 6pm.
Jaime Valle-Bob Magnusson Jazz Duo, Harry's Bar & American Grill, 4370 La Jolla Village Dr., 6:30pm.
Amelia Browning, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 7pm.
Jazz Night, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 7pm.
Basin Street Band, Lucky Star Restaurant, 3893 54th St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.
Tom Smerk, De Oro Mine Co., 9924 Campo Rd., Spring Valley, 9pm. (except 9th, 23rd)
Amelia Browning, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 7pm.
Jazz Night, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 7pm.
Basin Street Band, Lucky Star Restaurant, 3893 54th St., 7pm.
Open Mic, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.
Tom Smerk, De Oro Mine Co., 9924 Campo Rd., Spring Valley, 9pm. (except 9th, 23rd)
Vintage Vegas w/ Laura Jane & Franco Z, Martini's Above Fourth, 3940 4th Ave., 6pm.

every saturday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., 12:30-4:30pm.
Vintage Vegas w/ Laura Jane & Franco Z, Martini's Above Fourth, 3940 4th Ave., 6pm.

thursday • 29

Michele à Trois, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Hwy. 101, Leucadia, 7:30pm.
Alex Esther, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Dee Ray, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Ian Allen/Kristi Martel/Bigfellas/Abigail's Attic, Tiki Bar, 1152 Garnet Ave., 9pm.
Sven-Erik Seaholm/Michael Tiernan/Peter Bolland, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Grand Canyon Sundown, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.
Tenacious Dave/Alex DePue, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
JJ Grey & Mfro/Chuck Prophet, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Anna Troy/Derren Raser/Josh Damigo, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 30

Sven-Erik Seaholm/Michael Tiernan/Peter Bolland, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Grand Canyon Sundown, Del Dios Country Store, 20154 Lake Dr., Escondido, 8pm.
Tenacious Dave/Alex DePue, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
JJ Grey & Mfro/Chuck Prophet, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Anna Troy/Derren Raser/Josh Damigo, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 31

Robin Henkel Band, Coyote Bar & Grill, 300 Carlsbad Village Dr., 6:30pm.
Josh Wright/Lindsay White, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.
Novamenco, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Sue Palmer Trio, L'Auberge, 1540 Camino Del Mar, 7:30pm.
Eve Selis, Encinitas House Concert, 7:30pm. Reservations: pattylmorris@earthlink.net
Jim Earp, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.
Yale Strom & Hot Pstromi, Congregation Beth El, 8660 Gilman Dr., La Jolla, 8pm.
Jamie Laval & Ashley Broder, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Rdbu9000/JR Robison/Julie Meyers/Ginger Jackson, Twigg's, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Speak Easy Quartet, Claire de Lune, 2906 University, 8:30pm.
Grand Canyon Sundown/Sliver/Sandi Shaner/The Blevies, Triple Crown Pub, 3221 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Quincy Coleman/Molly Jensen, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
Tom Smerk, De Oro Mine Co., 9924 Campo Rd., Spring Valley, 9pm.

ROBIN HENKEL & GIRLFRIENDS!

Super talented ladies Lisa Sanders, Annie Dru, Anna Troy, and Kelly Rucker join Robin at Lestat's.

Friday, March 9, 9pm

ROBIN HENKEL BAND with HORNS!

Dave Castel de Oro and Troy Jennings on sax, Rodney Ratelle on bass, and Kevin Koch on drums join Robin for an evening of jazz-infused funk, blues, and steel guitar music at Tio Leo's North.

Wednesday, March 14, 8pm



Photo: Liz Abbott

Fishtank Ensemble at Dizzys



Photo: Suzanne Reed

Kenny Edwards @ Heritage East

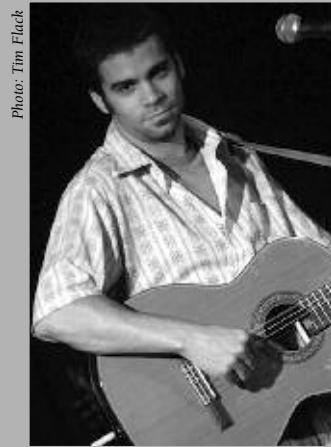


Photo: Tim Flack

Chad Farran @ Podunk Nowhere CD Release



Joe Cardillo @ Twiggs



Josh Damigo @ Kirin Sushi



The Grams @ Lestats



Denis Sluka of the Donnis Trio @ Belly Up



Citizen Band at 710 Beach Club



Not Your Mom's Astra Kelly @ Belly Up



Livingston Taylor @Acoustic Music SD



Donnis Trio's Phil Woodring @ Belly Up



Photo: Liz Abbott

Orquesta Nacional de Mambo @ Dizzys



Brooklyn @ Kirin Sushi



Photo: Liz Abbott

Podunk Nowhere at their CD release, Winston's



Photo: Liz Abbott

Diana Jones @ CanyonFolk



Todd Snider @ the Belly Up



Nate Donnis @ Belly Up



Tim Woods in his Wood 'n' Lips tee-shirt



Joyce Ann @ Kirin Sushi



Ralph Stanley & Ralph Stanley II @ the Belly Up



Cindy Lee Berryhill w/ Marcia Claire @ 101 Artists Colony



Chris Clarke & Sara Petite @ the Belly Up

Steve Covault
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