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SAN DIEGO

TROUBADOUR

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



FREE

February 2009

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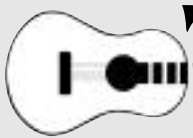
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SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR
Alternative country, Americana, roots, folk, blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass music news

MISSION

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

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

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SUBMITTING YOUR CD FOR REVIEW

If you have a CD you'd like to be considered for review, please send two copies to: San Diego Troubadour, P.O. Box 164, La Jolla, CA 92037.

SUBMITTING A CALENDAR LISTING

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

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

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Dear Troubadour,

I am so happy I've found your paper! For years I have been in rock bands but at heart felt I would rather just be on my own with my voice, songs, and acoustic guitar. I did not think there was a community in San Diego that would have this. Then I stumbled, quite by accident, onto your paper and I am thrilled. You connect acoustic venues, artists, philosophies (I love the "Zen" columns), and music lovers. I will be reading your paper every month and I have begun reading back issues as well.

Thank-You,
Al Venditti aka 'Avi Akiva'



DON TRUESDAIL

Dear San Diego Troubadour,

I am writing regarding the untimely death of a friend and fellow musician, Don Truesdail (pictured above), on January 13. Don grew up in upstate New York and moved to San Diego within the last couple of years. He was a classically trained musician, but he still retained a genuine passion for the language of folk music and the like. Here I mean basically all certifiable music: country, world, jazz, old-time, new-time.

Don was so great that he knew about music as lyric, melody, counterpoint, inspiration, therapy, and history. He was a good friend to me, but what I like so much about the way he made me feel was his wisdom, the irascible dissonance in my own life that he helped me with, and the feeling he gave me of being on

FRIENDS PAY TRIBUTE TO JANEIL ROCK

by Liz Abbott

Cancer sucks. After 13 years of living with breast cancer, gifted jazz musician Janell Rock lost the battle last July. She was working on her second CD right up until the day she died. Luckily for her fans, Sue Palmer was able to finish the CD, which will be released this month as a tribute to Rock as well as a benefit for the Breast Cancer Fund. The event will take place at Dizzy's in downtown San Diego on Sunday, February 22, at 4pm.

Singer, songwriter, and pianist, Janell Rock started her professional career in the alternative nightclubs of Kansas City. Relocating to San Diego, she became a featured pianist at Croce's downtown jazz scene, capturing the Saturday night spotlight. Her creative talent and piano skills stole the show. Invited to travel internationally, Janell per-

the level. That latter quality is rare to find in the highly talented. Maybe it just means something to me.

I know Don performed original material at nearly every local music venue in San Diego; he was also working on a multi-disc music project with each disc having an individual theme. We were also working on a travel and espionage-themed album together called *Pinto Corvere*. I don't know what else to write or if this letter is useful, but I hope it might be a contribution.

Very truly,
Alan L. Silva



Janell Rock

formed in Japan and Sweden as a guest artist. A career move to Seattle placed her lush layered sound squarely on the map. Recognized with songwriting awards both locally and nationally, her remarkable original songs exposed

the heart of her musical ability. Moving beyond simple entertainment, she entered a world of creative expression that brought forth her exceptional debut CD *Quiet Thrill*. This rich compilation of seasoned love songs reveals the passion and wisdom of life's romance. Janell enjoyed

the beach and the sunshine here in San Diego. "She was a health nut," Palmer says, attributing Rock's longevity with the disease to her nutrition and health habits. "She fought cancer until there was nothing left." Palmer says that Rock had written a great deal of material in her final years, which are on her new CD. "She was processing artistically while she was essentially dying . . . Some of the songs are so edgy and profound."

For those of us who have been lucky enough to survive cancer, we will remember Janell Rock.



Sue Palmer

The Janell Rock Tribute/CD Release/Breast Cancer Benefit, featuring Sue Palmer and her Motel Swing Orchestra, Candy Kane, Laura Jane, Wendy Dewitt, and other special guests will be held at Dizzy's, located in the San Diego Wine & Culinary Center, 200 Harbor Dr., in downtown San Diego, on Sunday, February 22, 4-7pm. Admission is \$20. All of the proceeds will go to the Breast Cancer Foundation, of whom Ms. Rock was an avid supporter. Its mission is to identify and advocate for the elimination of the environmental and other preventable causes of the disease.



Janell and Sue make a toast.

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Geoff Muldaur Sweeps Up The Blues

by Terry Roland

Have you ever made a promise to someone? One that may have sounded impossible, even frivolous, on the face of it, but you knew in your heart that it had to be kept? Maybe someone asked for a favor that didn't make sense to the visible world yet made perfect sense to you at a gut level. Seemingly absurd pilgrimages and treks have been undertaken for centuries, from Haiku journeys to the multitudes who gathered at the gates of Graceland in August of 1977. One southern Gothic-haunted night 40 years ago, young blues man Geoff Muldaur challenged some musician friends to do the great Blind Lemon Jefferson the very favor he requested in his song. "See that my grave is kept clean." So Geoff and friends bought brooms and headed for East Texas in search of the grave of Blind Lemon Jefferson for some house cleaning. It took more than one trip, so it took more than one song to tell the story.

And isn't this the way of things? In Geoff Muldaur's career, as with so many others who have devoted their lives to preserving and continuing the legacy of some of the greatest songwriters and musicians of the 20th century, haven't there been similar musical road trips through the dusty music of Mississippi backyards, front porches, and share-cropped cotton fields? Like Muldaur's youthful adventure to Jefferson's grave, he has also swept clean the dust that has obscured the music of these now historic and ancient blues artists, giving a voice to a people who were oppressed by racial hatred, economic hardships, injustice, and disability.

In this sense, Muldaur has been like a clean window through which we've been able to see and hear the best of the last century of undiscovered gems. And in some sense, all it took was curiosity, the desire to do a favor for a friend and the

purchase of a broom. Metaphorically speaking, of course.

However, in his pursuit of great American music, Muldaur has managed to transcend his musical ancestry into his own distinctive artistry. He is a talented and skilled acoustic blues guitarist with roots in jug band, Piedmont, and Mississippi Delta blues influences. From these distinctive roots he has created a style that has influenced a multitude of other artists including Bonnie Raitt, John Sebastian, John Cale, Richard Thompson, and David Lindley. Even Jerry Garcia, when he heard Jim Kweskin Jug Band's first album, wasted no time in forming a jug band of his own. So, you might say, the music was a coast-to-coast success at least among the small circle of enthusiasts.

With a career as diverse as the American music he has championed, Muldaur has managed to be involved in some of the most original and interesting projects while following his own particular muse in lieu of commercial pursuits. Like many of today's veterans from the folk and blues movement of the sixties, he has raised his home-grown legacy in the form of his family.

Rather than finding his roots on the usual breeding ground for many of his contemporary peers in the basket houses and dingy clubs of Greenwich Village, Muldaur made his name in his home town of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and then moved on to the pre-Dylan/Band and festival days of Woodstock, New York. As a young blues enthusiast and player, Muldaur found his breakthrough moment when in 1963, Jim Kweskin, another acoustic blues talent, passed through Boston. At the same time the Beatles were electrifying the nation with revitalized rock and roll, Kweskin and Muldaur discovered a musical chemistry that would equally influence generations of converts to the pure sound of folk-blues and jug band music. The style

would later be picked up by John Sebastian and Zal Yanovsky who would take the music through the Greenwich Village scene Muldaur had managed to avoid, and on to the national charts as the Lovin' Spoonful. Indeed, John Sebastian has described Muldaur as "The Lovin' Spoonful's favorite singer." Today, Sebastian continues to sing Geoff's praises and maintains his own jug band, simply named the J-Band.

The fateful 1963 rendezvous of Kweskin and Muldaur spawned the Jim Kweskin Jug Band, who released a series of albums between 1963 and 1971. While the band never achieved popular success, they provided a much needed education in the style of the homemade sound called jug band. The music was known for using handmade and household instruments (like a whiskey jug) to make music. Formed between the 1930s and 1940s, the music festively combined rag-time, blues, folk, country, and jazz. It took a few decades later for a young New Englander, Geoff Muldaur, to seek out the music of such artists as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Leadbelly, Mississippi John Hurt, and Yank Rachell.

The Kweskin Jug Band can also be credited with helping launch the careers of Muldaur's first wife, Maria Muldaur, and fiddle player Richard Greene.

In 1973, after the Kweskin Band split up, Muldaur found his way to Paul Butterfield's Better Days band, which emphasized a more acoustic sound than the harmonica man had cultivated during the 1960s. It was a sound perfect for Muldaur's skill and talent. These sessions represent some of the best tracks ever recorded by Butterfield. Muldaur's contribution to the two albums completed by the band are immeasurable.

During the mid-1970s Muldaur paved his own unique solo path. Through the last four decades he has managed to forge a signature style that has blended the best



Geoff Muldaur

of blue-eyed country-soul with a smooth easy folk blues that would make Blind Lemon break out in a whiskey-stained grin. All of this and his original, lyric-driven, melodic songwriting creates an irresistible combination. Muldaur's solo work includes albums with Maria Muldaur, 1987's *Sweet Potato*, 1998's *Password*, and *The Secret Handshake*. Along the way, he composed the title song for Terry Gilliam's classic film *Brazil*.

Unlike many singer-songwriters who have come around over the last 50 years who are great with their lyrics, melodies, and sometimes even vocals, they fit into that old cliché...something about the sum of their parts. In other words, someone like Bob Dylan may not be the best vocalist or instrumentalist, but man, can he write himself a song. Then, there's Leonard Cohen, who is basically a poet with a great gravelly speaking voice, but as was the case in New York City when he recorded his first album, he had to enlist musicians to help with melody and music.

An artist like Geoff Muldaur, however, didn't need to make reference to the sum of parts or any other disclaimer of his style. His lyrics, melodies, themes, vocal ability, and instrumental talent are an even match, giving his audience a full, Renaissance-like artist who can move from early Americana bringing to mind Stephen Foster, echo the blue-eyed soul of Ray Charles, and pay a clear-eyed tribute to Hank Williams and Mississippi John Hurt, all in one album or solo concert.

As a most durable artist of any era, it seems increasingly true of the roots, blues, folk and country musicians of the 1960s, Geoff Muldaur finds himself today in the enviable position of having his legacy continued not only by the young talent pursuing their own vocation in folk-blues but also by his two daughters, who now have their own respective careers in music. Clare, who is married to French songwriter-musician Oliver Manchon, is the lead singer for Clare and the Reasons. His second daughter, Jenn, is currently working with David Byrne.

Today, Muldaur keeps himself busy with new recording projects and as a much in-demand live performer. He is currently working on a new album titled *Geoff Muldaur presents the Texas Shiek's*.

His concerts are front porch affairs with the performer comfortably seated and sounding at times like a full band as he intricately fingerpicks his unique style of country-blues. From his knowledge of the music he's embraced and his own road tales, he weaves in unique stories. This is the source of his early epiphany with blues father Blind Lemon Jefferson.

Among his finest songs, "Searching for Blind Lemon, Parts One and Two" captures a youth's intuitive desire to make a symbolic gesture for his musical hero. Of course, it makes perfect sense to any blues musician, under the influence or not, to make the trip to sweep off Blind Lemon's grave. If you take your blues seriously, that is. This story, Muldaur made into a beautifully humorous and picturesque, two-part epic blues masterpiece. It is such a well-told story in song, it's worthy of a short story and one that could've been written by Flannery O'Connor. Part one of the story can be found on the CD *Secret Handshake*, while Part 2 completes the story on *Password*.

As he tells the story of finally finding Blind Lemon's grave, he describes an eastern storm heading out of Fort Worth and then the clarity that comes in the aftermath arrives as he finds the grave site, broom in hand, ready to sweep.

*Well, we seen a little island
way across the flowery field
when we ran over to it,
could hear that church bell begin to peel
fly catchers jumpin'
sweet smells in the air
when we found Blind Lemon,
his sister and mom were there.
We got to find Blind Lemon
see that his grave is kept clean.*

So it goes in the musical life of Geoff Muldaur. What began as a sincere, off-beat attempt to do a song-requested favor for a blues mentor, resulted in providing continuity to a musical form that could have been left behind in a dirty grave. Instead, Muldaur brought those sweet smells to the desolate Texas air, created no doubt, and by the broom sweeping he brought as he found joy in doing a favor for the late, great Blind Lemon Jefferson.

See Geoff Muldaur in concert at Acoustic Music San Diego on Saturday, February 21, 7:30pm.



Bart Mendoza's column "FYI," a compilation of various bits of local music news, has found a new home on the Troubadour website, beginning this month. See for yourself at www.sandiegotroubadour.com

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Recordially, Lou Curtiss

Photo: Bill Richardson



Lou Curtiss

A NEW ERA

Ding Dong, Dubya's Gone, Gone Away to Tex-I-Ay, Ding Dong, Ole Georgie Bush is Gone

Hi ho, the Merriment, Obama is our president, Ding Dong, Ole Georgie Bush is Gone

Music about presidents and other politicians go back a long way. Even “Yankee Doodle” mentioned George Washington in the second verse (when he was still only a general) and even candidates who lost had campaign songs that seem to survive among folksong collectors (at least). Who can forget “Hurrah Hurrah, the Country's Risin’, Henry Clay and Frelinghuisen” or “Al Smith Nominated for President, My Darling”? There are a couple of collections of these songs (one real good one by veteran folk songster Oscar Brand on the Smithsonian Folkways label) that are worth having in any collection. That's what this column is about, not presidents but rather bits and pieces about collections and collecting. The grant I received is to archive the series of music festivals that I had the opportunity to book and program and tape (mostly), including the 20 San Diego Folk Festivals from 1967 to 1987, the Adams Ave. Roots Festivals and

the Adams Ave. Street Fairs (from 1994 thru 2006), four San Diego Blues Festivals (we never seemed to get that one off the ground although they were grand affairs), and some 300 concerts at Folk Arts Rare Records, Orango's, and various other hot spots over the years. The tapes are being digitized as we speak with copies going to the Library of Congress, the UCLA Dept. of ethnomusicology (courtesy of those Grammy folks, who gave us the grant and hopefully will give us a second to continue the work) and a complete set remaining here in San Diego. The years covered by the first grant include the first nine Folk Festivals and concerts at Folk Arts Rare Records (from 1967-1975). Concerts taped at the Sign of the Sun Bookstore in the very early '60s, a collection of tapes donated by Sam Hinton including radio shows and concerts he presented here in San Diego and elsewhere, and a pile of field recordings made by myself at other festivals, concerts (including the Sweets Mill Folk Festival, the Fresno Folk Festival, and lots of living room concerts). The second grant will continue the work from the tenth Folk Festival onward, a series of concerts at In the Alley coffeehouse in Escondido, more from Sweets Mill, and more concerts at Folk Arts and Orango's

and elsewhere. There are other places I'm looking for material. Anything I don't have recorded at the Heritage. There should be tapes of Grady Tuck, Pam Ostergren, Cliff Nimen and Hilary, Dave Campbell, Bob White, Corky Woerner, John Yount, A Vitamin, Doug McKee and Pat Moss, Pam Baker Smith, the Scottsville Squirrel Barkers, Bruce Frye, Zoya Smithton, Claire Hart, and a whole lot more that I'm not recalling at the moment. Also tapes from shows at the Candy Company, the Old Time Cafe, and Drowsy Maggies. A musical history of acoustic music in the San Diego area (with a bent toward the traditional) is what I'm looking for. I'd be pleased to get material recorded at some of San Diego's early coffee houses like the Upper Cellar, the Ballad Man, Circe's Cup, the Zodiac, La Boheme, the Voodoo Man, the Land of Oden, the Zen Coffee House and Motorcycle Repair Shop, the Bifrost Bridge, the Why Knot, Jordan's Alley, Pearl Street West, or some of the bars that featured folksongs like the Kontiki, and others.

I'll be going to Washington D.C. in May to a conference on archiving and presenting traditional music. It's kind of strange to be asked to talk about this

thing that I've spent most of my life doing, at a time when I've been relieved of that responsibility here in San Diego, but I'll try to tell these people about the importance of traditional music and roots and FolkLife Festivals and concerts and the importance of archiving on tape (or by whatever means you have) the music presented. At a time when the powers that be (the folks with the money) often have little or no understanding of the need to keep the old traditions alive, it's good that folks like the Grammy people take an interest in what we, and people like us, have done. Part of the digitization project has allowed me to listen to music that I haven't heard for 40 years and hopefully in the future I'll be able to share a bunch of that music with people who have the same interests in it that I do. Just this past week I've been listening to music from the 1974 Folk Festival that included medicine show songster and early rockabilly artist Harmonica Frank Floyd, Vern Williams and Ray Parks and some startlingly good bluegrass, Frankie Armstrong, England's great ballad and topical song singer, the Strange Creek Singers, which included Mike Seeger, Hazel Dickens, Alice Gerrard, Tracy Schwarz, and Lamar Grier plus Seattle's Old Hat Band and Hollendale Mississippi's Sam Chatmon. Quite a treat all. It makes me realize why I want to continue to do my Mickey Rooney-Judy

Garland “Put on a Show” thing here in San Diego. Hopefully I'll get to do that again here someday. Meanwhile I'll continue to write, archive, play my autoharp when asked (and sometimes when I'm not), and dig up the rarest of the rare (and some not so rare) old time phonograph records. I just found a copy of “Sobbin' Blues” by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (that's the one with Jelly Roll Morton on piano). It's the original Gennett 5219. Pretty good for San Diego in 2009. Docks lists that one at between \$150 and \$200. Not bad. All in one week I find this record, Obama is inaugurated, and the *San Diego Union* runs Pete Seeger's picture on the Front page. Pretty good week.

Hurrah, Hurrah, Good Times Are Back Again, For me and you, our Hope, it never was in vain.

Hi ho, the Merriment, Obama is our president, Ding Dong, Ole Georgie Bush is Gone
Recordially,
Lou Curtiss

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International Pop Overthrow Adds San Diego to its Musical Itinerary

by Steve Thorn

After 11 years of concerts in venues as famous as Doug Weston's Troubadour in West Hollywood and The Cavern Club in Liverpool, the International Pop Overthrow Festival is coming to San Diego.

Living up to its title, this global summit meeting of new and veteran musical artists in the genres of power pop, folk, Americana, alternative, and garage will be held over the weekend of February 20-22 at O'Connell's Pub in Bay Park. International Pop Overthrow (or IPO) founder and CEO David Bash had been contemplating doing a festival in San Diego, only a few hours from the IPO home office in Sherman Oaks.

"The purpose of IPO coming to San Diego is "it's about time!" San Diego has a great pop scene, with so many cool power pop, garage, mod, and melodic rock bands," said Bash. "Plus, it's only a hop, skip, and a jump from L.A. To quote Chuck D, someone should 'slap me right here' for not having brought the festival to San Diego sooner!"

Two artists are making more than a hop, skip, and a jump in order to get to San Diego on time at IPO. Juan Mazzola, who performs as an acoustic act called Baby Scream, is originally from Argentina but now resides in London. Representing the Emerald Isle will be the delightfully irreverent We Should Be Dead from Limerick (as in "There once was a band from...."), Ireland.

Bands from other parts of the Golden State heading south for the festival are San Francisco's Bobbleheads, whose Saturday morning cartoon approach to songwriting dazzles audiences, and Santa Barbara veteran power pop group the Tearaways. IPO's hometown of Los Angeles will feature teen band Blackout 101 and the alternative pop of the Cherry Bluestorms.

The bulk of the artists will be from our fair city, including several who have appeared in the pages of the Troubadour: alternative folk singer Cindy Lee Berryhill, the blues rock of the Anna Troy Band, musician-producer Sven-Erik Seaholm, power pop bands the Shambles and Suite 100, glam rockers Roxy Monoxide, and Four Eyes (featuring Rockola guitarist Mark DeCervo).

Other local talents appearing will be acoustic/electronica artist Jed, singer-songwriter Wendy Bailey, the alternative pop of the Bigfellas, transplanted Brit Dave Humphries and his band, the power pop of the Minor Keys, internationally renowned



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Cindy Lee Berryhill



Photo: Tyler Shields

Anna Troy Band



Wendy Bailey

garage rockers the Loons, power pop bands the Modlins and the Shake-ups, alternative/garage group the Shamey Jays, and the power pop of Windsor.

IPO: HOW IT WORKS

Schedule: February 20 to 22; begins 7:30pm on Friday and Saturday nights; 4:30pm on Sunday afternoon.

Venue: O'Connell's, 1310 Morena Blvd., San Diego, CA 92110 (619) 276-5637 Ages 21 and up.

Countries musically represented: Argentina, England, Ireland, United States.

Admission: \$8 per night.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20

7:30pm Jed
8pm Wendy Bailey
8:30pm The Tearaways
9pm The Shake-Ups
9:30pm Suite 100
10pm The Cherry Bluestorms
10:30pm Sven-Erik Seaholm
11pm Four Eyes

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21

7:30pm Blackout 101
8pm Windsor
8:30pm The Minor Keys
9pm We Should Be Dead
9:30pm Roxy Monoxide
10pm Cindy Lee Berryhill
11pm The Loons

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

4:30pm Baby Scream
5pm The Bigfellas
5:30pm The Bobbleheads
6pm The Dave Humphries Band
6:30pm The Anna Troy Band
7pm The Shamey Jays
7:30pm The Modlins
8pm The Shambles

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PIANO: The Other Stringed Instrument

by Derrick Fields

Most of the folks in the sphere of the *San Diego Troubadour* are interested in the guitar. I am no exception, but old pianos, particularly the upright grands, have always fascinated me. I always notice them, each a formidable presence and with a huge sound. The ones I prefer tend to be at least 54 inches tall and most were built between 1895 and 1920. They seem so complex and I imagine almost impossible to build. I am puzzled at how many manufacturers produced them. Literally, thousands. Names like Starr, Gannet, Knabe, and Steinway graced the pianos with identifying logos above the ivory keys. A recently acquired Jesse French piano from around 1910 launched me on a quest to understand more about this particular piano company. The fact that I thought it an obscure brand added to my surprise to learn that in the year 1900 alone, Jesse French sold 6,000 pianos.

My piano, by this manufacturer, which I had never encountered, has a simple mission-styled case, solidly crafted in tiger oak. It does seem to be a medium quality piano and is no Steinway, but it is a blast to play and I find it transporting to sit down awhile and just rattle those keys.

I bought my first piano about 25 years ago, a 1918 Steinway. It needed work, inside and out, but what a sound it produced! I found a highly-recommended restorer of pianos – Abel Sanchez from the Piano Place. I had called the Steinway dealer, inquiring about repairs and have never regretted following their recommendation to let Abel restore that instrument. He turned it back into a beauty. Somewhere, along the way, that piano went to another lucky owner, but I played it for 10 years or more. I got by with electric pianos for awhile, and I do have a Hammond organ, which, with the Leslie speaker, rivals anything I have ever played. Still, I began to long for the feel, mechanical action, and resonance of a real acoustic piano. My budget and my preference for the old uprights led me to the Jesse French piano. It was the first nice, cheap, big, old upright I could find.

There was a period in American popular music called the Ragtime era. From about 1897-1917, you might say that ragtime was the rock and roll of the day. It was the happening thing and it was commercial. Selling sheet music was a big part of the business, with piano-based music at the height of its popularity. Homes, hotels, bars, restaurants, and schools had pianos.

About 120 years ago, there was a musical empire based around a gigantic music retailer based in Nashville. The Jesse French Piano and Organ Company had stores in Nashville, Memphis, St. Louis, and other cities, with an additional traveling sales force of 100 salesmen. They decided to manufacture their own line of pianos and, in 1893, the company gained controlling interest in the first piano company west of the Allegheny mountains – the old Starr Piano Company. My Jesse French and Sons piano has New Castle, Indiana, stamped on the soundboard. In 1920, Mr. Jesse French appears to have been bought out by his two brothers-in-law. The Starr Piano Company

lasted until 1952. Gannett Records was an early recording enterprise that was related to the French empire as well. Pianos from the Jesse French factory included instruments branded with the names Starr, Jesse French, Royal, Gennett, Coronado, and Remington.

Well, a story was unfolding. Jesse French had come to America and began selling instruments as a traveling salesman around the time of the Civil War. He had daughters who each married a man who joined the company and a dynasty grew. A manager at the company named John Houck married Julia French. Their son Oliver

Kershner Houck began the O.K. Houck & Co. in 1883. Now, in the early 1950s, one of rock and roll's first music stores was located in Memphis. It was the A.O. Houck Piano Company. A premium retailer of musical instruments since the turn of the century, the store's

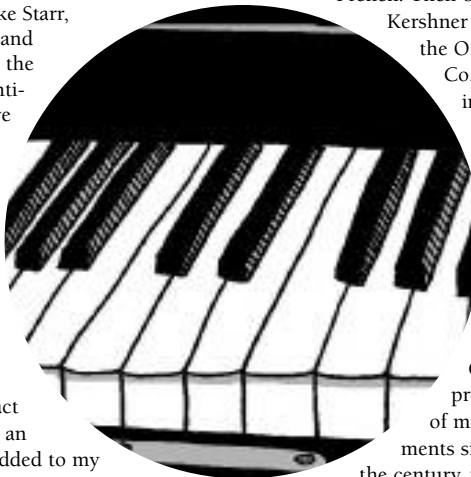
management decided in the '50s to focus on the emerging market for guitars. They carried a fine array of name brands, such as Gibson, Fender, Martin, Gretsch, and Rickenbacker. Of course, they had pianos, too.

So, by the 1950s, still in family ownership, the store began a unique contribution to history. In September of 1955, Elvis bought his first piano there. It was a used upright. He bought his first Martin guitar there, too. It was a 000-D18. He traded it in a year later for his next Martin, a used D18. Next was a D28. Scotty Moore, Elvis' bandmate, bought his 1953 Gibson ES295 there. Elvis also bought a bass for his other band member, bassist Bill Black. Scotty traded his ES295 for a Gibson L5. Through Gibson and Houck's, Scotty got Elvis that Gibson J200 many have seen (displayed at Graceland), with "Elvis" on the guitar. Gibson wanted to get Elvis away from Martin and who can blame them?

Other greats of the era patronized the store. B.B. King bought a guitar named "Lucille" there. Luther Perkins, who played behind Johnny Cash, was able to use his repo'd '55 Fender Esquire because Houck's let him. The guitar was being held until he could catch up on the payments. Luther asked to be able to use the guitar to cut a record one night and he returned the instrument first thing the next morning. "I Walk the Line" was recorded at Sun Records that night and was Johnny Cash's first number one record. By 1967, Houck's was gone.

Here some 40 years later, sitting in California at the keyboard of my old upright, I think of the story my piano brought along. It reminds me of the passing of once great names in commerce. Studebaker, a car manufacturer, had its beginnings in the manufacture of the wagons used in the great migration to America's frontier. Also with beginnings in the 1800s, that company, too, gave up the ghost in the 1960s.

I want to thank Able Sanchez of the Piano Place. He brought the old upright to my attention. He is the kind of fellow who might mention that he restored a piano for Patty Page, while treating you as if you were no less special. If you are looking for anything related to the piano, call him. Buying, selling, restoring, repairing, tuning, or moving a piano, I would begin with Abel.



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Going Somewhere with PODUNK NOWHERE

by Mike Alvarez

Whether it was kismet, fate, or sheer coincidence that brought them together, musical spouses Heather Marie and Johnny Janiga arrived separately from elsewhere and are now moving forward as Podunk Nowhere. Their name, coined by Heather Marie after a phrase her grandmother often used, derives from the fact that each came to Southern California from less cosmopolitan origins, she from Indiana and he from upstate New York. As their band bio describes it, “Every state has a Podunk Nowhere...it’s that little one-horse town on the outskirts of nothing, where you’re lucky to find a gas station let alone a place to get a cold beer and a burger.” Such is the imagery that informs their art. The cover of their latest CD *Based on a True Story* shows the couple posed in front of a trailer, seemingly on the unending highway to their next gig.

The story of their 2003 meeting is the stuff of local legend. They literally passed each other on the streets of Ocean Beach while walking with friends. These friends happened to know each other and stopped to chat. As the conversation turned to music, Johnny and Heather Marie found that they shared much common ground. So much so that they became instant writing partners and have been playing together ever since. Upon meeting them, one is struck not only by their enthusiasm and optimism but also by how well-matched they are. It is not at all uncommon for one to start a thought and for the other to complete it without missing a beat. As Heather Marie relates, “We were writing music as friends for a couple of months before we got married.” Johnny adds, “At that time we hardly knew each other as people, but we were already connected by our love of making music. Some people said we wouldn’t last six months but here we are, still together six years later!” She continues, “We still have the same connection musically and emotionally. We have this same desire and love for music. We understand it together.”

They started with the local open mic circuit and quickly became regular performers at many San Diego bars and coffee houses. Among their favorites are the Whistle Stop in South Park and Winston’s in Ocean Beach, where they participated in such shows as Cashed Out, Diva Night, and the Tom Petty Tribute. They have since expanded their territory to include Los Angeles, with gigs at prestigious venues like the Rainbow Room and Zen Sushi, though Johnny quips that “playing in L.A. is like running for president without ever having been a politician!” A recent tour took them from San Diego to Seattle and they have also performed a number of dates in Arizona. Currently they are considering some shows on the East Coast. Johnny says with a mixture of gravity and humor that “you learn a lot by being on the road.” Accounts of flat tires, scary motels, and nearly empty venues stand side-by-side with triumphant tales of magical moments with receptive crowds and friendly bartenders.

Their songs are written with a firm foundation of chords and melodies so that they can be performed live by an acoustic duo, which is how audiences are most likely to encounter them. Johnny insists that “it

has to stand up live, just me and her. Then we can bring other things to it.” Nevertheless, Heather Marie points out, “We are actively seeking a rhythm section.” Citing a wide range of influences, including PJ. Harvey, Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac, and the Beatles, they make an eclectic blend of alternative rock, folk, and Americana, propelled by Heather Marie’s fluid vocals and Johnny’s distinctively economical guitar style. He actually played a healthy amount of metal and punk in his time, though he readily admits, “I’ve always been a closet acoustic player!” Interestingly, he confesses that in Podunk Nowhere’s early days, “I was scared to death of playing acoustically.” Journalists have made comparisons to Portishead, Lucinda Williams, and Wilco, but while they are flattered by this, Podunk Nowhere’s minimalist sound remains quite unique. Recorded and co-produced by the Grams’ Chuck Schiele, their first self-titled CD is a direct reflection of this stripped-down approach. Both emphatically agree that Schiele was the first person to say he believed in what they were doing. Their creative and personal friendship endures to this day.

For *Based on a True Story*, they took full advantage of the recording studio to create expansive arrangements that include a full rhythm section, multiple guitars, and additional instruments. “We called in lots of solid people,” says Johnny. The album was recorded at East County’s venerable Strate Sound Studios with Alan Sanderson engineering and co-producing. The lineup of musicians is impressive. Drummer George Bernardo’s credits include Chuck Berry, Spencer Davis, and Brian Howe’s Bad Company as well as a regular gig at Universal Studios. Bassist Doug Lunn lists such talents as Sting, Bruce Springsteen, and Mike Keneally on his musical resume. Rounding out the studio lineup are keyboardist Ben Moore and vocalists Matt Molarius and Catherine Beeks. Podunk

Nowhere take obvious pride at having such gifted individuals play their music. Johnny singles out Lunn in particular, revealing how humbling it is to have such a noteworthy player appreciate what they are doing musically.

Heather Marie confesses that “we struggle with our artistic identity. We’re sensitive artists who can sometimes be blocked by insecurity.” Johnny is in total agreement stating, “We never know when something is finished. The next project always has to be bigger and better.” Yet despite such feelings, they both believe very strongly in their art. After taking a step back and listening to their latest recording, Johnny sometimes has to ask “why isn’t this taking off?” As a self-managed act, they are aware of the value of networking and have made connections in the rock and alt-country scenes. As Heather Marie puts it, “Slipping into the right scene is key, but for a duo like us, I don’t know if that scene exists!” Johnny adds, “You need the support of local radio.” While he allows that some stations do very well by showcasing local talent during their broadcasts, he laments that it’s difficult if not impossible to get on mainstream playlists. “Sometimes it seems you have to go somewhere else to find success before you’re accepted here.”

Podunk Nowhere’s journey has not been without its trials. They are very forthcoming about their newfound sobriety. Years of partying had taken their toll, but they now proudly assert that they have not touched alcohol or drugs for months and have no plans to do so in the future. Johnny earnestly states, “It got to the point where we were no longer enjoying the performance because we were looking forward to the party afterward. Without alcohol, live performance has an edge. And you remember it.” According to Heather Marie “It was no longer about having a good time. It was about self-destruction. We got sucked into that lifestyle. We spent lots of time at pre- and post-parties trying to find acceptance.

Photo: Tim Flack



Johnny & Heather Marie Janiga of Podunk Nowhere

We got lost in that whole process.” Johnny wryly adds, “As it turned out, people remembered the parties but forgot to come to the gigs!” He wistfully recalls the friends who went away when the partying stopped. “The only thing we had in common with them was drinking.” Yet through it all, they had a friend in Tim Flack who did the photography and layout work for their CD. They consider him to be their “go-to guy” and are eager to express their appreciation not only for his talent but for his stalwart friendship as well.

As Heather Marie blissfully asserts, “We are taking music back to ourselves. We have a lot of new material that we enjoy playing!” Johnny is in total agreement. “We’re invigorated in our living room. We can’t wait to play for people. It’s not that we’re looking for people to like our music – we already like it. But we want to share it.”

Based on a True Story is exactly what its title suggests. “We write about us, not the outside world.” After casting aside their demons, Johnny and Heather Marie Janiga are dreaming again. Both agree that they communicate better. As a result, they are truly composing songs together and proceeding forward with sharper focus. He can open up her journal and create a song. She is now helping with guitar licks and chords, a task that was once almost exclusively Johnny’s. Significantly, Johnny says that Heather Marie has inspired him to sing. She beams as she declares, “He has a great voice. We’re looking forward to adding it to our musical palette.” Podunk Nowhere is back on track with new ideas, new sounds, and a fresh new outlook. She contentedly says, “Now it’s more about making the music,” to which he adds, “Everything else is a bonus.”

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by Bart Mendoza

It may be a cliché, but in this case it's true. Simply stated, pianist Mike Wofford and flutist Holly Hofmann make beautiful music together.

Married since 2000, the two jazz legends' musical union goes back to the mid-eighties when Hofmann first arrived in San Diego from Colorado, and both could be found on local club stages. Their first recording together in 1989 was also Hofmann's debut album and, since then, the two have never looked back. What truly makes this relationship special is the love and respect they show for one another and their work. It's a constant in their conversation and it translates into their music. It's no surprise that with the hundreds of albums in their respective discographies, they both independently chose the same album as their all time favorite, and it's a duet disc.

MIKE WOFFORD

Always in the midst of some sort of musical project, this afternoon Mike Wofford is working on a big band chart to be used at the 37th Annual National Flute Association Convention held in New York this summer. It's just the latest in a string of accomplishments that make up one of the most impressive resumes of any musician to ever call San Diego home. Known as a consummate jazz pianist, Wofford has worked with Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughn, recorded with Shelly Manne, Shorty Rogers, and Mundell Lowe, to name just a few jazz icons. But a little further under the radar, he's also been a part of major recordings by rock artists including Harry Nilsson, Joan Baez, the Four Tops, and dozens of others. Notably, he was part of the legendary 1973 John Lennon-Phil Spector "Back to Mono" sessions that yielded Lennon's 1975 *Rock 'n' Roll* album, recording four sessions with the ex-Beatle during his infamous "lost weekend." With more than 300 albums in his discography, and more being added yearly, Wofford has given up trying to keep track. He remains as prolific as ever.

Born on February 28, 1938, in San Antonio, Texas, Wofford's family relocated to San Diego when he was still a toddler. It wasn't long before music began to fascinate him. "I started piano lessons when I was seven with a neighborhood teacher," Wofford recalled. "There were a lot of them then, almost every neighborhood had a piano teacher." Initially, at least, piano was just something he did for fun. "I was much too young to be thinking about careers, so it was just kind of a hobby." Wofford had always been a fan of classical music, but by the time he reached Point Loma High School, circa 1956, jazz was his muse. "I started hearing Chet Baker, Gerry Mulligan, and some of the great people on the West Coast and also Charlie Parker and the greats from the East Coast. I started listening to jazz records that were coming out; they completely captivated me and they have ever since."

Part of a group of teenage jazz musicians from area high schools that included such legends as John Guerin (see *San Diego Troubadour*, December 2007), Don Sleet and Gary Lefebvre, Wofford immersed himself in the then burgeoning local music scene. "By the time I was a junior in high school, I was probably playing two or three jobs a week at night," he remembered. "I wasn't old enough to get into night clubs per se, but there was still a lot of work around San Diego where you didn't have to be of age, you know, the local Moose Lodge and things like that." He also played in bands whose staple gigs were high school dances and proms and fraternity parties, finally joining the musicians union in his senior year.

The fact that so many young players of note emerged together from San Diego within this time frame is impressive, but Wofford notes that "there were a lot of older players that developed here, like Harold Land [see *San Diego Troubadour*, December 2003] and Leon Pettis, who worked with Nat Cole and so on. We were the next generation coming behind them." He considers San Diego to have been fertile ground for artists in those days. "Of course, it's hard to imagine now, but there were a lot of night clubs going six or seven nights a week, with a lot of jazz. It's hard to even conceive of now, it's such a different world."

While acknowledging that the era has earned its legendary status, "at the time, we were basically just kids trying to have a good time," he remarked. "When you're that age you don't attach too much significance to things. We were just having a great time and I was trying to learn as much as I could from the 'older' players." He laughs at the memory. "I mean *slightly* older maybe by a couple of years, like Daniel Jackson [see *San Diego Troubadour*, October 2007]. He was already a wonderful player when we were just trying to figure it all out. We just tried to absorb as much and learn as much as we could. It didn't occur to me until years later what a fortunate thing it was that we were all a part of that scene and had each other to learn from."

Upon graduation from Point Loma High, he headed to Los Angeles to investigate the jazz scene. "It was kind of daunting going to L.A. . It was a huge thing at the time to go up there. San Diego was such a small town by comparison back then." Working by day at Hughes Aircraft, he headed out to jam sessions by night. Slightly discouraged, he moved back to San Diego, but the stay wouldn't be long. In 1961 he was called to play at the famed jazz club, the Lighthouse in Hermosa Beach

Wofford, Don Sleet, John Guerin, Gary Lefebvre, and some others had actually taken part in a college jazz band competition at the club previously and had made an impression. "It was a week-long thing and they gave out awards. We said we were from San Diego State to get into the contest, but of course were still in high school."

House band leader Howard Rumsey remembered Wofford and asked him to join the band when a position came up. "That was when I started to actually started to lay down roots in Los Angeles," he said.

In addition to playing jazz in area venues, Wofford soon found himself in demand for sessions, particularly for television. "I never really intended to do television work, I just kind of fell into it," he said. "There was so much music being recorded in those days, in both television and motion pictures, that there was an awful lot of studio work." His entry into cinema came via the group Shorty Rogers and the Giants, with whom Wofford was packing local clubs.

"Besides being a wonderful trumpet player, Shorty had also gotten his foot in the door as an arranger in Hollywood. Since I had worked in his band, he called me a couple of times to go into the studio and actually record." The first time Wofford recorded with him was with Mel Torme. "It's the sort of session where you've got to go in and sight read music you've never seen before and hope that it all works. I was just a very inexperienced young guy. It kind of scares me to think now that I should have probably said no," he joked. Once word got around of his talent and availability, his schedule filled up. "It's a networking thing just like in any field, and I gradually got into studio work, which I'd never really intended to do. I really did-

Photo: Mark Keller



Holly and Mike with Tony Dumas and Victor Lewis



Holly and Mike with Hassan Shakur and Victor Lewis in New York

in Harmony

MIKE WOFFORD AND HOLLY HOFMANN



n't know much about it when I started, but I ended up doing it until about 1978."

Among his screen credits are the "Bill Cosby Variety Show" and Cher's post Sonny show. "I did a lot of stuff for a living that didn't relate to the jazz world and I was still playing out every night in clubs." He has fond memories of those days. "A lot of times we were literally running from studio to studio and maybe doing up to four calls a day. That part of the business is almost nonexistent today; the economy and a whole lot of things changed." He admits that with so many hundreds of session under his belt, many of those memories now blur together. "After all these years it's hard to even imagine some of the things that happened," he said.

In 1966 he released his first solo album, *Strawberry Wine*, with *Summer Night* released the following year. Both included Guerin. The delay in making his debut as an artist in his own right was due to the era. "It's kind of hard to imagine today, because the business has changed so dramatically, but back during that time you didn't record unless someone discovered you and offered to produce a record for you and took you into the studio. It was a big deal to make a record back then and I hadn't had any tangible offers to record until 1966, when I met the producer Albert Marks and he was kind enough to give me my first chance."

Wofford wouldn't record under his own name again until 1978. "I guess I was just busy doing other stuff, so the opportunity didn't arise. I was on a lot of albums as a sideman, backing other people in jazz." He would soon make up for lost time.

In late 1973 his career took a slight detour when he joined former Byrds member Roger McGuinn's band. "Actually, John Guerin was already in the band and got me in," Wofford noted. "It was a departure, but I'd already done so much

work as a sideman in the studio by that time, backing so many rock artists, that it was fun."

Interestingly though, he's best known as a pianist with McGuinn with the Hammond B3 organ as his main instrument. "Roger was a big jazz fan, which made it great because he was very simpatico. Unfortunately we never recorded, but I always wished we had. It was a wonderful band."

He returned to San Diego in 1976. "I had fond memories of my early days here and still had family in the area; San Diego seemed like a better environment to look after a family and the business had changed a lot in L.A. by then. I continued to commute to L.A. several times a week for the first few years that I was here."

In 1979 he began what would end up being two years with singer Sarah Vaughn, albeit at different times. In addition to 1979 he also performed with her during 1983. "She traveled constantly and she loved the road. "The trouble is that if you're out traveling all the time you come to lose a lot of contacts for your work; it's kind of out of sight out of mind. It was a wonderful experience and I loved working with her, but I felt it was better to get off the road for awhile, but then she needed someone again in 1983." Among the many TV appearances to his credit is a guest spot with Vaughn on the *Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson. He concentrated on solo work but was lured back into sideman status by the chance to work with singer Ella Fitzgerald in 1989. He worked with her until her retirement in 1993 and was accompanist on her final album, *All That Jazz*.

He counts the album as a favorite. "Naturally, I have a fondness for that and there is a solo piano record I did for Concord in 1992, *Live at the Maybeck*, that I'm really proud of, but...", he pauses with a laugh. "I'm sure you've heard lots of other musicians say this, but, a lot of stuff I've done I can't even listen to. All I hear is how I wish I'd done it differently or even sometimes, 'what was I thinking.'"

HOLLY HOFMANN

The flute has been a lifelong passion for Holly Hofmann. She received her first plastic flute-ophone, a kind of a recorder, at age five. "I played by ear with my father, a jazz guitarist, every night after dinner; he started teaching me standards. At seven I got my silver flute and he would sing an idea to me and I would play it back to him. I had a lot of ear training early in life, which has served me extremely well."

The reason for her choice of instrument was pragmatic. "It's a dumb reason," she said with a laugh. "I was really, really tiny and my parents thought that I could carry it to and from school; I'm only five foot two inches, so you can imagine how tiny I was back then."

She eventually studied music, attending the Cleveland Institute of Music. Her first show was sitting in with friends of her father at a local club. "Other than being scared to death, it was okay," she quipped.

Though she has never played rock, she did have a fusion band in college. "We did things that Hubert Laws and Freddie Hubbard were doing, kind of a cross over, and that's as close as I got."

Her parents were very supportive of her music career, "but they also wanted me to have a back up, because no one knew if a female flutist could have a 'major' jazz career or not." She received her master's at the University of Northern Colorado and got a teaching credential at the college level.

She moved to the West Coast in 1984 to attend postgraduate school. "I had tried Los Angeles for a little bit, which was a little more than I wanted to deal with and I had friends in San Diego, so I came down." She was soon attending

the legendary jam sessions held by Jimmie and Jeannie Cheatham (see *San Diego Troubadour*, February 2007).

By 1989 she had established herself enough to land a three-record deal with Capri records. *Further Adventures* was released that year, followed by *Take Note* in 1990. Hofmann remains one of Capri's premier artists. In 1991 she met her other main musical partner, pianist Bill Cunliffe. "Although Mike and I tour primarily in a quartet, we do a very classic jazz thing and try to take it to the next level," Hofmann explained. "But Bill and I have a lot of classical training and like to incorporate it. We actually do classical compositions like Delius, so it's a whole different vibe as a duo."

Like Wofford, she also did some session work, but notes that technology has taken much of that work away. "A lot of times now they just put synth flute on stuff, which just makes me nuts," she laughed. "Between music and playing concerts, the business is harder; the airlines make it just about as hard as they can, so there are some facets to the business that I don't enjoy as much anymore."

In addition to her schedule as a musician, Hofmann also spends part of the year as director for several music festivals, including Jazz in the City in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and Jazz at Newport in Oregon. And the recent Museum of Art's Jazz in the Park series. "Directing festivals is perfect for a musician," she said. "Because I'm on the road all the time I see acts all over the world. Because I've heard them live it's easy to choose who is going to work at a particular festival." Hofmann considers artists' involvement in the booking process to be crucial to a project's success. "I feel that when a musician is doing it, you'll know that it's being done for the right reasons, and there'll be attention to what the artists need."

Though her time is becoming increasingly limited, she still teaches on an irregular basis. "I teach adults; kids need to have more regular training than I can do," she commented. "I'm exclusively teaching classical flute players that want to make the transition into jazz, which seems to be my niche."

Hofmann has two projects in the works, "Concert at Symphony Hall: Tribute to Antonio Carlos Jobim with Strings," ("a giant undertaking"), and a new album with Bill Cunliffe in April, again for Capri. "They are always up for recording the next project, which is really a gift in this day and age, to have a label that a) wants to record you and b) lets you record what you want."

Musing on a life in music that has seen her tour the world numerous times, Hofmann considers herself on a mission to change the image of the flute. "There a certain stereotype that goes along with the jazz flute," said Hofmann. "A lot of people don't consider it a jazz instrument. If I were going to pass tomorrow and people asked me, 'what would you say about your career?' It would be that I spent my time trying to bring the flute out of the feminine stereotype and put it into the category of being just another main stream jazz horn."

MIKE AND HOLLY

"We figured when we got married in 2000 that we had worked together for 14 years before we became an item," Hofmann said. "We met when I moved to San Diego in 1986," The fateful meeting happened at Our Place, a jazz club attached to the Japanese restaurant, Miki-San on Fifth Avenue. They first worked together at the Horton Grand Hotel, where Hofmann also booked a jazz series from 1989-1996.

The first time they recorded together was for Hofmann's debut album, *Further Adventures*. "I chose him when I was told that I had the recording deal with Capri. I wanted someone on the West

Coast, as I had just moved here, so it would be more convenient." She had the option of using anybody she wanted, "but Mike has a reputation in our business on a national level. He is all about making the gig sound good, instead of "when is my solo."

They gradually began to work together more and more. "Mike was touring with Ella at the time, so he wasn't always here and wasn't always available. But when the CD came out, I started doing my first gigs out of town and he did some of those with me. I wasn't touring a lot, but he was mostly with me when I did."

In the years since, the pair have worked with numerous local groups, ranging from their own quartet to occasional combos such as Brasilia, a Latin group that includes Peter Sprague. "Unfortunately, we don't really work at home anymore; we're always on the road, but we do like to do the occasional show like Brasilia, which is just a bunch of friends coming together over music."

Hofmann admits that having two touring musicians living in the same household can be difficult. "Yeah, it's pretty hard to coordinate, but we're doing more things together now - by choice," she laughed. "It can be difficult to match up separate schedules, but it's great working together because we have the same musical vision."

She's effusive about her husband's talents. "He's the consummate musician. His harmonic knowledge is mind boggling to me; he pushes the envelope. When we play together he does such creative things, even in an ensemble, that it brings out the other person's best. It's one of the reasons why he's worked with every major player in the business for years and was so sought out. He has this way of making people sound better than they are in some cases. He feeds them ideas, he's not just sitting there counting, he is involved and he's always thinking about how the group, whether it's a duo or a sextet, is going to sound better. I've played with many of the world's greatest piano players and I don't know of anyone who does it quite like Mike."

The album Wofford and Hofmann consider their best? It's also their most recent, *Live at The Athenaeum, Jazz Volume 2*. "I liked it because Mike and I recorded exactly what we wanted to play and recorded it live," enthused Hoffman. She considers the venue's acoustics to have been key to its sound. "I didn't have to place any microphones because it was in a space where the flute was natural and didn't have to use any kind of monitor." Wofford is succinct. "I feel it's one of the best things I've ever done." That may very well be, but considering the immense talent and prolific nature of the pair, many more great recordings are still ahead.

For Wofford's part, the pride is evident when he speaks of Hofmann and her music. "We have worked together more and more over the last five years and just always have a wonderful time." He's particularly thrilled that "she's grown as a major figure in jazz." It's evident in their conversation that they, eat, drink, and sleep songcraft; their lives fully immersed in music. It might be a cliché to say it, but it's clear that Wofford and Hofmann are in perfect harmony.





Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



Every once in a while it seems timely to present a run down in this column on the venues where live bluegrass music can be heard in San Diego and where you players can get out and jam. So, here we go.

Tuesday nights are known as “bluegrass night” in San Diego. On four Tuesdays of each month you can hear and participate in live bluegrass music, and on the occasional fifth Tuesday there is plenty of bluegrass as well.

The first Tuesday of every month sees an open mic, pick up bands, and a featured band at the Round-table Pizza located at 1161 East Washington in Escondido. The action starts about 6:30pm with an open mic and pick up bands. Eight o’clock brings on the featured band for a one hour concert. And, there is open jamming in the parking lot all evening long. These first Tuesday events are presented by the North San Diego County Bluegrass and Folk Club, and you can learn more about that organization and about upcoming activities at their web site: <http://www.northcountybluegrass.org>.

The second Tuesday of every month is sponsored by the San Diego Bluegrass Society. It is held at the Fuddruckers Restaurant in the Grossmont Center in La Mesa (5500 Grossmont Center Drive). Open mic, bluegrass karaoke, and pick up bands start at 6:30pm, and continue until 9pm. Musicians and bands wanting stage time who sign up in advance are given priority, but sign ups on site are also accepted, time permitting. And, of course, there is plenty of hot jamming on the patio all night long. Visit the SDBS web site for more info and to sign up: www.socalbluegrass.org. Or, send sdbbs an email at sdbbsinfo@socalbluegrass.org.

The third Tuesday of every month finds the San Diego Bluegrass Society hosting an evening at the Fuddruckers restaurant in Chula Vista, located at 340 Third Avenue. SDBS Board member George Noble, Jr. hosts the event, which presents open mic, bluegrass karaoke, and pick up bands from 6:30 to 9pm, with open jamming on the patio. To sign up in advance, send an email to SDBS at sdbbsinfo@socalbluegrass.org, or contact George and sign up on site.

The fourth Tuesday of every month is SDBS’s featured band night where a top local or regional bluegrass band is presented in concert. For the past several years these fourth Tuesdays have been held at the Boll Weevil restaurant on Miramar Road, but with its recent bankruptcy and closure, SDBS is still looking at new venues and has not yet selected a permanent replacement location as of this writing. So, check the SDBS web site at www.socalbluegrass.org for updates. At the fourth Tuesday you can expect open mic, bluegrass karaoke, pick up bands, and lots of jamming in addition to the featured band presentation from 8 to 9pm.

In those months that have a fifth Tuesday, you can find the action at Old Time Music, located at 2852 University Avenue in San Diego’s North Park area. This music store has a great performance space in back, which is opened on fifth Tuesdays for a night of informal bluegrass jamming from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm with everyone welcome.

And, if Tuesdays don’t work for you, every Thursday night of every month is jam night in Encinitas at Today’s Pizza, located at 481 Santa Fe Drive just west of the I-5 freeway. These Thursday evening sessions, hosted by outstanding banjo player Jason Weiss, generally go from 6:30 to 9 m. Every one is welcome.

Prefer to hear your bluegrass with a great brunch? Stop by Urban Solace at 3823 30th Street just south of University in the North Park area of San Diego. Every Sunday from 10 am to 2 pm Urban Solace hosts a Bluegrass Brunch, featuring a different blue-

grass band every week. And, the food is outstanding.

In addition to these regular weekly events, great bluegrass music can be heard from time to time at any number of venues in San Diego, ranging from the Center for the Arts in Escondido, to Dizzys, LeStats, the La Paloma and Carlsbad Theaters, the Belly Up Tavern, and elsewhere. The best way to keep in touch with these special concerts is to join the SDBS for only \$20 per year for the whole family and get the updates they provide to members. Or, members and non-members alike can check the calendar of events at the SDBS web site: www.socalbluegrass.org. And, Wayne Rice of KSON’s “Bluegrass Special” radio show has a very comprehensive calendar available online called the Bluegrass Bulletin Board at: <http://www.waynerice.com/kson/bgevents.htm>.

Speaking of Wayne Rice, he hosts the country’s longest running bluegrass radio show every Sunday night right here in San Diego from 10pm to midnight on KSON at 97.3 fm and 92.1 fm in North County. Wayne presents a great selection of classic and contemporary bluegrass on his show, and, once a month, he features a local band live on the show to play some tunes and chat. Typically, Wayne presents the band that is coming up as the SDBS featured band of the month at the SDBS fourth Tuesday so that listeners can hear them and, if they like what they hear, stop by the SDBS fourth Tuesday featured band night and hear the group live.

If a great bluegrass festival sounds like fun, mark your calendar for the Summergrass festival held at the Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum in Vista. This year’s Summergrass will be held August 21-23 and will feature a host of great bands, national and local, camping, vendors, workshops, and activities for all ages. Visit the Summergrass website for specifics at www.summergrass.net.

We are truly blessed by the hard work of the many volunteers who make all this bluegrass in San Diego possible. I hope you will get out an enjoy some of these activities. I’ll be looking for you!



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The Zen of Recording

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

iPOD, THEREFORE I AM

Like a lost kid at the Anaheim Zoo, I stumbled through this year’s annual gathering of music product manufacturers, retailers, and distributors (otherwise known as the NAMM Show) with an odd combination of wonderment and déjà vu. There were many of the same familiar faces in attendance, and it’s always good to see friends, even if it’s only once a year. Making *new* friends, however, was a bit more problematic. Not that folks weren’t welcoming and affable, there just weren’t all that many new faces and products compared with previous shows.

There *were* a few that caught my ears and eyes, however. The best of them were often simple ideas that took a little “outside-the-box” thinking and applied it to existing concepts, resulting in exciting new twists.

One great example was Emmy winning composer/producer Mike Greene’s **Realivox – Vocal Palette** (www.realitone.com), a virtual instrument (AU, VST, DXi, RTAS and Standalone) that features 11 top session singers, multi-sampled in 20 different articulations (ooh, ah, ee, la, dee, bop, etc.), giving composers and producers of any level access to professional backing vocals of the highest caliber. Greene has ingeniously sampled legato articulations, so that you don’t get that tell-tale “key-boardy” sound from the re-triggering of the sample. In other words, if you want a vocal to slide from Middle C to the G a fifth above, it does so in a very realistic and natural sounding way, because he has actually captured these vocalists singing those myriad intervals. Outstanding!

Another original idea that has apparently been around for a few years is the **Standback** (www.standback.net) amp stand from Triad products. Electric guitarists quite often employ an amp stand to lift and tilt their amp toward themselves, for truer monitoring onstage or in rehearsal. If they’re using an “off-the-ground” design however, there is often a loss of bass response due to the decoupling of the amplifier from the floor. Additionally, these can be quite bulky and just one more thing to carry to the gig. The Standback creatively addresses both these issues through a simplified and highly portable design. The device is essentially a foldable metal triangle attached to heavy-duty cloth straps, with a “third leg” that swings out to support the amp at any angles you choose. The Standback is actually held in place by the weight of the amp itself, and easily folds and stores in the back of almost any amp. Check out their website to get a visual of what I mean. It’s a great example of how great products don’t have to come from huge budgets or impersonal corporations.

There were other great new offerings on display from companies like **IK Multimedia**, **SSL**, **PreSonus**, **Roland/Cakewalk**, **Big Fish Audio** and **Avantone**, and I look forward to sharing my experiences with those products in this column throughout the year.

Despite all of this promise and invention, if pressed I’d have to say that the one product that has changed my personal and professional life most dramatically is the Apple iPhone.

Yes, I hear your groans. I also realize that many of you may be familiar with the fact that I have blissfully followed an Apple-free path thus far in my career, with nary a care for keeping up with any developments emanating from the mega-corps lofty and decidedly PC-unfriendly perch.

The journey down Steve Job’s rabbit hole began simply enough, with my son Drew showing me his newly acquired iPhone in November. He said, “It’s not so much the constant web connectivity or the great tools like the calendar and email. All those things are great, but it’s the Apps, man. That’s the future! Here, take this over to that table over there and mess around with it for a while. You’ll see what I mean.”



So, I did just that. For the next 45 minutes I was spellbound. There was a feast of great little programs: Games, productivity applications, and idiosyncratic little curios like a “virtual lighter” for those “Freebird” concert moments, etc. Within a couple of weeks my wireless contract would be up, and I’d be free to change over to AT&T and purchase my very own iPhone for \$199, which is exactly what I did.

In the weeks since, I have found myself organizing my hectic schedule more efficiently, replying to emails in a more timely manner, and



Sven-Erik Seaholm

just in general having a ball with this thing. I have even been able to dictate song ideas on the run via a digital four-track recorder app. The best part is that most apps don’t cost more than a buck or two, and a large percentage of them are absolutely free!

Imagine having a guitar tuner, a metronome, a keyboard, a decibel meter, a flashlight, an alarm clock, a camera, a calculator, a calendar with all of your appointments, all of your contacts phone numbers and email addresses, and one-touch access to MySpace, Facebook, all of your email accounts, the AP wire, YouTube, the weather, Google Maps (with GPS, for directions from your current location) tons of games AND an iPod with all of your favorite music – all in your mobile phone. It’s ridiculous.

One of the great side benefits is being able to really get into a new technology whenever I have a spare moment. The simple act of learning is soooooo good for your brain and really, one’s well-being in general. As a result, I feel more efficient and have been able to become more creative with the time I’ve saved just using this device. It’s been a wonderful ride and I’m still finding new ways to improve my life with it.

Here’s hoping NAMM’s associates will be able to introduce a plethora of products with similar value and usefulness for the recording musician. In the meantime, it couldn’t hurt to review your manuals of the products you currently own. You never know what great tools you already own but aren’t using, right?

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent record producer and recording artist. Find him on the web at SvenSongs.com, KaSPro.com, Lynda.com and myspace.com/SvenSeaholm



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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra



José Sinatra completes a self-portrait

SORRY, FORRY

A recent event involving a trip back to 1968 was originally my topic this month, and I had set out to prove the existence of momentary time-travel and turn everybody into believers. But I was taking too much time and turning unreasonably emotional and the free flow of feeling I was seeking to impart kept getting muddled by my unresolved reaction to a recent death. So, I've decided to let '68 wait until next time; be assured the tools necessary for that journey are out there* and will be out there next month as well, so if we're all still here too, everything will be fine. And I'll be a lot finer or at least more coherent, having tried my best to exorcise this nagging recent exploit of the Reaper known as Grim.

He got nearly half a page in *Time* magazine, so there must be plenty of others out there now coming to grips with the passing of Forrest J Ackerman, whose influence on my life is immense and unfortunate.

Known to most as "Forry," Ackerman's most popular tangible creation was the magazine *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. He started it in 1958; I had no knowledge of it until I noticed its ninth issue among the magazines on display behind the glass façade of the Texas Liquor House in Clairemont on a September day in 1960. Suddenly it was clear to my older brother Tom and me that we weren't the only ones imbued with a near religious affection for monster movies (the '31-'60 variety). There were indeed *thousands* and *thousands* of us all over the country; back East in 1962 little Buddy Blue (miss you, mo' fo'!) discovered *FM* (as the initiated called it) with its seventeenth issue and was himself instantly hooked.

By '64 and '65, monstermania in America had peaked, overpowered by the Beatles and Bond (and, soon, Batman) but remained still a potent force in the lives of many of the still-dedicated like Buddy and me, to whom *FM* was the living, breathing guidebook, textbook, and treasury for decades.

And Forry Ackerman was the teacher. I first visited his "Ackermansion" in 1970, repository of the largest collection of fantasy/sci-fi/horror memorabilia known to man or mutant. I'd seen photos and read about this L.A. Monster Mecca in the 24th issue of *FM* in 1963, in part one of "The Amazing Ackemonster" by Paul Linden. Actually being there and meeting Forry was a thrill, and like so many others, the Collecting Bug bit me in his basement and Acquisition of Material Goods was the chronic Fever I was infected with, a sort of herpes of the soul. You do whatever you can to control, it but it's always there.

And Forry was always there, always reminding the world that he had more stuff than you ever would, that he coined the term "sci-fi" and no one else did, that his importance in the Scheme of Things was unsurpassable and that only a fool would deny that fact.

In 1998 he invited Buddy Blue to come up one evening and Buddy asked if he could bring some friends named Scott and Deneen and Hose, and Forry said sure and was mildly surprised that I was "Hose," having been his guest on several occasions during previous decades. This night I videotaped our visit and at one point, while looking through the viewfinder, I saw Forry Ackerman clearly for the first time. The man who had sewn so many seeds of my imagination and helped keep alive a love I needed not to lose was a needy, greedy, uncompromising egomaniac who thrived on envy, acquisition, adulation.

I look through the 24th issue of *FM*, steeped in nostalgia now. It came out the summer I heard my first Beatles record, *From Me to You*, played twice in a row one afternoon by a deejay on KDEO, who kept shouting, "They're a new group called the Beatles and they're from England and, I swear, there's something about this song I *really* dig!" And I dug it too and I dug the 24th issue of *FM* and I dug that summer of '63.

Five years later I grudgingly admitted to myself that the hundred-page #24 was the overall best issue of FM ever (having acquired all the earlier back issues I'd missed) even better than #9, and I stand by that assessment to this day. Interestingly, so did Forry Ackerman himself. Until a few weeks ago.

Revisiting Linden's article in 2009, I'm struck by the near-deification of Ackerman, who was a lifelong atheist. The photographs of the memorabilia-stuffed house depict the very rooms I first visited in 1970.

It's an amazingly fawning article, presenting its subject to a curious world as a serious, amiable, accomplished historian/archivist/ author/agent/genius who, in spite of all efforts by any reader, is the one who will end up dying with the most toys. Everyone else will have to fight it out to be number two. Paul Linden is simply telling the truth about an amazing man.

Now his words, which so long ago inspired me (and Buddy Blue and so many others) to so fervently admire this auxiliary parent suddenly read like some poisonous, sick joke. Sometime ago, I learned that Paul Linden was a pseudonym for "The Amazing Ackemonster"'s actual author, Forrest J Ackerman.

Normally it's bad form to deride the dead, I know. But I felt it gravely important to put this down so that you might be on guard for this particular fellow if you have the misfortune to end up in Hell.

Amen.

* Hint: 11/17/68, 9pm/CBS



RADIO DAZE



by Jim McInnes

IT'S THE NEW SHAMBLES ALBUM!

Desde *Ayer*, meaning *since yesterday* (I think), is the title of the new release by San Diego's power-pop veterans the Shambles or, as they're called on this recording, Los Shambles.

I assume the Spanish title and the "los" in the band's name is because the Shambles are big in Spain...at least big enough to tour and sell records there. And then there are the four tracks sung in Spanish. And the liner notes, too. They are almost entirely *en español*, which lead me to believe this release is geared more toward the band's Spanish and Mexican fans.

It's what Shambles' frontman (and fellow *Troubadour* contributor) Bart Mendoza calls a collection of outtakes, alternate versions, and demos from a dozen different sessions by the band as well as tunes from various side projects, all featuring numerous personnel. There's a lot of good stuff here. There's a lot of jangly '60s pop influence here... like Beatles, the Hollies, Small Faces, and the Byrds, for starters. Even in the Spanish language stuff.

The first track is called, "Una Mujer Por Quien Matar." Despite the Spanish title, this instrumental reminds me of something from the Ventures or the B-52s. It features a dirt simple descending guitar/organ riff that's catchy as hell and ranks right up there with "Rock Lobster" at the top of the *dumb and irresistible* charts. I love this one. That's why it leads off the recording.

Another standout is "Nadie Te Quiere Ya." The chorus on this one is irresistible... the arrangement kinda reminds me of Split Enz or Crowded House. The harmonies are tight and I have no idea what this song is about. No big. It's irresistible, too. Now I'll have this hook stuck in my brain for days!

"Paris Yesterday" is a demo with the odd refrain, "I heard Paul Wallace trashed his hotel room in Paris yesterday." Great pop tune! It's short, catchy and memorable... sung in English, thank you.

"More Than This" is pure uptempo power-pop, with tight harmonies, hand-claps, and a solid guitar solo. Short and sweet, like all good pop.

"All Sorts," by Mendoza's side project, Mission to Mars, has a strong Byrds-y feel to it.

Although 14 tracks are listed on the disc, there are also four "hidden" tracks. Three are radio commercials that mention shows featuring the Shambles or Manual Scan, Mendoza's '80s Mod group. The last track sounds like a live recording of the band singing in Spanish.

Kudos to Shambles' emeritus Mike Kamoo, who produced the majority of the selections.

I really enjoy *Desde Ayer*. I like it a lot. So will you.

One last thing. If 1966 ever returns, the Shambles will be as big as the Beatles! Mark my words.



by Peter Bolland

LIFE LESSONS FROM THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

On January 20, 2009, Barack Obama was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States. Reflecting on the significance of this event and the long years that preceded it, ten inescapable truths emerge, truths that have the power to transform our lives.

1. Nothing Is Impossible

There is never a shortage of well-intentioned (and not so well-intentioned) people eager to tell you that your dream is impossible. Characterizing themselves as sober realists (and, by implication, everyone else as drunken dreamers), naysayers take pleasure in their own cleverness and in holding you back. Give them a hug, thank them, and go about the business of accomplishing the impossible. Just a few months ago, let alone two years ago, you couldn't spit without hitting someone saying "Obama's great, but he'll never make it to the White House".

2. Assume the Best in People and That's What You'll Get

Barack Obama won the presidency largely because he reached out to people that traditional political operatives counseled him not to bother with. Entire states the Gore and Kerry campaigns skipped over became ripe recruiting grounds for Obama's operation. Obama and his team believed it was stupid and self-defeating to write off entire regions, as if human consciousness were bound by state lines. Obama lives by this truth: you teach people how to treat you by the way you treat them. His deep respect for the common man and woman is genuine. People feel it, and they respond. It is an unshakable spiritual law that you attract not what you *want*, but what you *are*. Obama teaches us that our most pressing and effective task is self-cultivation. His not-so-secret weapon: the only real way to inspire people to their own greatness is to cultivate your own.

3. Hope and Faith Trump Despair and Fear Every Time

Despair and fear seem to be our default setting, the way digital clocks flash 12:00 when you unplug them. Obama's presidency invites us to plug back in and set our own attitudinal clocks. Despair and fear may be cheap and easy but they create nothing. Nothing was ever built with the consciousness of scarcity and lack. Hope and faith, on the other hand, are the twin engines of transformation both on the personal level and the global level.

4. Our Assumptions Are Usually Wrong

In light of these first three truths, it seems clear that we have a problem. Perhaps the problem is not with the world. Perhaps the problem lies within the way we see the world. Our attitudes, biases, and assumptions are the biggest barriers to our own success and happiness. Many people assumed Obama had too many obstacles to overcome, namely, that not enough white people would vote for him. In fact, the opposite occurred. White people put him in office. The ascendancy of Barack Obama reminds us that we are more often wrong than right. And this begs the obvious question: what are we wrong about today?

5. There Is Deep Wisdom in Common People

Our arrogance and cynicism prevent us from seeing a simple truth: either everyone has the light or no one has it. One of Obama's strengths is his willingness to look past appearances; the circumstances of his own life taught him that. One of the most challenging and beautiful principles of democracy is the conviction that every single human being is a being of infinite value, a rational agent who if left to their own volition will seek the good, especially if inspired by the aspirations of those around them. We move forward, bound by the strength of our convictions and our common fate. Even the least among us adds to our strength.

6. If the Game Seems Rigged, Start a New Game

Early in Obama's presidential aspiration it became clear that he could not compete with Hillary Clinton's fundraising machine. As a young unknown he lacked the connections to adequately tap into the traditional streams of political cash flow, streams the Clintons had nurtured for decades. He could not win that game. So he started a new game. He went directly to the American people and bypassed the usual deep pocket sources. By raising five dollars, ten dollars, twenty dollars each from millions of individual Americans who had never contributed a dime to a political campaign, he changed forever the way politicians raise money. The new game put a black man in the White House. If the old game isn't working in your life, go around it.

7. Hard Work Works

Obama got into Columbia University and then Harvard Law School on sheer merit. No one handed him anything. As a boy his mother used to wake him up at 4:00 in the morning to do his homework before school. He would often complain bitterly. "Do you think I want to do this?" his mother asked him. "I don't like it any more than you do." Obama learned early on that what you *feel* like doing and what you *should* be doing is not often the same thing. Disciplined effort teaches us that despite our appetites to the contrary, we can always choose excellence and craft lives of power, beauty, and joy. Hard work works.

8. You Don't Need a Perfect Past

Nothing before this moment matters. We all come from somewhere. We've all been hurt. We all lack things others have. Estranged from his African father, raised by his single, white mother and then his white grandparents – being made painfully aware of his outsider status was just another day for Barack. But he found love and support where others saw enemies. Why do we cling to our story and allow the past to shape this next fluid, formless moment? Why not create something new from the wreckage? What some people call shit, others call fertilizer.

9. Stay Humble, Respect Your Opponents

Power need not be arrogance, mastery need not be condescension, assertion need not be divisive. True greatness is always humble. Great people recognize the light in all people, even their ideological opponents. Because each of us has only partial access to truth, we rely on others, perhaps especially our most vigorous and vocal opponents, to shed light on the corners of truth we had not yet considered. Real wisdom always manifests itself as flexibility and fluidity, traits often misunderstood as weakness by lesser minds who confuse strength with rigid, defensive inflexibility. Like his hero Lincoln, Obama intentionally seeks the counsel of those who disagree with him. Lincoln even appointed his political foes to his cabinet. How, in my own life, can I manifest this untapped inlet of insight?



Chocolate Drops Offer a Sweet Night in La Jolla

by Steve Thorn

After earning accolades for a well-received album, motion picture music, and exceptional live shows, the string band known as the Carolina Chocolate Drops is heading to San Diego. The splendid acoustics of La Jolla's Sherwood Auditorium will serve as the audio backdrop for San Diego's debut appearance of a remarkable musical triumvirate featuring Rhiannon Giddens (banjo, fiddle, vocals), Justin Robinson (fiddle, vocals), and Dom Flemons (guitar, banjo, jug, harmonica, snare, and vocals). This month's concert will be also be the launching pad for local concert company Save Old Time Music (see accompanying article).

Musicians often find inspiration from hearing a song the first time, making head or tails out of a new instrument, or seeing a live performance. In the case of the Carolina Chocolate Drops (or simply the "Drops" as they are called on their official website), inspiration struck like lightning at a black banjo festival in Boone, North Carolina, in 2005.

"I was first approached by (musician--archivist) Sule Greg Wilson in my hometown of Phoenix at a local folk coffeehouse and he told me that this event was happening and I decided to go," said Flemons. "I had been playing the banjo about four years or so and I was making up different ways of playing it on my own without really any sort of historical reference. Like anyone else, I knew it from bluegrass and old-time jazz. Nevertheless, Sule convinced me it would be a wonderful opportunity, and I took the chance to go somewhere I had never gone before -- much to my favor in retrospect."

It was the festival -- held at the campus of Appalachian State University in Boone -- where Flemons would connect with Giddens and Robinson. "As the event moved along -- blowing the minds of everyone there -- Sule, Rhiannon, and myself started talking about forming a band," said Flemons. "This had been a dream of Rhiannon's for a while and after the gathering Sule and Rhiannon contacted me and told me that we were forming a band. We created a group called Sankofa Strings. It's from the Ashanti proverb meaning literally 'go back and fetch it.' The idea of taking the past to the present into the future is the whole basis for both groups."

A name like the Carolina Chocolate



The Carolina Chocolate Drops: Dom Flemons, Rhiannon Giddens, Justin Robinson

Drops sounds like part of a 1967 psychedelic triple bill with the Chocolate Watchband and the Strawberry Alarm Clock. But as Flemons explained, the trio's moniker is a tip of the hat to the late Howard Armstrong, who passed away in New York in 2003 at the age of 94. Newspaper obituaries proclaimed Armstrong as the "last guardian of a vanishing African-American tradition of string-band music."

"At the [black banjo] gathering, everyone kept asking me if I had ever seen this movie called *Louie Bluie*. I never had. Sule told me he had a copy and later on when I watched it, it just stopped me in my tracks. This movie is amazing. It is a portrait of the black fiddle and mandolin songster Howard Armstrong, who made a few recordings under the name of Louie Bluie. He also made a few more recordings earlier with his brothers under the name of the Tennessee Chocolate Drops. In the film, there is a scene where Howard plays a blazing version of the tune 'Cacklin' Hen' and it just turned my world upside down. I eventually showed it to Rhiannon and Justin who were both equally amazed. Rhiannon up and said, 'We should call ourselves the Carolina Chocolate Drops,' referencing Louie Bluie but also giving a shout out to Rhiannon and Justin's home state."

Also critical to the development of the Drops has been the group's relationship with Joe Thompson, a legendary fiddler from North Carolina.

"Justin had been playing with Joe after the gathering and that gave him a great learning environment to pick up more stylistic ideas on the fiddle," said Flemons. "Having started playing violin as a young boy, Justin gave it up for many years and had just picked it again in his college years. Rhiannon had sung in [her] family growing up but she went to Oberlin Conservatory for voice, retreating to less formal musical situations after her undergraduate [studies] and began playing solo shows as well as playing in a celtic band, calling contra dances while still dabbling in opera. As she became more involved with the old-time music through contra dance, she learned to play both fiddle and banjo."

"Playing with Joe Thompson gave us a group dynamic. We all followed Joe and were all aware that he was the lead and we backed him up. Also, as when you meet anyone older than you, Joe conjures up different images of life as he grew up, which can be amazing to hear and can be very insightful. It gives the music a new context that you just can't get on record. Joe is a friend and a mentor by just being there and giving out what he knows and that's what we've taken from our times with him thus far."

The Drops' current CD is titled *Dona Got a Ramblin' Mind*. On television, the Drops have appeared on "Grand Ole Opry Live" and provided some of the background music for *The Great Debaters*, Denzel Washington's film depicting the rise of the



Howard "Louie Bluie" Armstrong

celebrated debate team at Wiley College, a black school.

"*The Great Debaters* started [for us] at the Folk Alliance conference in 2007 when I met a fellow named Scott Baretta," said Flemons. "Scott had originally contacted me on MySpace about doing an interview. He also knew the great blues player Alvin Youngblood Hart and had the idea to put us together to do a project. We had a great time chatting at the Folk Alliance and a few months later Scott was approached by G. Marc Roswell, who was the musical director for *The Great Debaters*. As it happened, the group was meeting up with the management and our managers brought up the idea that we should get into movies. That seemed good and fine but no one really had an idea about how to do this. Oddly enough, I checked my e-mail when I got home from the meeting to find an e-mail from Scott asking if we wanted to be in a Denzel Washington movie. There was no need to think too hard about it. We were now in the movies."

The Drops are proud to carry the banner for the Howard Armstrongs, Joe Thompsons, and many others who have inspired them. And who knows? Someday, a band inspired by the Drops will pop up out of nowhere.

"We don't really have a 'mission statement' about education but playing music in the schools is very important," said Flemons. "When we've played for children, we get them exposed to the music and then, being a black string band, we also exposed them to the idea that the banjo and the like are not confined to the normal stereotypes. What's also great is that kids are honest about how much they enjoy a performance -- it is always rewarding to see them engaged in music that they like."

The Carolina Chocolate Drops will perform in Sherwood Auditorium at the La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art on February 19. Opening for the show will be local favorite Chris Clarke. Visit www.saveoldtimemusic.org for ticket information.

SAVE OLD TIME MUSIC

This month's Carolina Chocolate Drops concert represents the debut of a new San Diego-based concert company promoting traditional America folk music.

Appropriately titled Save Old Time Music, the concert company is the creation of Kyle McCarthy. On his website, McCarthy explains his company's mission: "Recently founded, this charitable and educational organization needs your support to flourish from first offering a single event to offering a year-round music series. We want to establish an enduring non-profit institution to meet our mission of preserving and preserving old time, bluegrass, folk, and traditional music to the people."

The 34-year-old McCarthy, originally from Albany, New York, has broadened his musical boundaries since the days he was sampling the rock music record collections of his four older brothers. After heading out West for college -- he graduated in 1999 with a B.A. in Human Resource Management from the University of Nevada -- McCarthy fell in love with the thriving folk music scene of Northern California. "I used to go to a coffeehouse in Berkeley called the Freight and Salvage and I went to several music festivals," said McCarthy. "I had the chance to hear some incredible music."

Work brought McCarthy to San Diego County where he is employed at the La Costa Resort in a human resources capacity. Since his arrival, McCarthy has attempted to recreate the folk music environment of his Northern California days. With the booking of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, his efforts are finally bearing fruit. "I always wanted to see them," said McCarthy. "This will be their first time performing in San Diego. I remember seeing them on YouTube and thinking, 'Wow! These guys are good!'"

As a way of passing the baton on to future generations, McCarthy's goal is to introduce traditional music in local elementary schools. He also hopes to raise public interest through his involvement with a music promotion course currently being taught at Cuyamaca College.

For more information on Saving Old Time Music, visit www.saveoldtimemusic.org

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Grand Canyon Sundown

by Mike Alvarez

Unless you're a musicologist with Ferde Grofe on the brain, an album titled *Grand Canyon Sundown* immediately calls to mind a vast red sky above a rocky desert scene, accompanied by a country and western-flavored soundtrack. Such expectations are fulfilled and then some on this album. The opening song "So Far Away" evokes the Grateful Dead with its likeable melody, bouncing rhythm, and flowery embellishments, courtesy of a harmonica and pedal steel guitar. The smooth vocals are very easy on the ears. Then it's off to roots rock on "Violent Sea." Lots of guitars backed by a Hammond organ give this song a propulsive edge that would make the E Street Band proud. "River Roll" is an acoustic workout that is a return to the Dead influence, with fiddle and mandolin joining the mix. After an extended instrumental intro, the multiple vocal harmonies enter to give this song a Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young feel. "Band of Gypsies" is a jaunty celebration, rooted firmly in Southern blues that is sure to get people on the dance floor.

Instrumental and vocal tracks are tastefully arranged, creating a dense but uncluttered sound. While it is obviously well-produced, there is a very organic sound to this recording. Everyone is highly proficient with their instruments, always playing in service to the songs. Earthy guitars and a "tight but loose" rhythm section provide the foundation for warm vocals and ethereal harmonies. Other instruments are smartly added to the mix to great effect. Harmonica, pedal steel guitar, mandolin, and fiddle all serve to give the music the kind of signature that defines it in space and time. Vocals are pleasing and unforced. Background singers are seamlessly integrated into the main melodies providing the perfect accompaniment to lead vocalist Paul Cruz. On many songs they are reminiscent of the early Eagles. The ballad "Fly Tonight" brought to mind "Peaceful Easy Feeling."

This group of musicians manages to carve out its own stylistic territory while simultaneously pushing its boundaries. They have a core sound but find ways to keep it interesting and fresh. Even something as unexpected as the upbeat pop tune "Beneath the Surface," with its Spin Doctors-influenced vibe, fits in nicely with this collection of songs. It immediately becomes apparent that many influences are at work here. Country and bluegrass stand side by side with modern rock, blues, and psychedelia. Often they intertwine to create a classic sound from another era. Appropriately enough, the proceedings come to a close with the Tex Mex singalong "Goodnight Sweet World." It's a satisfying ending to a satisfying album.



The Bigfellas Chubbed Up

by Heather Janiga

Self-proclaimed smartasses, the Bigfellas, have baked up a batch of icing-laden cookies in the form of 14 cleverly crafted songs on their new release, drolly titled *Chubbed Up*.

You can almost see the curtain rise as "California King" begins to bellow out of the speakers. This is one of many songs on the album that cook up theatrics in the listeners head, thanks to a keen play on words and colorful use of imagery. Enter Mary Grasso, the song's musical harbinger, whose hauntingly beautiful vocal harmonies weave softness into the mix, and you have yourself one heck of an intro.

These fellas' lyrical stylings are akin to the Bare Naked Ladies clan, amusingly cynical and reverberating alongside a steady/groovy toe-tapping beat. Although the band doesn't credit Ben Folds as one of its main influences on their MySpace page, melodic piano pounding paired against male vocals traceably similar to Benjamin Scott Folds himself makes it hard to believe "Whatever and Ever Amen" went without contributing to the collective inspiration for this album.

Song to song, this CD was well calculated in terms of proper flow. One exception is a surprising dose of rap/hip hop on an otherwise pop, rockish mix. "On the Green" (a song about golf!) may be an odd twist in terms of genre bending, but given the satire of this album the listener isn't crying FORE! for long. Somehow it all comes together and cautions that the Bigfellas don't always want their listeners guessing their next move.

The satisfying saga of *Chubbed Up* wraps up on two wondrous notes: "Stuff on the Moon" and the not so mysterious "Hidden Track" (not so mysterious only because it's listed on the CD track list, so you know its coming). "Stuff on the Moon" is spruce in the use of sparsity, with spaced out electric strums dolled up with the perfect dose of delay and poignant but slight percussion. Add in a short sound bite from Mr. Armstrong and you're feeling like you're walking on the moon yourself.

The satisfying saga of *Chubbed Up* wraps up on two wondrous notes: "Stuff on the Moon" and the not so mysterious "Hidden Track." This is my personal favorite, with a frolicking array of instrumentation including banjo and accordion, sweet subtle percussion, optimistic lyrics, and a playful vocal melody. This is such a feel good song that happiness seems to form a tangible substance and is oozing out of the speakers.

Perfect for ambience at your next party or to help pick you up the next time you're feeling blue, *Chubbed Up* is well worth the ten or so dollars you've allotted to your music fund. Just make sure you have enough left over to grab a big box of fresh baked sugar cookies...you'll find yourself with a hankering for those before you even press play.



Trails & Rails Water, Weeds and Ghosts

by Allen Singer

I recently heard a cowboy poem about a band called Trails and Rails. This band went riding out one day looking for a weed-covered trail head that would take them into a dead-end canyon to hunt for stray old cowboy songs. The poem went on to tell about an artesian watering hole where a trickster ghost was known to play his parlor guitar and sing lost cowboy songs every night. The band rode on and finally met this ghost and played him "Ghost of Tombstone" from their last CD of the same name. The trickster ghost listened, didn't say a word, grumbled, spit some chew, and looked teary eyed. He trembled as he reached down and handed the band an old chuck box full of 78 shellac records as he sang "Happy Trails" and vanished.

Water, Weeds and Ghosts is Trails and Rails' new CD of western/cowboy standards. The band members are Walt Richards, Paula Strong, Bruce Huntington, and Ken Wilcox. The CD has a fresh, live quality with clear instrumentals and vocal harmonies. It consists of 21 songs that include two medleys, one, a group of instrumentals ("Medley of the West Songs"), and the other, a creative mixture of vocal tunes including "Cowboy's Lament," "Whoopie Ti Yi Yo," "I Ride an Old Paint," and "The Last Round Up." This CD of updated old standards isn't just another nostalgic musical ride into the past. Each song is faithful to its origins and newly refreshed in the band's creative, innovative hands. Recording, performing, and updating songs that have been in our musical collective memory over the last century is not easy to do. Old standards like "Back in the Saddle Again," "Streets of Laredo," and "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" sound heartfelt and alive again on this CD. Little instrumental hooks, vocal harmonies that rework the original arrangements, offer a new spark to these songs and bring you back to Gene and Roy.

Western songs are the heartbeat and life blood of the Southwest. Trails and Rails have unearthed some buried musical treasures to keep these traditional melodies from becoming ghost music. What stands out are the seriousness and purposefulness of the band to keep the music fresh and entertaining while still respecting its tradition and origins.

While finishing this review, my monitor starts to fade into an eerie green. Crackly sounds creep out of the speakers like an old crystal radio and I quickly realize it's the trickster ghost singing a tune, a well known song that ends Trails and Rails' new CD, and I find myself singing along.....

Happy trails to you,
Until we meet again.
Happy trails to you,
Keep smiling until then....."



Adams Entertainment/Dan Crary

Primal Twang: The Legacy of the Guitar

by Simeon Flick

What a feather in the cap this is for San Diego music, to have hosted the official filming of such a prestigious event! *Primal Twang* debuted at the Birch North Park Theatre in September of 2006 and this superb DVD production seamlessly mixes live footage of the event (shot by director Anthony Leigh Adams and crew) with the archival video materials that were projected behind the musicians during the show.

Aurally reminiscent of Burl Ives, and with a narrative delivery as soothing as Garrison Keillor, Dan Crary overachieves as a versatile host, guide, and musical performer on a brief yet comprehensive presentation of the 3,500-year history of the guitar. Backed by a phenomenal assortment of session players (including musical director and renowned multi-instrumentalist Dennis Caplinger, bassist Jeff Pekarek, and drummer Duncan Moore, among many talented others), Crary illustrates key genres on the instrument's developmental timeline with the strategic placement of brilliant cameos from the likes of Doyle Dykes, Doc Watson, Albert Lee, Mason "Classical Gas" Williams (who performed the hit to a standing ovation), and Grammy award-winning "headliner" Eric Johnson.

The San Diegans are responsible for the hottest moments: North County resident Peter Sprague smiles perpetually through the Latin-drenched "DeSamba," dueting in virtuosic fugue with Fred Benedetti... who practically sets the stage on fire during his flamenco segment with George Svoboda and dancer Lakshmi Basile (who happens to be Jeff Pekarek's daughter).

The widescreen DVD presentation boasts a pro look and a cornucopia of relevant special features, including bonus tracks edited out of the two-hour final cut, lengthy and informative artist interviews, and a behind-the-scenes documentary that grants amusing insights into the minds of the *Primal Twang* creators and the frenetic journey toward opening night.

A presentation geared for wide scale consumption such as this can be a little watered down and hokey at times, like a theme park ride or museum exhibit, and it will be tough for the hardcore purists to brook the little to no mention made of pioneering innovators like Django Reinhardt and Robert Johnson. But the insightful narrative more than makes up for any kitschy defects with a surprising warmth of humor and a non-pedantic erudition, striking a satisfying compromise for all who appreciate the guitar.



Sam Johnson Duo Gliding Along

by Bart Mendoza

Duo recordings are always special. Sparse by default, it's a situation that can bring out the best in a performer; after all, with only two musicians there is a lot of sonic ground to cover. In a move that's custom made for future trivia board games, the Sam Johnson Jazz Duo actually has three members, though never more than two at a time. The instrumental combo is fronted by acoustic bassist Sam Johnson, who also penned eight of the album's 11 tracks, with guitar duties handled alternately by guitarists Alan Worthington and Matthew Frigon.

Sonically the album has a rich warm sound. The instruments appear to have been close mic'd, giving the sound a real texture and capturing every nuance of the notes, as well as the way they were played. Best of all, the sound has not been cleaned up, leaving in things such as the sliding of fingers on fretboards, clicks when hands first touch string, and even the occasional bass string rattle. These elements give the tracks a percussive feel and add to the warmth of the material. It's music made by humans not machines.

Favorite songs include the melancholy "Pleasant Dreams" and Latin flavored tune "New York Mystery Movie," with that last title particularly significant. Notably, the album's three covers are all from soundtracks. "Til There Was You," (from the "Music Man") is quite nice, but "Pure Imagination" (from "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," the 1971 original, not the Johnny Depp travesty) is an inspired song choice. Anyone doubting the power of a bass as a lead instrument should give this interpretation a listen. Johnson takes the lead melody line for the first part of the song, with Worthington contributing sparse chording before eventually taking the spotlight. In general, the album is custom made for either an intimate club or, at home, a good pair of headphones.

The disc closes on a light-hearted note with the "Flintstones Theme." In addition to being the shortest tune on the album, it's a terrific showcase for Johnson's talents, providing a never-ending series of bass runs that must have left him breathless upon the song's conclusion. If you're a fan of either jazz bass or guitar, *Gliding Along* is something you're going to want to give a listen to.





FEBRUARY CALENDAR

sunday • 1

Shady Side Players, Rebecca's Coffeehouse, 3015 Juniper St., 10am.
Breez'n, Seaport Village, 849 W. Harbor Dr., 1pm.
Peter Sprague Trio, Encinitas Comm. Library, 540 Cornish Ave., Encinitas, 2pm.
Road Work Ahead, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Bushwalla & Friends, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Chris Ayore/Megan Combs, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 2777 Roosevelt St., Carlsbad, 9:30pm.

monday • 2

Ian Tordella, Lyceum Theatre, 79 Horton Plaza, noon.
Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Peter Sprague String Consort, Saville Theatre, San Diego City College, 1313 Park Blvd., 8pm.

tuesday • 3

Al DiMeola, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.

wednesday • 4

Lighthouse, Friendly Grounds Coffee House, 9225 Carlton Hills, Santee, 7pm.
Brooklyn/Jordan Reimer, Hennessey's, 708 Fourth Ave., 7pm.
Mark Hummel Harp Summit w/ Charlie Musselwhite/Lee Oskar/John Mayall, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Victoria Rose/Melissa Vaughan/Mark Jackson Band/Dave Perski & Session 73/Jacqueline Grace, Backstage @ the Bitter End, 770 Fifth Ave., 8pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 4605 Mission Blvd., 9:30pm.

thursday • 5

Theo & the Zydeco Patrol, Magnolia's, 342 Euclid Ave., 6pm.
Robin Henkel, Wine Steals, 1953 San Elijo Ave., Cardiff by the Sea, 7pm.
Joe Rathburn & Frank Williamson, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Rd., 7pm.
Old Tyme Fiddle Jam, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
Louden Wainwright III, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., Normal Heights, 7:30pm.
Jay Nash & Joey Ryan, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Todd Snider/Keith Sykes, Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Republic of Letters/Astra Kelly/Anna Troy, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.
Jordan Reimer/Cotton Fever, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 6

Robin Henkel, Chateau Orleans, 926 Turquoise St., 6:30pm.
Mark Kinney, Wynola Pizza, 4355 Hwy. 78, Julian, 6pm.
Paragon Jazz Band, Casa de Oro Cafe, 9809 Camp Rd., Spring Valley, 6:30pm.
Steve Kaufman Flatpicking Workshop, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
Fiction Family w/ Jon Foreman & Sean Watkins, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Blue Largo, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Greg Laswell/Jessica Hoop, The Casbah, 2501 Kettner Blvd., 8:30pm.
Fielding, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Steve Poltz, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, Molly Bloom's, 2391 S. El Camino Real, San Clemente, 9:30pm.

saturday • 7

Steve Kaufman Flatpicking Workshop, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 9:30am.
Will Jaffe, Wynola Pizza, 4355 Hwy. 78, Julian, 6pm.
Shady Side Players, It's a Grind, 204 N. El Camino Real, Encinitas, 7pm.
Hot Club of Cowtown, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., Normal Heights, 7:30pm.
Dr. Baird & the Galapagos Mountain Boys, UCSD School of Medicine, Leibow Auditorium, 9500 Gilman Dr., 7:30pm.
Nadja Nara, Upstart Crow Bookshop & Coffeehouse, Seaport Village, 835 W. Harbor Dr., 7:30pm.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 7:30pm.
Steve Kaufman, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 8pm.
Magic Show: Impossible Visions by Sebastian, Carlsbad Village Theatre, 2822 State St., 8pm.
Freddie Hubbard w/ Gilbert Castellanos New Latin Jazz Quartet, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Tommy Dahill/The Shadow's Edge, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Joe Brooks/Sara Haze/Dawn Mitchele, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

sunday • 8

Blue Rockit, Seaport Village, 849 W. Harbor Dr., 1pm.
S.D. Folk Song Society, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 2pm.
Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main St., El Cajon, 2pm.
Sara Petit Video Shoot & Party, The Ould Sod, 3373 Adams Ave., 4pm.
Hot Club of Cowtown, Dark Thirty House Concert, Lakeside, 7:30pm. 619/443-9622

monday • 9

Barbara Nesbitt/Astra Kelly/Bernie Lee, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.

wednesday • 11

John Bosley, Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library, 9005 Aero Dr., 6:30pm.
Charles McPherson w/ Gilbert Castellanos, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
The Blokes/Jordan Reimer, Hennessey's, 4605 Mission Blvd., 9:30pm.

thursday • 12

Dr. Baird & the Galapagos Mountain Boys, UCSD Faculty Club, 9500 Gilman Dr., 6pm.
Theo & the Zydeco Patrol, Magnolia's, 342 Euclid Ave., 6pm.
Sue Palmer Trio, Bing Crosby's, Fashion Valley Mall, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Joe Rathburn/Coco & Lefe, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Rd., 7pm.
Kenny Neal Band, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Michael Wolff Trio, Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., 7:30pm.
The Riders, 2nd Wind, 8515 Navajo Rd., 8pm.
Robin Henkel, Wine Steals, 1243 University Ave., 8pm.
Andy McKee, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 13

Jake's Mountain, Wynola Pizza, 4355 Hwy. 78, Julian, 6pm.
Robin Henkel, Chateau Orleans, 926 Turquoise St., 6:30pm.
Love, Tea & Chocolate, Unitarian Universalist Church, 4190 Front St., Hillcrest, 7pm.
Back to the Garden w/ Eve Selis/Cactus, Twang & Whyte/Larry Grano, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Billy Watson, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Rob Deezy/Jordan Reimer, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 14

Plow, Wynola Pizza, 4355 Hwy. 78, Julian, 6pm.
Listen Local Meet & Greet Showcase, Cottonwood Golf Course, 3121 Willow Glen Dr., El Cajon, 6pm.
Peter Sprague Trio w/ Leonard Patton, Founders Hall, UUFSD, 1036 Solana Dr., Solana Beach, 7pm.
Adrienne Nims & Spirit Wind w/ Jim Lair, Rio Rico Restaurant, 5256 S. Mission Rd., Fallbrook, 7pm.
Wood's Tea Company, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Nathan Welden, Canyonfolk House Concert, Harbison Canyon, 8pm. canyonfolk@cox.net
Sue Palmer Trio, Bing Crosby's, Fashion Valley Mall, 7007 Friar's Rd., 8pm.
Brett Sanders, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Greg Campbell, Upstart Crow Bookshop & Coffeehouse, Seaport Village, 835 W. Harbor Dr., 7:30pm.
Zymzzy Quartet, SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Uptown Rhythm Makers, Claire de Lune, 2906 University Ave., 8pm.
Warren Hill, 4th & B, 345 B St., 8pm.
Lisa Sanders & Friends, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

sunday • 15

Shady Side Players, Rebecca's Coffeehouse, 3015 Juniper St., 10am.
High Society Jazz Band, 2223 El Cajon Blvd., 1pm.
North Park Rock 'n' Blues, Seaport Village, 849 W. Harbor Dr., 1pm.
Tasha Smith (harp), Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library, 9005 Aero Dr., 2pm.
Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main St., El Cajon, 2pm.
Tasha Smith, Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library, 9005 Aero Dr., 2pm.
Folding Mr. Lincoln, Bondi, 333 5th Ave., 4pm.
Gary Lefebvre B-Day w/ Guests, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7pm.
Susan Tedeschi/James Hunter, Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.
Carlos Olmeda, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Robin Henkel Band w/Horns, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

monday • 16

Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Hello Sunshine/Astra Kelly, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.
Donavon Frankenreiter/Gary Jules/Jasso & Garcia, Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.

tuesday • 17

Mimi Blais, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 7:30pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 2777 Roosevelt St., Carlsbad, 9:30pm.

wednesday • 18

Duncan Shiek w/ Lauren Pritchard, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
The Riders, The Stage, 762 5th Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, Hennessey's, 4605 Mission Blvd., 9:30pm.

thursday • 19

Theo & the Zydeco Patrol, Magnolia's, 342 Euclid Ave., 6pm.
Joe Rathburn & Chuck Schiele, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Rd., 7pm.
Old Tyme Fiddle Jam, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.
David Bandrowski & Friends, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.
Sue Palmer, Bing Crosby's, Fashion Valley Mall, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Sven-Erik Seaholm/Brooklyn/Jesse LaMonaca, Hennessey's, 4605 Mission Blvd., 8pm.
Carolina Chocolate Drops, Sherwood Auditorium, Museum of Contemporary Art, 700 Propsect St., La Jolla, 8pm.

friday • 20

Zymzzy Quartet, OB People's Food, 4765 Voltaire St., Ocean Beach, 6pm.
Kev, Wynola Pizza, 4355 Hwy. 78, Julian, 6pm.
International Pop Overthrow w/ Jed/Wendy Bailey/The Tearaways/The Shake-ups/Suite 100/Cherry Bluestorms/Sven-Erik Seaholm/Four Eyes, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 7:30pm.
Judy Collins, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
The Qadim Ensemble, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., Normal Heights, 7:30pm.
Bill Magee Blues Band, Theatr, 155 E. Grand Ave., Escondido, 7:45pm.
Christopher Dale Acoustic Trio, Hanlery Hotel, 950 Hotel Circle N., 8pm.
Chase Morrin, BookWorks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Johnny's B-Day Bash, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
John Coltraine/McCoy Tyner Tribute w/ Brian Levy/Bob Weller/Dave Marr/Gilbert Castellanos, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 9pm.
Chuck Cannon/Gregory Page, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, O'Sullivan's, 640 Grand Ave., Ste. A, Carlsbad, 9pm.

saturday • 21

The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, noon.
Frank Lucio, Wynola Pizza, 4355 Hwy. 78, Julian, 6pm.
International Pop Overthrow w/ Blackout 101/Windsor/The Minor Keys/We Should Be Dead/Roxy Monoxide/Cindy Lee Berryhill/The Loons, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 7:30pm.
Geoff Muldaur, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., Normal Heights, 7:30pm.
Pete Escovedo, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
Duke Ellington/Ella Fitzgerald Tribute w/ Leonard Patton & Rebecca Jade, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 8pm.
Thomas Baird & Friends, Rebecca's Coffeehouse, 3015 Juniper St., 8pm.
Johnny's B-Day Bash/Ben Varela, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.
Tribute to Lorna Doone w/ Joey Harris & the Mentals/DFX2/The Farmers/John Juke Logan/Mojo Nixon, Brick by Brick, 1130 Buenos Ave., 8:30pm.
Cash'd Out/Sara Petite/Pushin' Rope, Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.
Anna Troy Band/Allison Lonsdale @ 6pm, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

sunday • 22

Peter Rutman Jazz Band, Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library, 9005 Aero Dr., 2pm.
Peter Sprague Group Plays Stevie Wonder, tat's, Ruby H. Schulmann Auditorium, 1775 Dove Lane, Carlsbad, 2pm.
Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main St., El Cajon, 2pm.
Peter Rutman Jazz Band, Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch Library, 9005 Aero Dr., 2pm.
Breast Cancer Benefit in Memory of Janell Rock w/ Sue Palmer & Candy Kane, Dizzy's @ SD Wine & Culinary Ctr., 200 Harbor Dr., 4pm.

WEEKLY

every sunday

Shawn Rohlf & Friends, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.
Bluegrass Brunch, Urban Solace, 3823 30th St., 10:30am.
Daniel Jackson, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 11am.
Celtic Ensemble, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 4pm.
Traditional Irish Session, The Field, 544 5th Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7:30pm.
Joe Mendoza, Surf & Saddle, 123 W. Plaza St., Solana Beach, 8pm.
Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss, 8-10pm, KSDS (88.3 FM).
Jose Sinatra's OB-oke, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9:30pm.
The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice, 10pm-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every monday

Open Mic, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 7:30pm.
Pro-Invitational Blues Jam, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 8pm.
KPRI Homegrown Hour w/ Astra Kelly, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.
The Blokes, Hensley's Flying Elephant Pub, 850 Tamarack Ave., Carlsbad, 8pm.
Songwriter's Showcase, McCabe's Beach Club, 1145 S. Tremont, Oceanside, 8pm.

every tuesday

Traditional Irish Session, The Ould Sod, 3373 Adams Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic, Cosmos Coffee Cafe, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa, 7pm.
Chet & the Committee All Pro Blues Jam, The Harp, 4935 Newport Ave., 7:30pm.
Jack Tempchin & Friends, Calypso Cafe, 576 N. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Open Mic, E Street Cafe, 125 W. E St., Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Open Mic, The Royal Dive, 2949 San Luis Rey Rd., Oceanside, 8pm.
Patrick Berrogain's Hot Club Combo, Prado Restaurant, Balboa Park, 8pm.
Shep Meyers, Croce's, 802 5th Ave., 8pm.
Open Mic, Portugalia, 4839 Newport Ave., O.B., 9pm.

every wednesday

Music at Ocean Beach Farmer's Market, Newport Ave., 4-7pm.
Christopher Dale & Friends, Handlery Hotel, 950 Hotel Circle N., 5pm.

Paul Nichols' Pro-Am/Pro Jam Invitational, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main St., El Cajon, 5:30pm.

David Patrone, Clay's @ Hotel La Jolla, 7955 La Jolla Shores Dr., 7pm.
Scandinavian Dance Class, Folk Dance Center, Dancing Unlimited, 4569 30th St., 7:30pm.

Folk Arts Rare Records Singers' Circle, Kadan, 4696 30th St., 6pm.

Tomcat Courtney, Turquoise Cafe Bar Europa, 873 Turquoise St., 7pm.

Open Mic, Thornton's Irish Pub, 1221 Broadway, El Cajon, 7pm.

Open Mic, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4605 Park Blvd., 8pm.

every thursday

Chet & the Committee Open Blues Jam, Downtown Cafe, 182 E. Main, El Cajon, 6pm.

Paragon Jazz Band, St. Paul's Manor, 2340 Fourth Ave., 6:30pm.

Wood 'n' Lips Open Mic, Friendly Grounds, 9225 Carlton Hills Blvd., Santee, 6:30pm.

Joe Rathburn's Folkey Monkey, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Dr., 7pm.

Open Mic, Turquoise Coffee, 841 Turquoise St., P.B., 7pm.

Moonlight Serenade Orchestra, Lucky Star Restaurant, 3893 54th St., 7pm.

Traditional Irish Session, Thornton's Irish Pub, 1221 Broadway, El Cajon, 8pm.

Open Mic/Family Jam, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 8pm.

Open Mic, Skybox Bar & Grill, 4809 Clairemont Dr., 9pm.

Jazz Jam, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 9:30pm.

every friday

California Rangers, McCabe's, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.

West of Memphis, House of Blues, 1055 5th Ave., 6pm.

Acoustic Mayhem w/ Sven-Erik Seaholm & Jesse LaMonaca, Bondi, 333 5th Ave. 6pm.

David Patrone, Bing Crosby's, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.

Jazz Night, Rebecca's, 3015 Juniper St., 7pm.

Open Mic, Bella Roma Restaurant, 6830 La Jolla Blvd. #103, 8pm.

Open Mic, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.

every saturday

Blues Jam, South Park Bar & Grill, 1946 Fern St., 9pm.

International Pop Overthrow w/ Baby Scream/The Bigfellas/The Bobbleheads/Anna Troy Band/Shamey Jays/Dave Humphries Band/The Modlins/The Shambles, O'Connell's Pub, 1310 Morena Blvd., 4:30pm.
Bill Caballero Orquesta Binacional de Mambo, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
Steve Gillette & Cindy Mangsen, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm.
Johnny's B-Day Bash, Across the Street @ Mueller College, 4603 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

monday • 23

Jaeryoung Lee, Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., noon.
Robin Henkel, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.
Shrewd Lucy/Astra Kelly, Dublin Square, 554 4th Ave., 9pm.

tuesday • 24

Matt Wertz, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30pm.
The Bladerunners, San Diego Bluegrass Society Mtg., Fuddruckers, Grossmont Shopping Center, La Mesa, 8pm.
Jordan Reimer/Lindsey White, Bare Back Grill, 624 E St., 8pm.
Hank Williams III, 4th & B, 345 B St., 8pm.
Jordan Reimer, Bare Back Grill, 624 E St., 10:30pm.

wednesday • 25

The Blokes, Hennessey's, 4605 Mission Blvd., 9:30pm.

thursday • 26

Sue Palmer, Bing Crosby's, Fashion Valley Mall, 7007 Friar's Rd., 7pm.
Joe Rathburn & Patty Hall, Milano Coffee Co., 8685 Rio San Diego Rd., 7pm.
Amina Figarova Sextet, Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., 7:30pm.
Bobby Hutcherson, Anthology, 1337 India St., 7:30 & 9:30pm.
The Riders, First St. Bar, 656 S. Coast Hwy. 101, Encinitas, 8pm.

Happy Hour w/ Candy Kane, Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 5:30pm.
Belly Dancing/Local Mountain Tribal Group, Wynola Pizza, 4355 Hwy. 78, Julian, 6pm.
Robin Henkel, Chateau Orleans, 926 Turquoise St., 6:30pm.
Lucy Kaplansky, Acoustic Music SD, 4650 Mansfield St., Normal Heights, 7:30pm.

friday • 27

