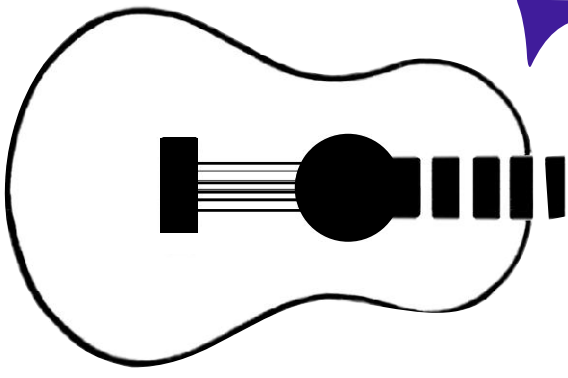


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# T SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR

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



November 2010

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## what's inside

### Welcome Mat.....3

Mission  
Contributors  
Zoe Keating

### Full Circle.....4

Barry Scott  
Recordially, Lou Curtiss

### Front Porch... ..6

Dixieland Jazz Festival  
Michael Tiernan  
MandoBasso

### Parlor Showcase ...8

Curt Bouterse

### Ramblin'.....10

Bluegrass Corner  
Zen of Recording  
Hosing Down  
Radio Daze  
Stages

### Highway's Song. ...12

Chad & Jeremy

### Of Note.....13

Scarlet Furies  
Leigh Taylor  
Jimmy Patton  
Liz Grace  
Cathouse Thursday  
Louisa West & Jimmy Patton

### 'Round About .....14

November Music Calendar

### The Local Seen.....15

Photo Page



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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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CONCERT REVIEW

Zoe Keating Wows the Crowd with Cello Magic



by Mike Alvarez

Beating the odds, cellist Zoe Keating has become something of an iconic figure in independent music circles. By taking control of her art as well as her business, she has achieved an enviable level of success with very few compromises. She has availed herself of online social media and marketing techniques, resulting in multitudes of followers on Twitter and Facebook, and, more significantly, thousands of CD sales and album downloads. One can easily find her music at sites like iTunes and Bandcamp where it regularly tops the classical and electronic charts. Her resume includes membership in the cello rock group Rasputina, tours and recording sessions with Imogen Heap, the California Guitar Trio and Amanda Palmer, and a recent collaboration with Curt Smith of Tears for Fears. But it is her solo act that is remarkable for its blend of musical artistry and technological wizardry. Keating reveals, "I was able to quit my tech job in '02 to become a professional musician."

Sophisticated software lets her create intricate cello arrangements onstage. Emphatically asserting that there are no pre-recorded tracks, she plays all of the music live in front of the audience. Foot controllers on the floor let her add and subtract the various loops and layers at will. As she explains, "I'm only limited by the amount of RAM in my computer. Right now I have between 16 and 24 tracks." The crowning touches are the hypnotic melodies she plays over the resulting "virtual cello orchestra." The overall effect is a rich ensemble sound that is mesmerizing and quite amazing to witness.

She recently wowed a capacity audience at Carlsbad's Museum of Making Music. Museum director Carolyn Grant explained that she originally met Keating through a luthier in Northern California and had been trying to get her to perform for quite some time. Kicking off the show with "Tetrishead," Keating expertly demonstrated her ability to craft the various interactive parts of the song's dark rhythms before letting fly with its soaring melody. Other songs

she performed were the somber "Sun Will Set" from her *Natoma* CD as well as some new tunes from her latest album *Into the Trees*. "Lost," "Escape Artist," and "Optimist" delighted the appreciative crowd, many of whom were string players. Two special additions to her setlist were her arrangement of a movement from Beethoven's 7th Symphony and "Exurgency," an early work of her own that she could not have previously played live due to technological limitations. Of the Beethoven piece, she says it was ideal for her approach because it is comprised of "complex parts that need to interact without stepping over each other," which very neatly encapsulates her meticulous methodology for creating loop-based music.

While the concert was the main event, she took the time to explain her creative process and demonstrate some of the techniques she employs to perform all by herself, a role she reluctantly assumes. She declares, "I'm not a soloist. For me, playing Beethoven with a hundred musicians is a peak experience. So all of this layering recreates being in an orchestra." She explained that her cello, which is named "Ariege" after the French town where it was made, is "not a power solo instrument, it's a blending one that was specially built for me. It's fatter on the bottom and has a lower resonant frequency of E. This is handy when you play with rock bands because drummers usually tune their toms to E." Although she confesses to having suffered from shyness and stage fright in the past, she demonstrated a confident and engaging persona that was warm and entertaining. Making the effort to meet and greet fans afterward, even with her new baby Alex in her arms, she proved to be encouraging and inspiring. Her pioneering use of technology as a music-making tool pushes back the boundaries of what was formerly possible by solo performers. Her do-it-yourself work ethic shows that it's possible to reach a wide audience without having to go through a middleman or record company. While grounded in classical traditions, Zoe Keating has embraced new technologies and has become the true embodiment of a forward-looking 21st Century artist.

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by Bart Mendoza

# BARRY SCOTT

## Back in the Saddle Again

Most artists never get a chance at the major label brass ring, let alone two and change, but then not many have the talent of Barry Scott. A gifted singer-songwriter and terrific rock guitarist, he's an East Coast transplant to San Diego, with an amazing resume that includes everything from Mark DeCervo to Hall & Oates, acoustic-based country tunes to Barbie.

### EARLY DAYS

Born and raised in Portsmouth, Virginia, Scott likens his childhood to being "as close to 'The Andy Griffith' show as it could be," he said. "I grew up in a neighborhood called Cradock, which holds the distinction of being the first planned shopping area in the U.S. By appearance it mimicked Mayberry in every way. I remember feeling like I was watching myself through Opie's adventures. Just a magical childhood." Music was part of family life. "My dad did play semi-professionally when I was very young," Scott recalled. "He taught me my first guitar chords and I supplemented that by watching 'The Monkees' TV show. I figured out a barre seventh chord by seeing Mike Nesmith playing 'Mary, Mary.'"

Had he been a smidge older he might have gone into sports, but a fateful TV show viewing in February 1964 changed notion. "[Until then] I would have done anything to play professional baseball. But seeing the Beatles on Ed Sullivan would have changed my mind anyway. I thought John Lennon was the coolest thing I ever saw. Funny how a 10-year-old can be so right about something. It was guitar, guitar, guitar, after that."

He doesn't recall his first performance in front of a live audience, but does remember an early game of musical one-upmanship, with his mid-sixties band, the Blueprint Index. "I was very young and playing at a private club," he recalled. "I thought I was far enough away from home to be in a different state, but it was only four or five miles from my neighborhood really." There were two bands that evening. The Blueprint Index was set up in one corner and the other band, the Crystal Ship, in the corner next to them, ready to play the moment they were done. "Well, before our last song [the Byrds' 'Feel a Whole Lot Better'] faded away, the Crystal Ship started with that song! The thing was...we were terrible and they sounded like the Byrds," Scott laughs at the memory. He became friends with the guitar player soon after that, in fact joining another band of his later on.

### SAN DIEGO 1972

18-year-old Barry Scott landed in San Diego with driving partner Kelly Miltier, in mid 1972. "I arrived in my Volkswagen Beetle with no friends or relatives and \$100 left in my pocket," he said. "I had just become serious about writing songs and wanted to be close to L.A. but not live

there," he explained. "I was young and naive and unaware that the scene I was attracted to, mostly Southern California country rock, had disappeared from the area." On his first night in town, at a party, Scott was introduced to someone who later took him to see two musicians that he knew, who were in a "rock opera" at San Diego State. "So I got my first look and listen to Chris Creasman and Jeff Gregory doing a fantastic job of Simon and Garfunkel's song 'America.' They were great - much better than me. But, I was young and cocky enough to approach them about becoming a group."

Creasman and Gregory soon teamed with Scott and Miltier, to become an acoustic group, Headfirst. Drummer/percussionist Chris Anderson was added soon afterward. The band performed regularly, particularly at SDSU's Backdoor where they performed regularly, including opening spots for Tom Waits, Patti Smith, and Jimmy Buffett. "We already did nearly all original tunes with an America or CSN&Y thrown in here and there," Scott said. When Headfirst ran its course, Scott and Creasman, continued as a duo, regularly playing long gone venues such as the Ancient Mariner, now the Brigantine. It wasn't long before the pair made the acquaintance of another transplanted East Coaster, Mark DeCervo, and soon put together one of the most important, if unsung, groups from San Diego's 1970s, Copenhagen. Besides Scott, Creasman, and DeCervo, the band included Mighty Joe Longa (the Mentals, etc.), Steve Bidrowski (the Unknowns), and Jeff Becker (Four Eyes). Copenhagen released a seven-inch single, "Tonight"/"Don't Sail Too Near the Wind."

Unfortunately, Scott was homesick. During a visit to Virginia he heard and was invited to join a new band just starting to play around Norfolk, Virginia, led by Jimmy McDonnell. That group would soon become the States. He returned to San Diego to say goodbye for awhile. The decision quickly proved to be a good one as within the year, the States had signed a major label deal with Chrysalis Records (Blondie, Jethro Tull).

### THE STATES

"When we first started getting record label attention we were still called 'McDonnell,' Scott said. "We were already playing shows with the Cars, Fotomaker, Robert Palmer, and others. Joe Piscopo of 'Saturday Night Live' fame was one of our opening acts." That sort of resume soon attracted attention.

A cassette demo the band made in a garage landed at ATI International, the booking agency headed by future famed TV producer Jeff Franklin. "His wife thought we were great after hearing it on a drive from the offices in Manhattan to their home in Connecticut," Scott recalled. "ATI became our booking agent and after Jeff became involved record companies were flying in to Norfolk on the weekends to see us. A&M, Capitol, and Infinity were all interested. We were quite surprised and delighted when Chrysalis snuck in at the last minute."

Despite being signed by Chrysalis' chairman of the board, Chris Wright himself, the band only stayed with the label for one self-titled album, released in 1979. Produced by Chris Bond (Hall & Oates, Jermaine Jackson) the LP was also released in several other countries including Canada and yielded a single, "My Latest Girl." "They did not like our manager at the time," Scott commented, although other issues played a factor as well. "Our record was not selling nationwide. And Pat Benatar, who was a newer artist on the label, was selling huge." The band had a five-album deal, with a budget of \$250,000 for the first album and session players like legendary pianist Nicky Hopkins. "Our manager made sure it was used, but the demo that we did in the garage sounded way better," Scott laughed. "Still, sales were big enough to change management, get out of our Chrysalis deal, and interest another company, which we did."

He did return to San Diego during this time frame. "After we signed with Chrysalis and the first LP was done we went on a nationwide tour with Hall & Oates. The tour brought us through San Diego and we played the Roxy here (11/07/79). It was one of the only cities where we were getting airplay," he recalled.

### BOARDWALK RECORDS

The States were signed to Boardwalk Records within a year of leaving Chrysalis. "We fired our first manager and Jeff Franklin suggested Doug Thaler, a hot agent working at ATI to step in. It was a great move. Doug got us away from being in debt for years to come and started working with us on new demos." Jeff Franklin and Boardwalk records president Neil Bogart were close business associates, having been involved together for years in Casablanca Records with artists like Kiss, the Village People, and Donna Summer. "Neil really liked the band and had big hopes and plans for us," Scott said. "He made a special point



Barry Scott

to write us a letter saying that the title cut from our 1981 Boardwalk album, *Picture Me With You*, would be 'the single of the summer.' Unfortunately, as the album was about to be released, Bogart died of cancer unexpectedly to everyone, except his wife," Scott said. "The label was lost without him. Ringo Starr and Phil Seymour also suffered because of it. Still, 'Picture Me With You' got continuous airplay and was a big hit for us in the mid-Atlantic. We sold about 80,000 copies in our area." The album was also released in Italy and Germany

Despite some success, the turmoil at Boardwalk meant the band was once again label-less. The band never recovered, though there were still a few releases though the late '80s, including a 1981 single for their fan club members, "This Christmas." Notably, in 1983, the band scored another regional hit with "I'm Watching You" from the album *Mondo Montage*. Unfortunately, the band soon folded. "We had been on the road so much we were just tired," Scott said. "Counting the building we rented to rehearse in and store gear, along with a road crew of four, who also drew weekly paychecks, we had to constantly travel. We just gave out." That would be it for the States. Almost. "As the '90s came to a close we were approached by the head of concert promoters, Cellar Door Entertainment, to reform, as we had disbanded, and do another album with the idea being to re-record some of our previous "hits" along with new material. That started out as a huge amount of fun because we

were all still very close but had gone our separate ways" Pre-production and rehearsals were reportedly great and the band went into the studio with much enthusiasm. However, the sessions soon went sour when outside musicians were brought in to "modernize" the material. "The resulting album was called *The States: Now and Then* and we were not happy with it. It didn't sound like us at all. It wasn't bad...it just wasn't the States."

### MATTEL AND DRACULA

Post States, Scott added an interesting sidebar to his songwriting career, though with a band connection. "Jimmy McDonnell worked for a short time with a children's record label, Rincon Records," Scott said. The connection found Scott involved in two high profile projects. In 1992 new trading card-comic book-cartoon franchise "Monster in My Pocket" added an album of original songs to its list of collectables, *Monster Rock*. Released by BMG Kidz, Scott sang on three songs. "It was my first experience as a "hired voice talent" and it was surprisingly hard. I remember having to get drunk to get into character, one of them being an English vampire." In 1994 he also placed a co-write with McDonnell, "My Best Friend" on a CD issued in honor of Mattel's Barbie doll's 35th Anniversary. "We submitted two songs, though only one was used and it was the weaker one. The lyrics were judged too suggestive on one song for young girls to be exposed to. Harry Belafonte's daughter Shari sang on the one they used."

continued on next page

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Barry Scott, continued

THE BARRYS

Scott next appeared with a band named, appropriately enough, the Barrys, releasing an album, *Who Else*, in 2002. The album still had Scott's signature powerpop melodies, but now with a country music influence.

"Despite most of my career being in vocal based pop bands, I have always been exposed to country music because that's just about all I heard around the house growing up," he said. "It's what my dad played and my mom sang. She loved Slim Whitman and Marty Robbins. And Jim Reeves. It's really not that removed from bands like Poco and the Buffalo Springfield. I love those bands and it's reflected significantly in my writing. When Dwight Yoakam came out I fell back in love with that music. I thought I was him for awhile in the '90s. My license plate frame still says, 'I Love Patty Loveless'."

The band was only together four years, winning a *Musician* magazine-sponsored "Best Unsigned Band in America" contest, the song "My Marie" earning a spot on an Atlantic Records distributed compilation album.

Though he finally released a solo album, *Why Did I Do Whatever I Did*, in 2008, he considers the Barrys to be his real "solo" debut. "Prior to the Barrys I had always been 'the guitar player in the band,' he explained. "That was because I was always in bands with better singers, starting back

in Virginia and continuing in California. But I have always sung on my own demos and pitched them that way. In a way the Barrys was a solo album; it just said *The Barrys* instead of Barry Scott."

TODAY

Scott returned to San Diego in 2004, performing for a short time with the Coyote Problem, the Working Class Cowboy Band, and Steelbone, as well as establishing a residency at Fiddler's Green, recently immortalized on his new 15-track album, *Live at Fids*. Owner Steve Rock is an old friend. "He recorded some of the early demos when Headfirst was forming," Scott said. "He even provided a place for me to live several times. When I arrived here again, I began playing three nights a week for the late night bar crowd. That went on for almost four years and during that time I recorded direct to CD occasionally. I didn't pay too much attention to levels or other details at the time because I hadn't planned then to ever let anyone hear it. That's a great thing about age. I'm a little too old to be embarrassed about much, so I recently decided to document the fun we had there with a CD. I play there now only every once in awhile.

To choose the songs Scott forced himself to sit down over a couple of months and listen to the 100 or so CDs he had to find performances that were listenable and not too embarrassing. By the time I had the selection down to what it is, I couldn't bear to hear myself anymore! It's all there. Sharp and flat notes and mistakes. But all and all, not too bad. As I said, I never really intend-

ed to release it. It's a pretty good cross section of what I use to play each night. A couple of the tunes were the only times I ever sang them. One, in fact, I wrote on the spot as you are hearing it.

While Scott has thus far been happy to perform his own music solo during his return to San Diego, he next wants to put together a group. "Solo is fun but being part of a group, especially with like-minded friends, is the best," he noted. "The new combo will be a vocal-based, guitar-driven pop band, not very different from the Barrys," he said. "The sort of band that shows Brit pop influences alongside songs that you might expect from a band like Buffalo Springfield"

He's also hoping to do something with his vast archive of unreleased material. "Quite honestly, there is so much stuff I will not live long enough to get to it," he joked. I spent the last couple of years trying to transfer stuff from cassettes and tapes to CD so I wouldn't lose work to age and deterioration. I'm very organized by nature and spent down time on tour with the States cataloging tapes of working songs so I have notebooks detailing the progress and location of just about everything going back to the '70s. And I'm currently on a writing spurt. I easily have more than 300 cassettes front and back of working songs. And then there is the material that the States worked on, demoed, or left behind because it was considered not right at the time. We have a recording of a song intended for 'Picture Me With You' given to by the guy who wrote 'Hit Me with Your Best Shot' for Pat Benatar that is great. We did not use it because he got a solo deal as we were recording it and asked us not to release it."

Some of the songs may be revived for his current projects. "I have been surprised at the tracks that are there. Some of them suffer from being written in outdated styles or maybe from childish lyric content, but there are many songs worthy of recording."

It's been early 40 years since Scott first arrived in San Diego and more than 45 years since he first picked up the guitar. After all this time he is clear on his favorite thing about being a musician. "I suppose it's being able to wear clothes most guys would not wear and be excused because you're a musician," he laughed.

Barry Scott can be reached at [barriedtreasure@gmail.com](mailto:barriedtreasure@gmail.com)  
For a full discography, see the online article at [www.sandiegotroubadour.com](http://www.sandiegotroubadour.com)

## Recordially, Lou Curtiss

MY RADIO DAZE

Next month I'll celebrate my 40th year in radio in San Diego. That's 40 years since I first went on the air to a San Diego audience. Actually it starts awhile before that. In about 1961 I was playing music with Terry Huston as a duo (the Lysaders) and we did a show on TV station channel 10. At that program I met Jeff Clark who had heard me doing an old talking blues tune called "The Talking Atomic Blues" and said I had a good voice. He offered to meet with me to talk about a career in radio. That always stuck in my mind and nine years later (after a few audition gigs at O.B. Jetty's Underground Radio) KPRI gave me a Sunday Night blues show and I was on my way. I'd do it solo, or with Ralph Phillips or Joe Chandler. After about a year and a half KPRI changed formats and the Sunday blues show was gone. Ralph and I tried a couple of audition shows at KDEO that didn't go over, but it was in 1972 that KGB asked me to do a Sunday morning gospel bluegrass show. They also said they'd give me a show titled "The Folk Arts Radio Show" on which I could play anything I wanted. For the next five years or so I did both of those shows (the Folk Arts show became sort of a Dr Demento type show with old-timey overtones. I also had a fair amount of in-person guests like Martin Henry, Mary McCaslin, Jim Ringer, Stuart Duncan and the Pendleton Pickers, Luke Baldwin, and bluesman Thomas E Shaw). One night I was feeling a little sick and decided to go with a live show (one of the concerts at Orango's that I was doing then) with A.J. Soares, Jimmy Borsdorff, and Jon Wilcox. It was a good show but what I forgot was that right in the middle of their set they did a song titled "I'm F----- Up Again (on the wine and the beer and the sin)." Now, in those days it seems that the FCC monitored stations and so I was called into KGB's office and got fired. I thought maybe my career in radio had come to an end.

Well, a few years later Kim Cox asked me down to KSDS to join him on a Sunday night jazz show and "Jazz Roots"

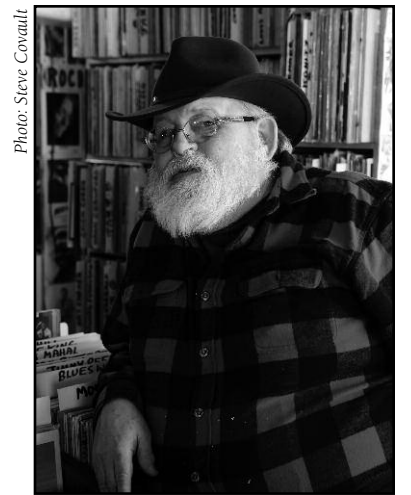


Photo: Steve Covault  
Lou Curtiss

was born. I've been going down to KSDS every Sunday night going on 24 years (playing old jazz and blues and the occasional old-timey song plus a few other things). I've never been paid for doing radio. It's something I do for the music because it's done so much for me. I always have a good time and I hope you'll listen and have a good time too.

Recordially,  
Lou Curtiss

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# November Is the Month for Dixieland Jazz

by John Philip Wyllie

Sometimes it's fun to take a step out of your musical comfort zone and try something a little different. That's what I did last November when I finally made it to the San Diego Dixieland Jazz Festival held at the Town & Country Hotel.

As a child I once saw Louie Armstrong perform and I also visited New Orleans where I enjoyed the legendary Al Hirt in concert. Music was everywhere in the Big Easy and I fell in love with the toe-tapping rhythm and joyous feel of Dixieland music. There, the seed was planted. In the subsequent years my ears have perked up whenever I have heard Dixieland jazz played.

I had known about the San Diego festival, called the crown jewel of jazz festivals for years and in the last several I seriously thought about going. But for whatever reason, I never made it. Big mistake! I finally attended my first San Diego Dixieland Festival last year and it was wonderful! Fortunately, I will have another opportunity this month and come hell or high water, I will be there.

The festival, hosted by the San Diego Dixieland Society will celebrate its 31st year this month and run Thanksgiving weekend from November 24-28 at the Town & Country Hotel in Mission Valley. Twenty-five top-notch bands from far wide will perform. While many of them will naturally play traditional Dixieland jazz there will be enough variety on display to make this festival really interesting.

Last year we thoroughly enjoyed "Queen of Boogie Woogie" Sue Palmer and Her Motel Swing Orchestra. They'll be there again this year and they never fail to entertain and amuse.

Fans of Benny Goodman, Bing Crosby, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Lester Young will enjoy entire sets dedicated to those musical legends. Other sets will entirely feature gospel music and western swing.

Headliners this year include Tom Rigney and Flambeau, Tim Laughlin's New Orleans All-Stars, High Sierra Jazz Band, Titanic Jazz Band, Night Blooming Jazzmen, Yerba Buena Stompers as well as a handful of others.

While this festival tends to draw a decidedly older crowd, we were please to see some excellent youth ensembles on hand. The Mission Bay High School Dixie Band and prodigy saxophonist and clarinet whiz Chloe Feoranzo impressed last year and will again perform this time.

Five day passes are just \$90. Four, three, and single day passes are also available from \$15 to just \$85. A wide array of food and beverages are available on site and all-day parking is available for only \$6.00.

For additional information visit the festival's website at [www.dixielandjazzfestival.org](http://www.dixielandjazzfestival.org).



Sue Palmer & her Motel Swing Orchestra



Tom Rigney

## Tiernan CD Embraces Love and Loss

Photo: Dennis Andersen



Michael Tiernan

"Don't worry Mike, I am Strong." Tiernan hung up the phone and couldn't believe it. Stage 4 cancer, his own brother. Two years later, as Tiernan was recording tracks in the studio for "Strong," the very song he had written about his brother Joe's

battle with the terrible disease, he received another call. Three days later, his brother passed away. Tiernan played the song for his brother on the last morning of his life. "Strong" is the swirling center of Tiernan's emotional and inspiring album, *L.A. Can Wait*.

However, *L.A. Can Wait* is not about death and is certainly not a downer. It is actually an uplifting album that reveres each unique color in the spectrum of life, from birth to death, with the over-arching mandate to appreciate and enjoy every moment in between.

A cancer survivor himself, in fact, Tiernan penned two of the most tender of love songs, which were inspired by the unexpected miracle of new life – the birth of his first child. Having been a year away from being ordained a Catholic priest, in Rome just several years prior, kids were never in the picture – but, oh, how life changes. And it's a good thing it does, because these songs are celebratory tear-jerkers about all the amazing twists of life, especially the unexpected ones.

The album's title track, "L.A. Can Wait," gets right to the heart of living out your dreams and viewing obstacles as a helpmate to growth: "So L.A. can wait, Nashville can wait – I'll put a hold on Austin / I just want to get lost in you." In one of the album's featured songs, "Father and Child," Tiernan exclaims, "You're the miracle I never knew I was waiting for / Life is blossoming, like I'm walking through a door

A CD release is planned for Sunday, November 7, 3:30pm, at the Crossings, 5800 Crossings Drive in Carlsbad.

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Photo: Marcia Claire, Scott West & Bill Ray at The Viper Room in Hollywood ©2010 Leah Lathrop



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Photo & story by Tony Cagala

It may seem an unusual pairing of instruments both in size and sound – Gunnar Biggs' resounding Dutch flat back 3/4 size double bass, and Bill Bradbury's lilting Paul Schneider-designed Summit mandolin. But like many contrasting pairings the duo goes as well together as sweet and sour, coffee and cream, steak and eggs.

Performing as MandoBasso, Biggs and Bradbury maintain that it is the extremes of registers of each of the instruments that make them a natural sonic pairing.

Another natural pairing is the musicians themselves. They have known each other for about 18 years. Both have come from musically enriched families, and both have taught music at the college level. Biggs, who has a background in classical and jazz, is a well-known studio musician and teaches bass at several colleges around San Diego. His father has taught music at SDSU since 1957. Bradbury, who received his PhD from Cornell University, has a background in composition and computer music. He is currently a faculty member at Cal State San Marcos.

"We have compatible senses of humor and students often mistake us for one another," said Biggs.

"I loved the idea of the two of us, who look very similar on stage with two string instruments that are so different," Bradbury added. "Gunnar is an amazing jazz bass player and I had been playing a lot of Irish music at the time, so we thought it would be fun to combine the two styles and see what developed," Bradbury said.

"We found [that] we both loved traditional Irish and American music," said Biggs. "So [we] decided to start messing around with it. That resulted in our CD and continued live performances," Biggs added. "We're close to half-way done composing pieces for a second CD," said Biggs.

Their self-titled, debut album, *MandoBasso* was released earlier this year.

Catching them live is a treat, but it's also rare. "Since Gunnar is a very busy studio and performing musician and I teach full time at Cal State San Marcos, we don't have time for as many MandoBasso gigs as we might like," Bradbury said.

But they are scheduled to play through the rest of the year. "We will play at

Palomar College and the Encinitas Library in the fall and the Museum of Making Music in January. We also play regularly at Carlsbad's It's a Grind coffee house," he explained.

"We are working on other gigs as well, including playing at a gallery space in Santa Monica," Bradbury added.

Flashback to last July, during the first real heat of the summer, the duo gave a limited seating house concert in a Cardiff-by-the-Sea neighborhood.

"It's a great vibe here," said Biggs, as he and Bradbury took to the raised living room stage.

Biggs stood at the ready as Bradbury plucked at each of the mandolin strings, turning the tuning pegs. "In this weather it's hard to stay in tune," he said. Biggs heaved a heavy, mocking sigh of impatience.

The concert was a mix of material from their first CD, some impromptu improvisations, and new material from their upcoming album.

The heat and humidity of the day was weighty and the cool coastal breeze seemed to lag in its relief. At some point, the musicians realized it must be influencing the evening's playlist, as they played a mellower, meditative set, prompting Biggs to joke that the tunes must have been from their "Prozac years."

"Ballads and 'mellow' tunes are probably the hardest to write and play effectively," Biggs later explained. "Every note is 'naked' and must be treated individually and specifically for maximum effect and meaning. The next CD will have a variety of tempos and material," he said.

One of the more up-tempo pieces the duo introduced was a new song titled "Mr. Hanford." Bradbury wrote the piece while on vacation last summer.

"My father-in-law is an actor in community theatre in Hanford, California, as well as a successful businessman," he said. "Several years ago he was asked by the city council to portray James Madison Hanford, for whom the city was named, at a community event.

"Since then he has continued to portray Mr. Hanford on a regular basis, now with a long beard and hair and an outfit to match... he projects quite a sight when he is in character, a wonderful eccentric," he said.

The sound is jaunty and confident, he

# MANDOBASSO

## AN UNLIKELY PAIRING



Gunnar Biggs and Bill Bradbury on bass and mandolin

explained. "As soon as it was finished, I knew it had to be named Mr. Hanford," said Bradbury.

"You ought to meet Mr. Hanford," Bradbury said, after they had finished the song.

"I feel like I already know him," said Biggs.

And that is the quintessential feeling you have after listening to their music. The songs seem to be personal narratives, allowing the listener to sightsee through the two musicians' worlds.

But Biggs wouldn't necessarily describe the music as impressionistic. "I would hope the music leaves an impression with the listener, but the style would be more Nouveau Americana, for lack of a better term," said Biggs.

"Certainly, a great goal to aspire to is to create images and feelings within the mind and ear of the listener but to musicians, Impressionist music is that of Debussy and Ravel, which may have had some bearing on my musical education but not something I'm striving for in writing for and playing in

this group," Biggs added.

There is humor in the music; there is gentleness in the music; and there is tradition in the music. Each of the musicians has written songs for their wives, their mothers and their fathers, and meaningful locales; Biggs has even written songs for his dog and guinea pig.

"My life is rich with family, travel, my life partner, and canine cohorts – lots of material in that much happiness," said Biggs. "The harmonies and melodies suggest to me the feel and/or the character of a person, place, or thing," he added.

The band also covers traditional music that keeps with the romantic, narrative quality of their original music, exemplified by their rendition of the Irish folk song "Captain O'Kane."

"I do hope people will tap their feet, smile a bit, and maybe be touched by some of the sweeter tunes," said Bradbury.

Bradbury first took up playing the mandolin when he was about 15-years-old, he explained. He learned on his grandfather's bowl-back mandolin and eventually began

playing folk music in amateur string and bluegrass bands.

"I then left the instrument for nearly 25 years and picked it up again in my mid-40s. I've been focusing on mandolin seriously for the past four or five years," he said.

"I studied composition for many years and my influences were composers in the European concert, orchestral tradition," Bradbury said.

"As a mandolinist, my biggest influences are probably David Grisman, Sam Bush, Mike Marshall, and Andy Statman. I'm more drawn to players who really 'push the envelope' in their music, exploring new territory and combining various music genres. It's at the intersections of different music styles that lots of the interesting stuff happens!" Bradbury said.

"I think the fun of MandoBasso is in weaving together the disparate sounds of the mandolin and bass in new and interesting ways. As a duo, we try to make ourselves sounds a full as possible given the challenge of 'filling the gap' in the ranges of the instruments.

"So far I think we've done well and have had a great time doing it. I certainly wouldn't rule out adding other instruments in the future, but for now the duo is working fine. We have experimented with looping ourselves and layering textures and we'll probably explore more of that soon.

Some have compared their sound to Edgar Meyer's and Yo-Yo Ma's string ensemble album *Heartland: An Appalachian Anthology* minus the orchestrations.

"My background in composition does influence how I write for MandoBasso, but I don't think I would consider any orchestral textures at this time, our sound is fine as is," he added.

The pairing doesn't seem to have a drought of material, or see a limitation to their unique sound.

"Only if we place a limitation on what we imagine is possible," said Biggs. The musicians and their instruments have an infinite amount of possibility for new expansions, Biggs explained.

Here's to infinity, then. More information on the musicians and links to MandoBasso's concert schedules can be found at [williambradburymusic.com](http://williambradburymusic.com) or [gunnarbiggs.com](http://gunnarbiggs.com). Their self-titled CD, *MandoBasso* (reviewed in the August issue of the *San Diego Troubadour*) is available at [cdbaby.com/cd/biggsbradbury](http://cdbaby.com/cd/biggsbradbury), or on iTunes and Amazon.com.



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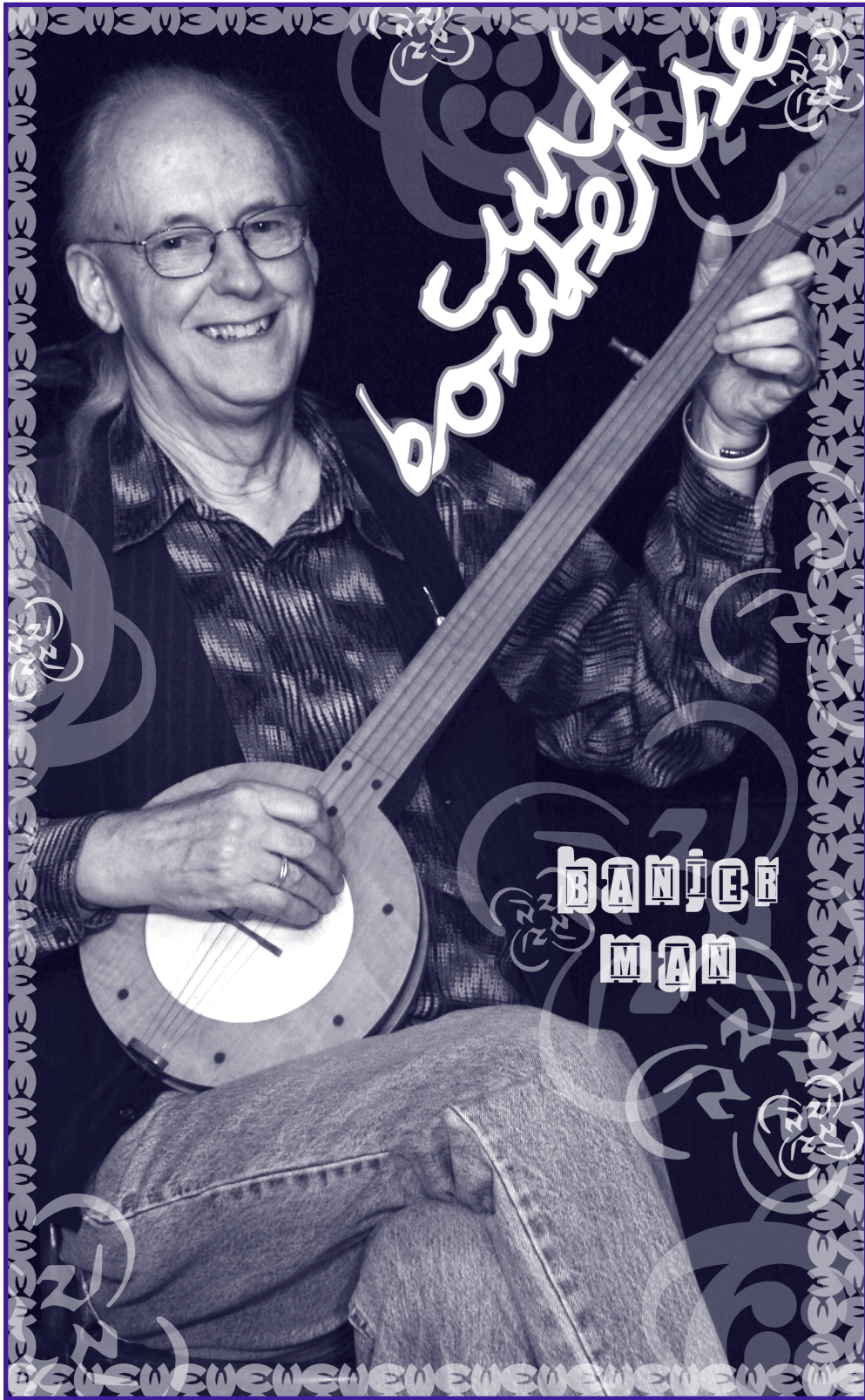
We proudly welcome singer/songwriter Peter Bolland (Coyote Problem) along with multi-instrumentalist & string wizard, Dennis Caplinger, together for the first time for a special pre-holiday show.



w/ Dennis Caplinger sittin' in



by Frank Kocher



### The overstuffed couches and chairs in Rebecca's

coffee house in South Park look different in the daytime, and the air in the spacious room sounds full of echoes and noise. The place has a cozy feel at night when the light is inside and people are relaxing at tables to study, blog, or listen to a performer on the stage to the left of the door in the big open room; it's like a refuge from a more bustling, harder-partying world. Now, it is early afternoon on a weekday, and two young girls are playing, loudly, near the stage; a few people are at the counter ordering pastries and espresso made with a machine that grinds with a metallic scream as the air fills with the pleasant smell of warm coffee beans. Trucks and busses bustle past on busy 30th Street outside the window. The place seems too busy, loud, and full of the clanging sounds of daytime, but Curt Bouterse, local traditional musician and musicologist, doesn't seem to mind and picks a seat on a comfortable green couch near the stage.

An acclaimed expert on medieval instruments and banjos (traditional, fretless banjos), Curt presents himself in an unassuming way – tall and slim, with lively and intelligent blue eyes behind wire-framed glasses; he looks like he is most comfortable in denim. The thinning silver hair is pony-tailed, and his relaxed voice is never far from an easy chuckle. Not long into our conversation, it's clear that Curt is not going to engage in the kind of profanity one gets used to nowadays. The son and grandson of country preachers, he is polite. As he talks about banjos, old-time musicians, the early San Diego folk scene, and his educational pursuits, it also doesn't take long to tell that music isn't Curt's only, or biggest, interest.

His story begins in the rolling bluegrass hills of rural Kentucky; the quiet small town of Carlisle is the birthplace of Curtis Carlisle Bouterse. His Dutch granddad and father were Baptist ministers, and his mother was from an eastern Tennessee family. Music was a family affair in the Bouterse household, where Curt was the oldest of five kids.

His grandparents hosted a popular local Florida radio show in the '30s, featuring their gospel singing. His mother was a gifted singer and pianist who passed up a possible musical career for family life, and played organ in his father's choirs. Young Curt and his sister Lee both sang along from very early age.

A year and half older, Curt recalls his young sister being picked on by a bully, much huskier than he. He stepped in like a proper big brother and "whaled on the kid" to defend her, after telling her, "Hold my popsicle." It was his only fight.

World War II came a few months after Curt did, and his dad joined the Navy as a chaplain. After the war, the family began 20 years of traveling to various Navy outposts, including stops in San Diego, Point Hueneme, Naples, Italy, and other locales.

"I went to third grade in three different schools. I had a chance to constantly reinvent myself."

At home, there were plenty of his father's classical music records, which were young Curt's favorites. When he lived in Naples during the early '50s he would listen to the radio and hear different music from all over the Mediterranean. The melodies he heard, including the street sounds of whistling laborers, bagpipers, and street vendors, would make an impression on him that appeared later in his career choice.

Back in Clarksville, Tennessee, for junior high, he lis-

tened to local radio that played bluegrass and country music between farm reports; his favorites were the old time fiddlers they would sprinkle in. In '57 his dad brought him a hammered dulcimer from Hong Kong. With no one to teach him to play it, he taught himself, concentrating on adaptations of old fiddle tunes.

"When folk music became popular in the early sixties I began singing songs, many of which I had known for years," Curt recalls. "For a short while I even played a guitar! But, since everyone else did that – and I wasn't too fond of the sound anyway – I began playing the banjer, Appalachian dulcimer, and autoharp. I also began working on my hammered dulcimer chops, though I had played it off and on since I was about 16. Mostly, I considered the instrument's accompaniment for songs; I also preferred the old unaccompanied ballads."

Curt enjoyed folk music, but then as now prefers traditional style, like the New Lost City Ramblers, to the more polished and popular pop-folk acts as the Kingston Trio and others who rode the folk wave to riches in the early '60s.

Attending San Diego State University in 1961, Curt met two local music legends who both became friends and mentors.

"It was about '61 or '62 that I met Sam [Hinton], Stu Jamieson, and Bess Lomax Hawes at the Idylwild summer school. That's where I got to sing my first shape note and a lot of other things. Sam, Bess, and Stu had been doing summer schools up there for a long time."

Local traditional music legend Sam Hinton was introducing Curt to "shape note" traditional hymn singing, called sacred harp music, right around the time of folk music's popular breakout. He and Jamieson advised Curt about traditional repertory for his hammered dulcimer, and Curt began to develop a reputation on the instrument. Around this time, he was becoming more and more involved with the banjo as well.

"There were a lot of people in San Diego at the time who were affected by this music and learned to play it. Lou Curtiss was there as well as many others."

The big influence on Curt was Jamieson, who introduced Curt to fretless banjer; after Stu taught him, he "started off fretless and never worried again." "Stu was a tremendous guy; he just died about a year ago and will be sorely missed. So many were influenced by him."

The room shudders with sound as a large tractor-trailer truck groans to a halt at the stop sign in front of Rebecca's; somehow the monster has business on this quiet Juniper Street today. As Curt makes himself comfortable on the couch, he begins to clarify the word banjer.

"People think they know what the banjo is. Almost anywhere you go, whether it's one of the bluegrass websites or old-time music and jazz websites, there's always hassling and discussion about peoples' perceptions of the banjo – especially old-time players; when they walk in a place, the first thing people say is, 'Hey, that's not a guitar, that's a banjo. Can you play 'Dueling Banjos' or 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown?'"

"Most people are familiar with bluegrass, if they know anything about the banjo. Fifty years ago, they would have thought about Eddie Peabody and Dixieland or something like that. So, it's a very wide field of music that is played by this one instrument. Most of it is fairly recent; it's fairly modern. All of the popular banjo playing styles really started in the 20th century. Old-time, traditional banjer playing from the 18th and 19th century was a very different kind of cat. The banjer played different kinds of music and was built differently; it had a different audience, it had different roots, and all of that. My preference for banjer, when talking about traditional old-time banjo playing, is just so that it brings it back to those roots."

Curt mentions that another reason for the name "banjo" has to do with Southern pronunciation and points out that Thomas Jefferson (a fiddler) and other early references called the instruments banjers, "but I'm not dogmatic about it," Curt adds.



It's Saturday and two steps into Folk Arts Rare Records on Adams Avenue, the bookstore-like aroma of tens of thousands of record jackets is unmistakable. Owner, longtime San Diego traditional music guru, and *San Diego Troubadour* columnist Lou Curtiss steps into the narrow aisles among countless vinyl LPs, graciously giving me a tour. At a room to the rear of the modest converted home, he says, "The records in here are in my private collection." Judging by the quality of the others, many are rare and old; these must be treasures indeed.

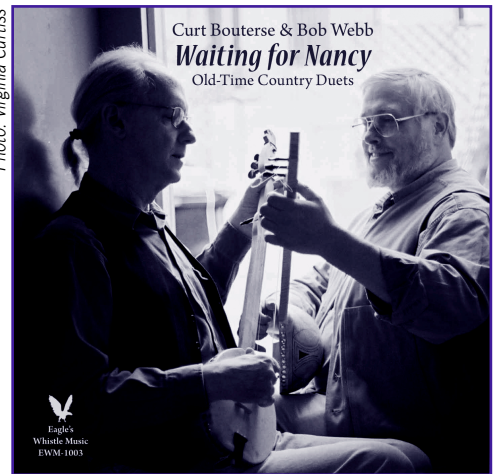
"I met Curt in 1962. When I went out to San Diego State, he was probably one of the first people I got to know there. During the summer before, there had been an on-campus organization called the Campus Organized Folk



Bouterse with his first dulcimer, 1963



Fretless banjo workshop, 1979 (Bouterse, 2nd from right, top)



Bouterse CD with Bob Webb, *Waiting for Nancy*



Bouterse with self-made fretless gourd banjo, 2004





Singers and Folk Song Society. Curt and I decided that the group ought to continue, so we called a meeting. I met him at an African History class, and we started talking about traditional music.

"I had heard of him before that and he had heard of me. I think, I'm not sure, around the coffeehouse scene. So we started a folk song society; that was the time of the hootenanny era, you know, the Great Folk Scare. We kind of started a traditional music version of that, a series of on-campus hoots every Thursday that went on for several years.

"He was a trail blazer and one of those guys to go to if you had a question about music, since Curt was a music major. Most of the rest of us, or the people I knew, were either history majors or political science majors or something else, but Curt was actually on the music end of things. Not only could he tell you about an old-time tune, but also what mode it was in and what central European tradition it came out of, or that sort of thing. I was one of those people who, whenever I was around anybody who knew something about music, I tried to absorb it. I was on the other end of things, because I was the record collector. Curt was more likely to collect old instruments and learn about traditional ways of playing them."



His school days as the observing wanderer helped steer Curt's path as a student.

"I was turned on to anthropology even though I didn't know what it was; I was just curious why people did things the way they did," Curt says.

Archeology and history also fascinated Curt, as did music. His first bachelor's degree reflected these interests. As he completed a second degree in music during the mid-'60s, he extensively studied medieval music, art, history, and literature.

"As an anthropologist I'm interested in what human beings do, and as a historian I am interested in how long they've been doing it and why and how. I study almost everything I can come up with. I have a collection of books on the history of just about anything; I've always been interested in old things.

"We all have the same brains, and we all have the same tongues, but we come up with thousands of different languages. Then you say, well, we are all dealing with the same basic tools; well, of course we are, but if you think that explains it, it doesn't. The explanation is in all of the differences – the fact that someone is born in a different society and comes up with a completely different way of dealing with the world."

Curt feels that it's important not to get caught up in comparing everything in terms that are familiar or similar when the keys to the world are the things different and unique.

A childhood love of libraries and thirst for knowledge served Curt well. After a stint in the service, he pursued a master's degree in world music, responding to long-standing interests in both history and music. While furthering his education, he founded and began performing with a medieval music ensemble, Alfonso X, in 1970. He also hosted a local FM world music show. In 1979, he published an article about medieval Arabic lutes, which demonstrated that the widely accepted descriptions of the instrument from a prolific earlier expert were actually far too large to have been actually held and played; Curt's studies are now the cited standard.

After receiving his master's degree in 1983, he spent a decade studying music from Asia, Africa, the East Indies, and American Indian sources. Given an opportunity to pursue a Ph.D. in ethnomusicology at the University of Maryland, he studied with renowned ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood. Curt's Ph.D. came on his birthday in 1996, which led to college-level teaching positions in San Diego and Baltimore later on.

At this time he was also making a name for himself as a performer and was already a regular on the local folk scene. In 1967, he performed and emceed the first San Diego Folk Festival, the only performer to play in the first 20 at SDSU and the first 15 Adams Avenue Roots Festivals.

There is still a line at the counter. As the young girls at Rebecca's sense the microphone's presence and scream, Curt recalls the old days.

"There were a lot of us guys way out on the coast. Not only Stu Jamieson, who was our mentor in a lot of ways but also Dave Lindley who is a really good guitar player and banjo player; there were a lot of good banjo players then."

Recalling old folk festivals and the Topanga Canyon Banjo and Fiddle Contest, "People went to those things mostly to see what new banjos had been dragged up from a pawn shop in Yuba City or something place like that. There were a lot of beautiful instruments that came around."

Another artist he performed with early on was Bob

Webb, who played both guitar and banjo. Starting around 1968, Webb often played accompaniment for Curt on banjo while Curt played fiddle tunes on hammered dulcimer.

Though Webb relocated to the East Coast in the late '70s, Curt recalls it as "one of those friendships that when he walks into the room, it's like we've always played together; we pick up where we left off."

"Back in the '60s and '70s there were a lot of folk music venues in San Diego, lots of coffee houses and all, and, actually, I closed a lot of the folk music places," Curt says. "At one time, Bob Webb was one of the owners of the Heritage in Mission Beach, which lasted for a long time. In fact, I was playing there regularly on Sunday nights, or something like that, when it closed. I also played the last weekend that the Bi-Frost Bridge in La Mesa and played, I think, the last weekend at the Candy Company on El Cajon Boulevard.

"I started to feel like I had this black raven on my shoulder every time I walked into a place. I figured it was about time to pack up and leave [laughs]. Well, there weren't very many people who were willing to work as cheap as I did, so I was doing a lot of stuff."

By this time, the young girls have left. Rebecca's and Curt has relocated to a corner near a window. It is quieter, but none of the background distractions have bothered him anyway. He seems to have a degree of inner calm, one that is tempered with an inquisitive, active mind.

Over the years, Curt's standing as a banjer and hammered dulcimer player continued to grow. In 1978, he published a collection of 11 compositions, including "Farewell to Nixon and Ten Other Newly Made Old Time Banjer Tunes in Traditional Style." It featured one of his best-known pieces, "Waiting for Nancy," a reel that has been covered by many artists. In addition, he performed occasionally on movie soundtracks, and in 1980 string multi-instrumentalist Lindley, an old acquaintance from Topanga, recommended him to guitarist Ry Cooder to play in a movie soundtrack for the film *The Long Riders*. His contributions to this well-known album included playing penny whistle and hammered dulcimer on such tunes as "Seneca Square Dance" and "Jesse James." A year later, he contributed more dulcimer playing to Lindley's *El Rayo X* album.



In recent years, Curt has helped spearhead a fretless banjer revival of sorts, according to Curtiss, now seated in a comfortable desk in his record store, surrounded by boxed reels of tape, computer gear, and sound equipment.

"There's a lot of interest in fretless banjo all over the country. Certainly the most important early fretless banjo player was Frank Profitt, who came out of Virginia. Curt kind of got interested in that instrument going again. In the '60s people rediscovered Frank Profitt and he made a couple of albums. Then, well, he died. To some extent the instrument didn't exactly die with him, but it certainly fell back into the genre of 'yeah, this is one of those banjos they play in the South.' Guys like Curt and Mike Seeger and others kept those old ways of playing around. Of course, we lost Mike this last year.

"The other instrument Curt popularized is the hammered dulcimer, and I didn't see anybody playing a hammered dulcimer before Curt started playing it. There were hammered dulcimer societies that met and played – like 20 or 30 of them – in bands. But then Curt started playing fiddle tunes on it."

Lou points out the influence of Curt on Guy Carawan, when the latter was getting started on the dulcimer in the early '70s.

"Guy took it back East and pretty soon everybody was playing them. I always thought Curt should have gotten more credit for introducing the hammered dulcimer back into traditional music than he did."

Though musical trends change with the times, Lou isn't convinced.

"The one thing that always surprises me is that with all the various places to play music in this town, Curt isn't working more, isn't asked to play more places. He's not only a great musician but he's also a fine performer who puts on a good show. And you go away feeling like you've listened to a good program, plus you've learned something.

"He's one of San Diego's musical treasures, and San Diego doesn't do very well by its musical treasures."

Lou is playing cherished tapes of Curt and other old-timers like Sam Hinton, Tom Waits, Tomcat Courtney, and Jack Tempchin performing at past Folk and Roots festivals. These include young Curt singing and playing at some of the

earliest get-togethers at San Diego State. Lou sits at the controls like a mage, his tapes and discs conjuring the sound of Curt's ethereal-sounding hammered dulcimer tones, which soon fill the room.

"One of the people I looked to impress when I started putting together the folk festivals was Curt. He may not have known that, but that's the honest truth. If I impressed or got a good word from Curt about a festival, I'd put on a pretty good festival."



Just as Curt is about to recall stories of his banjer-building, a loud screeching sound, like skidding tires at high speed, has this interviewer ready to dive for cover.

"It's okay, it's just the espresso machine," he smiles.

"When I was a kid living in Naples they had real espresso machines, but I don't remember them making noise like that."

Frank Profitt not only played fretless banjers, he built them, and Curt, who owns several built by Profitt and his son, Frank Jr., does the same. He built his first instruments in 1963 – a fretless box banjer and an Appalachian dulcimer. Since then, he has built many other instruments, including an octagonal-shaped box for his original fretless.

"A few years later I decided to make a copy of the William Sidney Mount banjo. It's in the famous painting of the young black man with the stocking cap playing. The

wood that I used on the William Sidney Mount was beautiful cherry. But the banjo itself had to be Japan black on the outside, so I had to cover up all this beautiful cherry. You can see it on the inside, but I was sort of weeping as I put all this finish on it. On the next

one, I decided to make an entire instrument out of cherry."

Curt adds that banjer building, making pottery, and jewelry making are things he likes to do, but he only does them for himself and his own satisfaction, not commercially.

"I sort of wish in many ways that I were less fractured and more focused, but it probably wouldn't have been as much fun. It would have been nice to concentrate on one thing and do it well, and be successful at it, make some money at it. Maybe the last part of that is the most important. But so far, I've just enjoyed the things that I do; I've gotten pretty good at them but haven't made any money. So I'm not exactly a jack of all trades and master of none, but I am a jack of all trades and I like to master as many as I can."

Curt has been building gourd banjers for a long time, and the musicologist in him is evident in his designs. He's also made wood banjers and medieval lutes of various types.

"I think every banjo player who's really interested in the instrument is missing something essential about the instrument if he doesn't build one himself, even if it's not a good one. Building it is important, because, for one thing, you'll never take your instrument for granted after that. And, you may develop a lot of confidence about the things that you can do with this; it's a lot easier than building a guitar, although you can build a cigar box guitar and a lot of people have. I would recommend that too. A banjo is a really easy thing... You don't necessarily have to have a skin stretched across a gourd or some kind of a rim; you can do it with a solid box out of wood or make it out of metal."

A bus stops across the street outside; hydraulic brakes hiss, then it rumbles away. The lunch crowd is dwindling, and the baristas are cleaning up. There are three customers on the opposite wall with laptops, drinking coffee and using the Wi-Fi.

One of Curt's favorite old-time banjer players is Roscoe Holcomb, a famous traditional musician from Kentucky.

"Nobody could listen to him and be unmoved. Even now, a lot of kids are discovering him, whether it's a clip on YouTube or something like that, you'll hear these 18-year-olds saying, 'Who is this guy? This guy is unbelievable!' That's exactly the way we felt back in 1961 or 1962.

"There were a few mega-stars that came out during that time. Doc Watson, Roscoe Holcomb, Mississippi John Hurt, and probably Clarence Ashley were the ones everybody was listening to, partly because they were the people that the New Lost City Ramblers and other groups covered – that was the music they were involved with, too."

His musical tastes lean toward the traditional, but not everything about Curt is old school. He has several websites that are extensive and informative, including his home page, which covers topics ranging from his background to his music, banjers, photos of his instruments, various projects,

and many other areas.

"I am always getting emails from people saying they stumbled on my medieval site or they stumbled on my banjer site, or in genealogy looking up the name Bouterse. The internet is an amazing thing. It's like a big city with all the advantages a big city has. But it is also like a big city with all of the disadvantages like the slums, the crime, and the violence, and the dissipation that goes on, too."

A click of the mouse or two and the casual surfer will find him or herself in a discussion of the music of medieval Spain or maybe the origin of Curt's Dutch surname, or a story about his childhood. His site about fretless banjers is probably the most extensive on the internet. The medieval instrument site is amazing both for the encyclopedic knowledge of the centuries-old instruments and for the craftsmanship shown in the replicas as well of them built by Curt – of lutes, guitarras, and other exotic instruments. These include some made from bowls and one made from a piece of wood from a thrift shop.

Cooking and rare coins also hold fascination for Curt, who is single and lives in South Park; he still spends a lot of time researching things that interest him.

"I stayed in school a long time, then I taught at San Diego State a while as well as other places around town, then kept going back to school. I'm still going back to school, only now, it's the internet."

A few years ago, after performing at the Adams Avenue Roots Festival, Curt was approached by folk musician Adam Miller about recording some music. Miller and George Winston, a well-known Windham Hill recording artist, were interested in recording traditional musicians. Their project at the time was Curt's mentor, Sam Hinton. While being asked to be recorded was nice, the "deciding factor" for Curt was the pair's focus on Hinton. Curt was in, although he would wait over a year while they finished *Master of the Solo Diatonic Harmonica*, a two-CD set that features highlights from decades of songs and stories by Hinton, with an emphasis on his virtuoso harmonica playing.

After plenty of support and encouragement from Winston and Miller, Curt recorded *Down the Road I'll Go*, a disc of "fretless old-time music" in 2006. The album features Curt singing in shape note tradition, with and without his sister, as well as playing his banjer, dulcimer, and even a mouth organ. A few originals by Curt and Doc Watson are sprinkled in among familiar traditional folk melodies, some reworked fiddle tunes that are played like they were before fancy instruments came along.

"A few years ago I got the idea of doing a few things with Bob [Webb] in the style of the old things we used to do. He has done a number of recordings himself back East, mostly gone off in the direction of shanties and sea songs and things like that. He still plays guitar and banjo, so we decided to do this and George Winston was very supportive; we put together the second record, which was Bob and myself playing mostly duets."

The result was *Waiting for Nancy: Old Time Country Duets*, released in 2008. Webb shares Curt's passion for traditional music, and the two played fretless banjers on several tracks, sharing vocals on a collection of traditional folk melodies, shanties, and tunes that feature Curt on Jew's harp, dulcimer, Khaen (Thai bamboo mouth organ), and autoharp. Curt reprises his hammered dulcimer performance of the traditional "Seneca Squaredance," also heard on *The Long Riders* soundtrack. On both of his CDs, Curt plays banjers he made himself, and Webb and he both play Curt's gourd banjers on the 2008 disc.

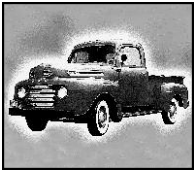
Curt has just finished the final touches on his latest disc. Slated for release this month, the new CD, *Banjer on My Knee*, features his sister Lee Davis and two friends, fiddler Ray Bierl and guitarist/singer Larry Hanks.

"I have an arrangement of a shape note hymn, but the melody is 'Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie.' There are a few other things – old-time gospel numbers, Carter Family songs that Ray, Larry, my sister Lee, and I do together. If you like the things I've done in the past you'll like this; if you don't like the things I've done in the past, you might like this," Curt says with a smile.

Another bus zooms past outside without stopping. The Wi-Fi bloggers drink their coffee and don't look up; it's late afternoon and things are quieting down at Rebecca's. It will be evening soon.

[http://home.earthlink.net/~curt\\_bouterse](http://home.earthlink.net/~curt_bouterse)





# BLUEGRASS CORNER

by Dwight Worden



## IBMA ANNUAL AWARD WINNERS

On Thursday, September 30, 2010, at the historic Ryman auditorium in Nashville IBMA held its annual awards show and the winners were announced. Here is a rundown on the winners:

- \*John Hartford and Louise Scruggs (wife and business manager for Earl Scruggs and key business manager for the band Flatt and Scruggs) were inducted into the IBMA Hall of Fame, receiving IBMA's highest honors.
- ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR Dailey & Vincent
- VOCAL GROUP OF THE YEAR Dailey & Vincent
- INSTRUMENTAL GROUP OF THE YEAR: Michael Cleveland & Flamekeeper
- MALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR Russell Moore
- FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR Claire Lynch
- SONG OF THE YEAR "Ring the Bell," the Gibson Brothers (artists), Chet O'Keefe (songwriter)
- ALBUM OF THE YEAR *Dailey & Vincent Sing the Statler Brothers*, Dailey & Vincent (artists & producers), Cracker Barrel/Rounder
- RECORDED EVENT OF THE YEAR "Give This Message to Your Heart," Larry Stephenson featuring Dailey & Vincent (artists), Ben Surratt & Larry Stephenson (producers), Whysper Dream

Awards for best on their instruments went to:  
INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMERS OF THE YEAR

- BANJO: Kristin Scott Benson
- BASS: Marshall Wilborn
- FIDDLE: Michael Cleveland
- DOBRO: Rob Ickes
- GIUITAR: Josh Williams
- MANDOLIN: Adam Steffey

## ANNUAL SAINT MARK'S BLUEGRASS CONCERT.

This year's annual bluegrass concert at St. Mark's United Methodist Church at 3502 Claremont Drive in San Diego is scheduled for November 21, the Sunday before Thanksgiving. This year's concert will start a bit earlier, at 4:30pm. The theme for the evening will be "home-grown bluegrass," featuring music written in San Diego, by San Diegans, about San Diego, or bearing the general theme of "home." The concert will feature three bands: the Taildraggers, Superstrings, and a hot young kids' band. Each band will perform for 30 minutes, with a punch and cookies reception following the concert. Admission is free and donations will be solicited. The concert is jointly promoted as a fundraiser by the San Diego Bluegrass Society and St. Mark's United Methodist Church. This year, SDBS will commit its share of proceeds to its "Heritage Fund" toward musical scholarships and other worthwhile endeavors. We hope to see you there.

## FORMING A BLUEGRASS BAND, PART 2

Last month we looked at the preliminary steps for forming a bluegrass band. In the second installment we will look at the next phase: how to develop a repertoire and start practicing.

Okay, so you have a group of four to six musicians featuring the right mix of instruments and vocalists with a shared commitment to try and make a go of it as a band. What next?

First, if you have not already done so, have a candid discussion about the business aspects of your band so that everyone has the same expectations. How will revenues and expenses be shared? How will the non-musical obligations and necessities be shared? These include: setting up and maintaining a website,

Facebook presence, Twitter account, MySpace, etc.; maintaining an email list and sending out e-blasts, newsletters, etc.; preparing business cards and other promotional materials such as fliers; booking gigs; hosting practices; acquiring, maintaining, transporting, and setting up any needed sound equipment. All of these things need to be done for the band to be successful, so discussion, in advance, and an agreement on how they will be shared is important.

Second, discuss how musical material will be selected. Will the bandleader decide which songs will be played? Will it be a democracy? My recommendation is that you allow every band member to bring material to the group to be auditioned, and that the group decide what material will actually go on the set list. The selection of material can be a very sensitive topic and you don't want anyone to feel "left out" of the selection process, yet at the same time you should expect that not everything brought in by every member can realistically be added to your performance repertoire list. So, discuss this key area in advance and agree how it will be handled. If you have band members who want to write original material, discuss that in advance as well. There is no quicker way to hurt someone's feelings than to reject an original.

Third, agree on a practice schedule and location. Generally, it is best to practice at least once a week and to pick a regular time and place so that everyone can mark their calendars and plan accordingly. Otherwise, you will be asking five band members to undertake ad hoc scheduling for each practice. Recognize, too, that sometimes your regular schedule won't work. In that event you can, on an ad hoc basis, reschedule individual practices. And, recognize that sometimes you may want to schedule a practice to address just vocals or just instrumentals that not everyone need to attend.

Fourth, start practicing! My recommendation is that you practice until you have at least 10 to 15 songs you can perform well before you make any public announcement that you are a "bluegrass band" and before you play out. People will be curious and interested to hear a new band, but remember that first impressions are critical. If the first time they hear you the band is sloppy, unprepared, or unrehearsed, it will be very difficult to overcome a bad first impression. On the other hand, if the first-time people hear that the band is tight and well rehearsed, their impression will be favorable, even if you only perform two or three songs. It is better to leave the public wanting more.

Fifth, agree upon the basic structure for your practice sessions. It is not an effective practice session if all you do is play songs. The difference between playing in a band and playing in a jam session is that a band can and should pay attention to details and can orchestrate how it will perform each song in a way that cannot be done in a jam session. Your band should devote part of every practice session to working on vocals and vocal harmonies, to structuring instrumental breaks, to arranging fills, and to working on kickoffs and endings. It is very helpful to record every practice session and provide copies to each band member. Much can be learned from listening. You'll be surprised when listening to recordings that things you thought sounded great in practice aren't so good, and that some things that sound really good on a recording went by unnoticed in practice. Practicing with a metronome can also be good for the band.

Next up: booking gigs and performing.

# The Zen of Recording

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

## CREATIVE CONSPIRING

For all of the different types of people who create, perform, arrange, record, and/or produce music daily, there are nearly as many approaches to doing so. Just as each of us has a unique set of fingerprints on our hands, so too do we each display and employ a singularly distinct set of impulses, intuitions, and gut feelings with regard to the creative process. Notice that in the last sentence, I didn't use words like "methods," "techniques," although these also come into play. What I'm getting at is that we develop our own personal paths to creation based upon our own *exclusive* set of experiences. While inspiration may come from a place of divine mystery, it is our *selves* that provide the impetus and shape for our resulting creations.

This has inspired many to regard the very creation of art as a selfish act.

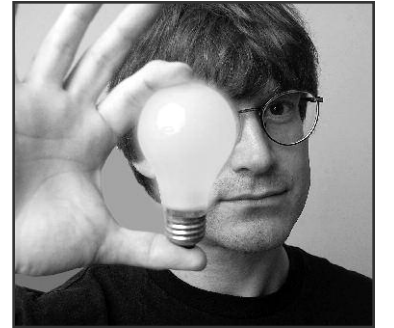
In my production work, I often explain to my clients that I may have little to say or offer in the way of opinions in the first sessions. I go on to assure them that this should not be seen as a lack of interest or ideas, but a time of intense *listening*. If we were cooking chili instead of making records, wouldn't you want me to know how things are tasting before I start throwing in my favorite seasonings? As the project progresses, I begin to become more opinionated. The music begins to "speak" to me, asking for this, rejecting that. Mostly, it's a

case of "okay, this is really good chili. How can we make it *special* as well?"

In recording sessions, a sort of musical dialogue emerges. Like jazz musicians riffing back and forth in musical conversation. An idea spills out seemingly nonchalantly and is instantly seized upon by another. Yet another idea is born from that one and suddenly we find ourselves in fresh musical surroundings, led here by something that might have simply passed by unnoticed, were it not for an objective ear in the room.

For most of the projects that I work on, the song is already written and my eye (or ear, really) is on how to make each facet of it most effective. If, for example, the lyrics in the verses are coming from a perspective of loneliness and the choruses offer hope and triumph, my choices will be informed by that contrast. Maybe we'll have less going on in the verses, more instrumentally sparse to sort of illustrate that aloneness. Then our choruses can bring in stronger elements, bringing forth that feeling of optimism and elation, and so on...

The real test, as I have recently discovered, is in creating it all from scratch. The song, the arrangements, beats, you name it, are all in collaboration with the artist. While I've long prided myself on being considered a collaborative-styled producer and have been involved in several "multi-artist" side projects, I must say that writing with others has often been the most



Sven-Erik Seaholm

difficult musical task I have set before myself.

My difficulties can be summed up by this recent experience: A song idea sprang forth to my friend and I at the same sitting. He was to leave town for a few days but we agreed we'd pick up where we'd left off upon his return. Lining up our schedules was difficult however, and a month later I showed up at his house with a "completed" version of the song. He was hurt by this and thought my pronouncement of the song being finished was not only a bit premature, but more than a bit selfish and arrogant. After all, we had agreed to write it together.

In my own defense, I could only state that I am a finisher. I had a gig coming up that I felt I needed that song for and in a fit of inspiration, I wrote the rest of the song. But he was right and I had just never stopped to think about it that way. Anyway, what ended up happening is that we sat down and replaced a couple of the lines to make the song so much better than the one I said was "finished."

Maybe my point here is that there's always a little bit of ego that drives one to write, but you can't let your ego do all of the driving, either.

Now here I am, in the midst of three projects that require me to do all of the aforementioned tasks with not one, but two other artists in the room!

The first thing that we all realized is that we are jointly making music that none of us would be making without the others' involvement, that collectively we are just as unique a musical entity as any one of us is separately. That we should respect that as such. The next thing we recognized was that there is a different sort of satisfaction that accompanies that. One that feels just as good.

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent record producer ([kaspro.com](http://kaspro.com)) and performing artist ([www.svensongs.com](http://www.svensongs.com)). He also provides private instruction for recording and songwriting: 619-287-1955.

# ROBIN HENKEL

Thurs, Nov 4, The Cellar, 7-10pm  
Robin Henkel & Billy Watson  
156 Avenida Del Mar  
San Clemente (949) 492-3663

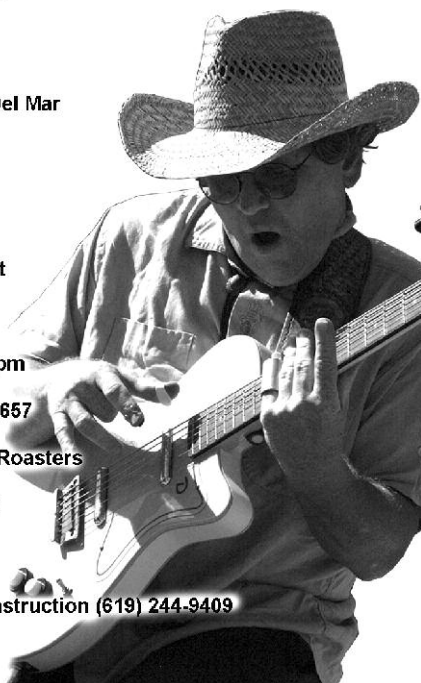
Sat Nov 6, 13, 20 & 27, Zel's Del Mar  
(Restaurant & Bar), 8-10pm  
Robin Henkel solo blues  
1247 Camino Del Mar  
Del Mar (858) 755-0076

Sun, Nov 7, Lestat's, 8pm, \$8  
Robin Henkel Band in concert  
3343 Adams Avenue  
San Diego (619) 282-0437

Tues, Nov 9, Wine Steals, 7-9pm  
1953 San Elijo  
Cardiff by the Sea (760) 230-2657

Sat, Nov 20, Birdrock Coffee Roasters  
10am-12noon  
Robin Henkel & Troy Sandow  
5627 La Jolla Boulevard  
La Jolla (858) 551-1707

Booking info, guitar & bass instruction (619) 244-9409  
CDs at CDBaby.com  
Visit me at [robinhenkel.com](http://robinhenkel.com)



## PHIL HARMONIC SEZ:

When an elder dies,  
a library burns to  
the ground.

— African proverb



## Call for Artists!

Roots Fest on Adams  
April 30-May 1, 2011



The Adams Avenue Business Association is seeking old-time string bands and performers in the genres of folk, cowboy, Cajun, rockabilly, roots-blues, bluegrass, Celtic, roots-rock, honky tonk, Texicana, Tejano, Conjunto, and Gypsy jazz. Submit your press kit either electronically, through [SonicBids.com](http://SonicBids.com), or by mail to:

Adams Avenue  
Business Association  
4649 Hawley Boulevard  
San Diego, CA 92116  
Attn: Roots Fest on Adams

No email submissions, please!

All submissions must be received no later than **December 15, 2010**.

For more info, visit the AABA website: [www.adamsavenuebusiness.com](http://www.adamsavenuebusiness.com)



# Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

## BIGGER THAN LENNON?

Just days before the elections, and I'm weighted down by the cruel, ugly power of the times. I will be voting again, and again will add one more number to the real tally that Big Rich Brother will later falsify, satisfied that so many millions of his puppets are continuing their exercise. Just as long as He and his rich buddies are able to continue multiplying their enormous wealth and keeping all of us in check, we'll remain largely oblivious to his games. Years from now as you walk past the new Chargers stadium downtown on your way to meet up with your cigarette connection, maybe you'll look back on these times as the Years of Glorious Freedom. Chances are that I won't be around to walk with you, so I'll give you my sincere sympathy right now.

You're welcome.

Can't believe that 40 years ago this month, the original double LP studio version of *Jesus Christ Superstar* was released here in America. Four decades now seems more like four years... even less in that I recall seeing the small article in *Time* as if it were this morning. I had heard the quirky single "Superstar" on the radio in D.C. earlier in the summer and bought it at Korvettes on Rockville Pike, falling eternally in love with its B-side, *John 19:41*. Here in *Time* is a picture of its authors. Andrew Lloyd Webber, looking like a very nervous poofter, is holding the album in his arms while Tim Rice lords over him behind with a big hillbilly-hippy smile on his friendly face.

(Something particularly weird happened between then and now. News items then could refer to the composer as Webber. Sherlock Holmes' creator might be written about as Doyle. Now it's always Lloyd Webber and Conan Doyle. Along with this faux sophistication came the reemergence of the dreaded *amongst* and *amidst* to further freshen the imaginary flowers on our lapels, which instantly wither with the emerging use of dropped double consonants in our speech. "I wasn't hi'in' him!")

Well, the album certainly hit me in a very good place, and it sounded particularly good through headphones. Forty years ago! Unbelievable. Then, 39 years ago, it went to Broadway very respectfully, if quite bizarre. The travesty that the motion picture of 1973 was might have killed it for me if it hadn't remained so easy to immerse myself in the original at a moment's urge.

Ian Gillan of Deep Purple was perfect in the title role, proving finally that a rock star could really *sing*. Murray Head had more soul than any white singer before or since, and is the definitive Judas. He became a big star in England and France. He had appeared in *The Family Way* (score by Mr. Paul McCartney) in the cinemas and would have been front and center in Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* had his bit as narrator not ended up on the dreaded cutting room floor. (He's actually still in the



The Hose: give him Head and Gillan

film if you look in the background during the fight scene closely.) Then, more films such as *Sunday Bloody Sunday*, *The French Woman*, *White Mischief*... and then singing again in Webber's *Chess*. The power of these two artists (along with several others) is the stuff that keeps the original album the untoppable Real Deal in the 40-year history of *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Hard to top. What on earth could be bigger than Jesus? When John Lennon innocently (if not correctly) suggested the Beatles as an answer to that question, a lot of offended good old boys wanted to shoot him.

And 30 years ago next month, one idiot did. Once again, it does not seem like 30 years to me now. Not at all! Every moment remains so clear and the pain remains so real. The most fun and carefree backyard party you could ever imagine, and some douchebag pees in the pool. You can drain it and refill it, but swimming will never be quite as enjoyable as it was. The past few years only seem like 30 because they really were, and no one's been able to sue Mark David Chapman (or should I be saying David Chapman, you know, like Harvey Oswald?) for emotional distress, and 30 years wants to seem like such a long time but can't, and never will again.

We'll try to regain our souls, I hope, as we come to grips with this speeding demon that calls itself Time. Through voting, we're supposed to be able to make the trip more bearable. Our ballots are ideas for improvement. We all throw them in the big hat but there's always some big rich guy who's ready to disqualify us if we don't play by his rules. And, boy, he gets angry when we call him on his greed, angry enough to dazzle us with the magic of a new hat trick, one that in reality is as old as Time itself.

Which reminds me: Happy birthday to Hanging Chad, who turns ten years old this month.



# RADIO DAZE



by Jim McInnes

## I'VE BEEN DIAGNOSED WITH A-G-E

I celebrated another birthday on the third of November, which got me to thinking... As I ease into my dotage, I find that I am re-imagining many of the great songs I heard or played on the radio.

I now think of Aretha Franklin's "Chain of Fools" as "Chain of Drool."

The Stones' immortal "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" is more like "(I Can't Find My) Medication."

"D-i-v-o-r-c-e," by Tammy Wynette has become "R-e-t-i-r-e-d."

Tommy James and Joan Jett each recorded "Crimson and Clover," a song that, to me, has become "Crimson and Plavix."

Instead of singing along to U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For," I find myself chanting "I Still Can't Recall What I Came Here For."

Billy Joel's, "I'm Still Standing" has become "I'm Still Conscious."

"Help," the Beatles classic, has become "Whaaaaat?" or "Ouch!" (Yes, I know, the Rutles have already recorded a parody called "Ouch!")

My age-appropriate version of "Start Me Up" by the Rolling Stones is called "Stand Me Up."

Instead of the Who singing, "Who Are You," I'm singing "Who Am I."

Chuck Berry's teen anthem, "Almost Grown," I now call "Almost Dead."

"Sweet Little Sixteen" has become "Sweet Little Sixty."

Tower of Power's funk masterpiece, "What Is Hip" shall heretofore be thought of as "Broken Hip."

Remember "Up on Cripple Creek," by The Band? The new version is called "Up on Crippled Knees."

The Beatles' "When I'm Sixty four," is too close for comfort. I prefer "When I'm Ninety Four."

...and, when my time finally comes, I hope to take a ride on the "Stair Lift to Heaven!" BA-DA-BING!  
Happy Thanksgiving.



by Peter Bolland

## A LIGHT SENSE OF SELF

Is the ego our enemy, our friend, or just another tool in the box? Even the most casual student of the world's spiritual and philosophical traditions knows that self-centeredness is the blade that cuts us off from wisdom and well-being. We must relinquish selfishness the sages tell us. Egotism is the enemy. And yet a nagging cluster of questions remain: Is my innate desire to learn, grow and create egotistical? Is my sense of identity such a bad thing? Don't I need personal ambition to get anything done?

These questions arise in any walk of life, but they seem particularly acute in the arts, especially the performing arts. If you're going to get on stage and demand people's time and money, you've got to believe that what you're offering has value. You need a strong, clear sense of self. Nothing is more important on stage than confidence, which, by the way, is very different from arrogance.

What is the ego? It is that thing we refer to when we use words like *I*, *me*, and *mine*. It is a concept of self, an identity that is separate from everything else. It is one of the truths about us. But there are other truths.

In the spiritual and philosophical wisdom traditions of the world a few recurring principles arise again and again. Aldous Huxley called these recurring principles "the perennial philosophy." Foremost among these universal ideas is the concept of Oneness, the notion that behind the veil of differentiation there is an underlying unity. All separate things, then, are expressions of the One. Whether you personify and deify the One or think of it as an impersonal force is purely a matter of preference. Some call it God, others call it Dao or Brahman or Spirit or Source or Divine Mind. "The Truth is One," says the Rig Veda. "The sages call it by many names."

Why the One became the Many is the great mystery of existence. We don't know why. But it did. As humans evolved, spiritual traditions emerged, girded by philosophy and clothed in mythology. Imbedded in these traditions are maps left for us by those who went before, maps that make clear that realizing our unity with Oneness is the highest form of wisdom; to rise up out of the consciousness of separateness characterized by agitation, fear, competition, scarcity and craving and into the consciousness of unity characterized by serenity, clarity, kindness, community, abundance, compassion, and gratitude. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and countless other truth-traditions all lead by different paths to the same summit.

In this context then the ego is neither good nor bad – it is simply one aspect of a complex array of energies and faculties nested within the phenomenon of consciousness. The ego, that sense of separateness, is a necessary construct. The ego serves us well. It encourages us to invest considerable time and energy into the maintenance of our own lives, materially and spiritually. I enjoy being me. Initially, I may think that I'm doing all this for myself. But it's equally true that as I get stronger, smarter, more creative and more skillful I'm equipping myself for greater acts of service. Maybe the ego with its love of achievement, accomplishment, competition, and attention is all part of a larger plan. By cultivating our own excellence we are adding to the wealth of the world. As I expand my capacity for self-expression, I am simultaneously deepening my connection to the Source and becoming a widening channel for Source to express Itself through me. In this way the false dichotomy between my individuality and the One begins to dissolve.

All one hundred trillion cells in your body emerged from a single cell, the egg. After fertilization, it quickly divided into

PHILOSOPHY, ART, CULTURE, & MUSIC

# STAGES

two, then four, and so on. The rapidly multiplying and expanding cells began to specialize – some becoming bone, others becoming skin, still others becoming brain tissue with the capacity for self-awareness. Deepak Chopra asks an excellent question. Are the heart and the brain *different*? Yes. Are they *separate*? No. They are differentiated expressions of one, unified organism. Differentiation is not separation. In this same way then all of reality is One, despite appearances to the contrary.

The problem arises when we mistake the ego for our entire being. We may fault the ego somewhat for playing along with this self-serving delusion, but it is certainly not the ego's fault. It's just doing the job for which it was designed – leading the parade. But thinking that one lousy drum major makes a parade is a big mistake.

"Person" and "personality" come from "persona," the Latin word for mask, specifically the masks actors wore on stage in Classical plays. Our personality is the mask we show to the world, behind which lurks all the immeasurable mystery of our little slice of the One consciousness. Our identity, the way we are known to the world, is a cluster of associations made up of a complex and interwoven tapestry of threads – race, age, ethnicity, profession, looks, skills, mannerisms, voice, preferences, opinions and so on. This cluster of elements we call a "person" is led by an ego, an organizing principle that ties together all of these otherwise disparate elements. In this sense, then, the ego is our friend. We would be hopelessly fragmented without it. Before we demonize the ego it is probably wise to remember that the ego is, after all, yet another manifestation of the One.

Still, the dangers of egoic attachment are very real. Mistaking the ego for the entire depth and breadth of our being is the source of all our suffering. Putting the ego in charge of our lives is like letting a flea rule the world. In the end, neither the flea nor the world prospers.

What if we re-conceptualized our ambition as emergence, our hunger for more as sacred expansion, our yearning to be heard and understood as holy communion? "You have the right to work," Krishna tells Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "but never to the fruit of work. You should never engage in action for the sake of reward." The Buddha also counsels non-attachment in the midst of deep engagement. And Confucius says, "The inferior person asks 'what's in it for me?' The superior asks, 'what is the right thing to do?'" The highest form of action is selfless action rooted in the ground of Being. When the ego recedes its as if the clouds fall away from the sun – the whole world is enlightened.

Cultivate your excellence. Revel in your expansion. Don't hide your light for fear of appearing egotistical. What matters most are your intentions. Are you working for egoic glory born in the consciousness of fear, or are you working in the consciousness of service, joyfully allowing Transcendence to express itself in you, through you, as you? Make something happen. Be a channel of the creative manifestation of the sacred energy of the universe. Participate in the healing of the world. Co-create your own best life out of the raw materials within and without you. Do it with a bold sense of Oneness. Do it with a light sense of self.

Peter Bolland is a professor at Southwestern College where he teaches eastern and western philosophy, ethics, world religions, and mythology. After work he is a poet, singer-songwriter, author, and speaker. He also leads an occasional satsang and knows his way around a kitchen. You can find him on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/peterbolland.page](http://www.facebook.com/peterbolland.page) or write to him at [peterbolland@cox.net](mailto:peterbolland@cox.net).

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# Chad & Jeremy: Five Decades of Harmonic Bliss

by Bart Mendoza with Sandra Castillo

The sixties were an amazing time, particularly for music. While there were many groups that hit the charts during that time frame, it's likely that few had the media visibility of British duo Chad and Jeremy. Best known for hits such as "Yesterday's Gone" and "A Summer Song," the pair was a much bigger success in the U.S., where they appeared on all the typical shows of the day, from "Hullabaloo" to "American Bandstand." But unlike other duos of the era, such as Peter and Gordon or Simon and Garfunkel, Chad and Jeremy, who perform at AMSD Concerts this month, became staples of mid-sixties TV Land on dramas, sitcoms, and more, giving them exposure beyond their wildest dreams. And it was all pretty much an accident of fate that made it all happen.

"[Jeremy] was a year ahead of me," Chad Stuart recalled in a recent phone interview with the *Troubadour*. "It was in drama school. It was in an acting class, which really isn't school at all," he laughed. "Or is it? It's pretending and getting paid for it." Stuart's sense of humor is contagious. You can tell from his manner and demeanor, he's seen it all and enjoyed most of it. "I think it was Jeremy's mum that dragged some character down to see us – Robin, who was a literary agent, and she knew of this manager guy, Tony Lewis and Tony Lewis dragged John Barry down because he knew us. It was one of those 'friend of a friend' things."

The duo format was down to their friendship and proximity. "We didn't really decide to form a duo. While we were students we had a band, of course. Inevitably you do. There was an old joke in the sixties, that in England, the population was divided into groups of four... the Beatles, the Shadows and so on. So, we did that, and then, of course, the band broke up. Jeremy left [school] a year ahead of me. He went off to acting in a repertory theatre. But as luck would have it, there was an actor's equity strike, and so he couldn't work. He came back to London and we kind of teamed up. We'd always been singing and playing acoustic stuff when we weren't playing with the band. It just sort of grew; we just played wherever there was food. And we went from there. It just so happened that we landed a gig at this place called Tina's, which is where John Barry pursued us. So, we didn't just decide to do it, we were just doing what we

could do. I mean, I was working as a music copyist in the morning for a music publisher. I was playing in pick up bands at night. And in the lunch hour we would go to Tina's. I remember thinking, 'Boy, I'm working hard! Something had better break here!' Sure enough, the thing that broke was the thing we didn't think would break, which was singing folk songs in the cellar. Who knew?"

The time frame from first gigs to recording was brief, a matter of months. "It was in a remarkably short space of time," Stuart confirmed. "But it was a 'good news, bad news' thing. John Barry signing and producing us was 'good news.' The 'bad news' was this guy, Jeffrey Kruger, who had a little label called Ember Records, somehow managed to sweet talk John into leaving EMI and joining this little label, which looking back, was an extraordinarily dumb thing to do. But I think that Kruger convinced John that he would have his own label and make pots of money. But, it didn't work out that way at all and John bought himself out of his contract. And there we were stuck with Ember Records. But I digress."

The first record quickly began to climb the British charts, but that would be in their homeland. "It got stuck at number 44 with an anchor, because Ember didn't have the distribution and the big boys squeezed him out. We thought, 'That's about it then.' So we played a few gigs and Jeremy was on the verge of leaving, which he's done quite often, actually [laughs]. Then we get word that it has been released in the States and "Yesterday's Gone" is climbing the country charts! Then, they found out we were English and that was the end of that."

Despite, the lack of country chart action, Chad and Jeremy soon found their records charting regularly in the U.S. "Probably because we were with a little label, called World Artists, and they spent money and did all the payola action to get it noticed," Stuart quipped. "The other thing of course, was that the William Morris agent who signed us, John Hartmann [brother of good friend, the late actor Phil Hartmann], was actually a television agent. He was the one who got us on [U.S. television]. That's another reason why we made an impression – because we were all over television [sitcoms and dramas], not to mention the variety shows."

Asked to name a favorite television appearance, Stuart doesn't hesitate. While they appeared on "The Patty Duke Show"

and Jeremy was on "The Dating Game," the favorite is clear: "Dick Van Dyke – absolutely!" he responds enthusiastically. Playing a pair of British rock stars who hide out at the Petrie's home to avoid fans at a TV show taping, Chad and Jeremy's network television debut was an impressive one and neatly brought the pair back into the world of acting. "First of all, we had just arrived, practically," Stuart said. "When you think of who was on that show! Dick Van Dyke, Mary Tyler Moore, Rose Marie, Morey Amsterdam – all those legends! And then, Carl Reiner was directing it, while Bill Persky and Sam Denoff wrote the scripts. It was a 'who's who' of serious talent. That's a pretty good way to start."

As great as the episode of "The Dick Van Dyke Show" is, for many fans the duo's high-water mark was their appearance on "Batman," in a pair of episodes that saw Catwoman (Julie Newmar) steal their voices.

"That was fun to do," Stuart smiles. "It turns out Adam West is a neighbor of mine, up here in Sun Valley, Idaho. He's a lovely man. I've done play readings with him. He's a fabulous actor."

Being actors, they almost made a cross over into TV Land. "We did a pilot for a western, which was a brilliant idea, with two English actors stranded in the Old West. All we had was a trunk full of costumes. It was a spin-off of "Laredo." The idea was that the manager of the acting troop had absconded with the funds and we were stuck in the middle of nowhere, pulling any old scan we could, because we couldn't pay the hotel bill. I thought that it had a lot of potential. In retrospect we were probably a little too young to be believable," he joked.

His other favorite is a little more off the wall, playing a vulture in the animated Disney film, *The Jungle Book*. *The Jungle Book* was a personal favorite for obvious reasons – it was short and sweet. It was my first and last foray into cartoons. I loved doing it! Ironically, Stuart's son, James Patrick Stuart, is now involved in voice-over work, including the role of 'Private' in *Penguins of Madagascar*.

The band ultimately released a dozen albums, switching to Columbia records in 1965, although that liaison was over by 1968. "The last album was *The Ark*," Stuart explained. "That's because one of Jeremy's songs was called 'The Ark' and it took its cue from that wonderful painting by Charlie Bragg, where the ark comes to rest in a tree on Mount Ararat. It's called "Generals and Admirals."



Chad and Jeremy, now and then

Though *The Ark* was officially Chad and Jeremy's last recording during their original run, one more album was released during the sixties bearing their name, the soundtrack to a movie, *Three in the Attic*. "That was a truly horrible movie," Stuart laughs. "I desperately wanted to score movies. That was the first one to come along so I grabbed it. I would've scored *Raising Pigs for Fun and Profit* – anything, anything. But, it wasn't in the cards, it just wasn't meant to be. So I'm not a composer anymore."

While Stuart is happy to be back out on the road, he notes that things aren't as good as they once were. "It has a sort of curve to it, because, obviously... the economy has tanked and there is less discretionary money, so the touring business is shrinking," he said. "People aren't paying as much for tickets, which means the promoters aren't giving you a bigger guarantee, [yet] the airfares and hotels are more expensive. You stop and think – is this going to be a fool's game in a year or two? Or do we just do it because we love it?"

That said, so far the 50th Anniversary has gone well. "September was the actual month when I wandered into drama school and met Jeremy. We both had guitars on our backs, so it was kind of a giveaway."

Despite the fact that things are harder, he still enjoys the performances as much as ever. "What I like most of all is making people laugh. I really do." Still some bad and good news in the mix. "The good news is we're back! For us it's good, for the people who like us, I suppose, it's good. The bad news is that Jeremy insists on living in London, and therefore, he's not here very much. It's very difficult to make progress when it comes to adding new material to the set – not just songs I might add. The secret for me is embracing the fact that he is an Englishman, through and through, lives in London, and I, on the other hand, live in Sun Valley, Idaho, and have been for 20 years. I've only lived in England, since the sixties, for two years, out of all that time."

There is a plan for new recordings, once again, depending on scheduling. "A lot of things are coming down the pike," Stuart confirmed. "It's sort of a logistical challenge because Jeremy comes in from time to time, but he's not around that much, so it's a bit tricky."

One project that perhaps fans shouldn't hold their breath for is the legendary second album for a mid-eighties reunion on Rocshire records, *Zanzibar Sunset*. Though it shows up in articles and discographies regularly, ... "I just never finished it, to tell you the honest truth," Stuart admits. "Some

people think this is all fun and games, which it is, in a way. Obviously, the most fun is when you're performing. Quite often, I find myself going out on the road and I'm tired before I've even started. You go home and everyone says, 'get back to work, finish that album!' But no, I think I'll take the dog for a walk and I'll do some gardening instead. So, the truth is, the album is very close to finished." In the meantime look for Chad and Jeremy to release a live album, recorded in Shelby, North Carolina, earlier this year. That one's out first, because when people come to gigs it's nice to have a live album. It's kind of like having a souvenir." He points out that live albums are not as easy to put together as it might seem. "Everyone thinks that with live albums, you put on the mics, turn on the recorder and everything will be okay. Well, it never is. Murphy's law just kicks in, doesn't it?"

Though Chad and Jeremy never performed in San Diego during their sixties heyday, Stuart did play a show here with ZZ Top in the late sixties and they also played a British Invasion reunion show at the Bacchanal in 1986. This show will be the third time the pair have performed at AMSD Concerts since their most recent reunion.

"I really like this church," Stuart said. "Most churches have a big, long reverb, and some of it is hard to handle, but that one is pretty good." Indeed, Stuart has a lot of experience with church sounds. "I was a chorister at Durham Cathedral when I was a boy," he recalled. "I worked it out the other day. I was there for five years until my voice broke. We sang at Christmas, Easter and so we ended up singing seven services a week, for 66 weeks. So, I sang in 3,210 church services. Pretty amazing isn't it?"

After five decades of performing together, Stuart has a full understanding of what's enabled Chad and Jeremy to keep their working relationship so strong. "First of all, we're on again, off again. It's not like we're always there. I think this is our third reunion. People say, 'how come you guys don't hate each other, like other bands?' Well, it's simple – Jeremy lives in England, I live in America, and we hardly ever see each other! [laughs] In some ways, I'm sort of being facetious, but it's also true. If we had to live in each other's pockets, we'd be like the Smothers Brothers, who had to go into therapy to stop themselves from trying to kill each other," he joked.

Chad and Jeremy will perform at AMSD Concerts on Friday, November 12, 7:30pm. Located at 4650 Mansfield St. in Normal Heights, tickets are available at: [www.amsd-concerts.com](http://www.amsd-concerts.com)

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Play Guitar Naked



## Scarlet Furies Dark Clad Company

by Frank Kocher



The Scarlet Furies are a Southern California acoustic, alt-folk band featuring singer Raleigh Holmes, with her dad Robert and a some

other old-timers providing nice instrumental and vocal backup. *Dark Clad Company* is their new EP.

The focus of the sound is rightly on Raleigh, with a smart buildup of deep harmonies over solidly built layers of acoustic instruments and string effects. The flawless production by LA studio musician/producer Rusty Anderson and board work by other top-notch studio talent puts the band's best foot forward.

Raleigh's voice is delightful, full and clear, delivering the songs without taking attention away from them, like on the opener "Gone Tomorrow" and "All or Nothing." After these pleasant country-folk tunes, "Young Goodman Brown" hits harder, a charged, blues-edged tale of Raleigh's encounter with a backwoods bad boy. "Safe in Arms" floats in on harmonies piled high, a highlight about a soldier returning from war that sounds like Fleetwood Mac's salad days in the '80s. The only wrong move here is the puzzling choice of Nirvana's "Heart Shaped Box" as the only cover; lyrically and musically it falls flat. A bit of a recovery is "Canyon," a personal-sounding folk tune with a catchy bridge written by Raleigh and her dad.

The Scarlet Furies have made some intriguing music on *Dark Clad Company*. Raleigh Holmes is a talent that can take material up a notch and makes the best songs here excellent.

## Leigh Taylor Live Studio Tracks

by Frank Kocher

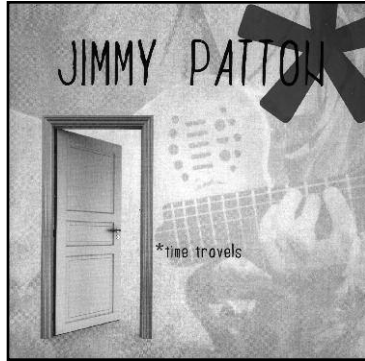


In the space of six tracks on their new EP, Spring Valley Christian rockers Leigh Taylor's Watermark Tribe seem to demonstrate the old

adage that less can be more. The Tribe's *Live Studio Tracks Volume 1* offers Taylor on acoustic guitar and powerful vocals, exotic percussion by Roy Robinson, bass by Frank Sarmiento, and Tim Gamelle's soaring sax work, all playing Taylor's songs and offering diverse musical styles. The lyrical message is spiritual, personal, by turns anguished and celebratory. Some of the songs are basically musical prayers, but they are prayers with a world beat.

The strength of the music here is the ability of the stripped-down group to convey a different sonic atmosphere on each track. "I Will Obey" opens, a hymn of soulful surrender with a West African feel. Choppy guitar chords introduce the reggae rhythm of "My Addiction," a confessional about Taylor's sacrifices, about how "we're all being cooked in the same stew." "We Should All Be Ashamed" has an ace arrangement of percussion touches, funky bass, and hard R&B rhythm guitar that manage a musical snapshot of gritty urban life and its challenges for the Christian. The disc highlight follows, as both Taylor's consciousness and alto sax freely flow over brisk, galloping guitar and drums, "My Heart is Glad." Wrapping things is a tropically-framed prayer "Send Me," which has an upbeat pop hook.

The Watermark Tribe cover plenty of musical ground while Taylor's devotional message is never lost, and the result is something new, different, and interesting in contemporary Christian music.



## Jimmy Patton Time Travels

by Paul Hormick

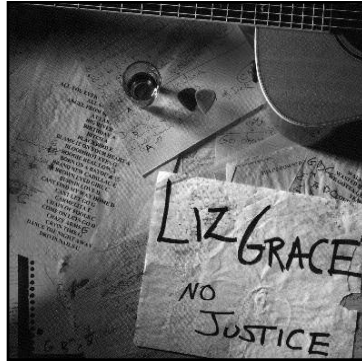
With his new disk, *Time Travels*, guitarist Jimmy Patton sets his musical WABAC machine to the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s as he covers a half dozen of the mega-hits that comprise the soundtrack to the lives of the Baby Boomers and a couple tunes near and dear to the hearts of the Gen X crowd.

Patton performs all selections on *Time Travels* with an electric nylon-stringed guitar. The sound is that of a classical guitar with a bit of an electric edge. After the accordion, the classical guitar is the best instrument on which to play just about anything. It gives richness and character to even the simplest chords, harmonic progressions, and musical lines. Classical guitarists thus have at their fingertips a means of expressiveness that other instrumentalists lack. It is difficult to imagine a piano arrangement of "California Dreamin'," even if Gustavo Romero were the pianist, that would sound near as good as the treatment of the tune that Patton gives us here. Patton is also a very good musician, playing all the tunes on this disk fluidly and assuredly.

Patton keeps his arrangements close to those of the hits that poured out of our car stereos decades ago. As he covers "Superstitious," he gives the funk line prominence, as Stevie Wonder did on his single. "I Shot the Sheriff" has a reggae backbeat, and the chording of the phrase "but I did not shoot the deputy" suggests the Eric Clapton version over the original by Bob Marley. With so much material from the sixties and seventies, one might guess that Patton is pandering to the Baby Boomers – the most chronocentric generation, particularly when it comes to their music – offering them another tidbit to stoke their nostalgia. But by the time I had played the disk through for the third time, the sense that I came away with is that Patton really, really loves these tunes and really gets off by playing them.

It is impossible to hear any version of Queen's "We Are the Champions" without subconsciously hearing Freddie Mercury's golden tenor or Brian May's British feedback soaked guitar solos. The same goes for "Ring of Fire" and hearing the echoes of the mariachi-inspired trumpets and the best baritone that God ever created, Johnny Cash, singing "I went down, down, down, and the flames went higher." By performing these hits with arrangements that so closely mirror the originals, Patton has guaranteed that he has an instant backup band, as the listener calls up those musical memories.

Two of Patton's own compositions, "Cachito de mi" and "Overture for Springtime," fill out the rest of *Time Travels*. In choosing tunes for this disk, it's curious that Patton skipped the decade that produced the best music ever, the 1980s. Perhaps we will be treated to his take on Prince's "When the Doves Cry," "Don't Dream It's Over" by Crowded House, or other 25 year-old hits the next time he gets in his musical WABAC machine.



## Liz Grace No Justice

by Frank Kocher

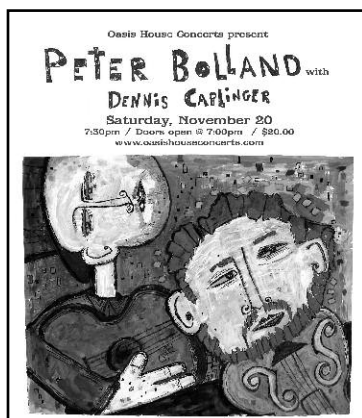
For the past couple of years, Three Chord Justice has been playing country music in San Diego and other Southern California night spots, mixing standards by such country saints as Johnny Cash with some of their own tunes. Liz Grace has fronted the band with a bit of old-fashioned '60s style that owes more to Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton than more recent, smoother song queens. Now, Grace has a disc of her own, *No Justice*. It is acoustic country, many of the 10 songs her own, and the musical backing is played by the core members of TCJ – Jeff Houck on guitar; Tom Wolverton on dobro, guitar, mandolin and slides; and Mark Markowitz on percussion. Their playing is crisp, and the nice recording job by Jeff Forrest squeezes the maximum potential from the material.

"Lullaby" is a bit of a stumble as the opener; Grace sings it fine, but even repeat listening can't get past the fact that this Grace original is basically a reworking of both the melody and lyric vibe of Kris Kristofferson's "Help Me Make It Through The Night." Things get better on "Hillbilly Justice," as the tale of a betrayed woman putting her man into a barrel of whiskey (and dropping it down a well) unfolds to acoustic guitars. The ballad "Hold Your Hand" is the best of the seven Grace originals, and like most of the other songs that score, it doesn't reinvent the wheel. She sings about her dedication to her man, who "never fixed that old car; you just leave it on blocks," but who "fits like my blue jeans" – the kind of traditional country themes that have worked since the '50s, and her vocal treatment makes the song touching.

The flow of the music on *No Justice* benefits from the simplified, acoustic musical presentation. While Grace is clearly the star of this show, Houck and Wolverton play tasty solos and fills all over the record. There is no pedal steel and no hard country-rockers, but they aren't needed.

The highlight here is "Mama Was Miss Ventura." This familiar-sounding slice of life about a Cadillac-driving cowboy dad and pregnant beauty mom is musically catchy, drawing the listener into the story. Grace displays some good range on "Jolene," a Dolly Parton folk lament. "Mainline" is a blues tune, handled well by Grace as she pushes a metaphor about her heart.

Liz Grace makes a big impression on *No Justice*, a great listen for country music fans. Her songs show promise in her songwriting, and the band does a great job in framing her music.



## Cathouse Thursday Nashville Baby

by Frank Kocher

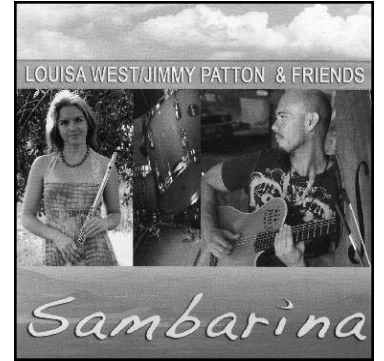
In the '70s, Cathouse Thursday was part of the title of a Lee Marvin western, and more recently it is the moniker of a San Diego-area roots band led by singer/keyboardist Will Faeber. He and guitarist John DePatie joined up years ago for some recordings in LA, and now the group is in San Diego, and includes Aaron and Jodie Bagley on bass and vocals. They play straight-ahead, country-rock music built around Faeber's strong lead vocals, with rising harmonies over the top of keyboard and guitar interplay. The music for the songs on *Nashville Baby*, their new disc, are written by the whole group with lyrics by Faeber and Jackson Sandland, and the tunes mostly play to the musicians' strengths – brisk beats, sharp soloing, and enough alt-country variety to avoid sameness.

Things open up with the title tune, which launches from a Dwayne Eddy-style guitar lick then brings in Faeber's deep tenor to tell the story of a country songbird, with plenty of harmonies on the chorus. This radio-styled single establishes a template for the songs to come. Familiar country-rock themes are everywhere in many of the songs and lyrics, but the delivery is catchy enough that it doesn't dilute the effect, like on "Midnight Train." On this one, lyrics about the midnight train to Georgia, big wheels rollin', and the hazards of the road are all there, but the slick, Southern rock-style arrangement (especially a nice solo break by DePatie) makes it click. The same approach works for "Don't Think I'll Be Waiting." The standout track here is "Walking into a Crossfire," told by Faeber as a lover who falls in with a bad crowd and is caught up in an armed robbery. The dueling guitar lines fit right in with the story, the listener becomes involved, tapping a foot and following along. "Quiet Darling" is another matter, a slow grand piano/guitar ballad that scores style points for eclecticism but doesn't match Faeber's singing strengths.

The new disc is one of two simultaneously released by the group, the other is *Till Death Do Us Party*. Based on limited listening, the other disc is more of the same, with a bit more of a rocking feel, but with the same musicians and production, including the solid drums played by Kevin Hindes.

"Funky Hang Loose," just like it sounds, is a quirky, fun four minutes of shuffle about getting out on the floor and letting your booty shake. On its heels comes "When I Told You I Was a Cowboy (I Lied)," and this time the big piano and organ, with gospel-vibe backup singing, is just right.

Cathouse Thursday sounds like a band that has played together for years and worked out all of the kinks. They don't blaze new trails on *Nashville Baby*, but they show enough skill to make the trip an enjoyable one.



## Louisa West & Jimmy Patton Sambarina

by Paul Hormick

Flutist Louisa West and guitarist Jimmy Patton have teamed up and assembled a band to produce *Sambarina*, a disk of ten upbeat Latin/Brazilian instrumentals that combine sophisticated jazz performance with fine-tuned pop sensibilities. The result is a recording that may be appreciated by jazz fans as well as those who enjoy a good tune that has a good beat.

West and Patton choose from some of the best Latin jazz composers for half of the tunes on *Sambarina*, and they have chosen well. You can't go wrong with anything written by Sergio Mendez, who West and Patton tap for his "Groovy Samba." And West sensitively interprets "Luiza," a composition from the innovator and greatest composer of bossa nova, Antonio Carlos Jobim. The big surprise on this disk is the inclusion of the odd-metered jazz hit "Take Five." How you gonna cha cha or samba with that extra beat hanging around? Patton and West take out the fifth beat, throw in some Latin percussion, and thus give us a version of the Dave Brubeck/Paul Desmond signature composition that you can dance to.

Patton wrote the remaining tunes on the disk. Favoring major keys and short peppy phrases, the guitarist's compositions come across as bouncy and spritely. The tune with the most upbeat disposition is the first and title track, "Sambarina." It has a cheerful ditty of a tune that is almost too happy. On "Cha Cha Blu," Patton does what you might surmise from the title. He juxtaposes a bright, almost cute cha-cha against a 12-bar blues, with the blues section of the tune sharing the cheery nature of the cha-cha. The arrangements for all the tunes — which were done by Patton for eight of the tunes and by him and some of the other musicians on *Sambarina* for the remaining two — are tight and uncluttered by any attempt to overreach or to be too clever.

West and Patton are two fine musicians. West commands her instrument and extracts a full-bodied timbre, a difficult thing that many jazz flutists neglect to do. Patton is similarly talented. He plays his guitar with a great variety of phrasing and freshness. I hope to hear more of these two musicians, both individually and through any joint effort they might try in the future. The ensemble these two employ is every bit as good. In particular, electric bassist Kevin Freeby treats us to two great solos on "Take Five" and "Groovy Samba." I hope to hear more from this talented musician as well.

With *Sambarina*, I wanted all the tunes to last a little longer. Certainly talented enough to do so, West and Patton might have taken a few of the tunes around once or twice more to extend their soloing. We can hope that these young musicians might stretch out more as they continue to perform and record.





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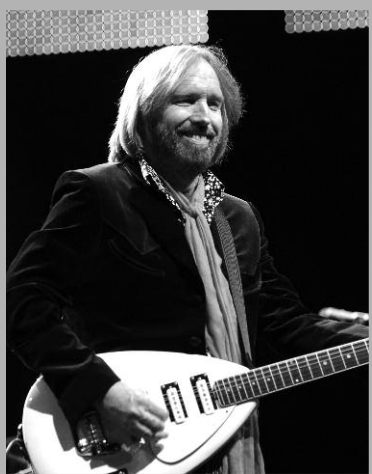
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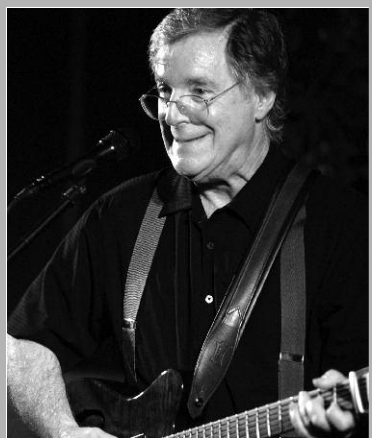
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## Structure • Boundaries • Discipline • Spirit

*This is the third of a four-part series of guided imagery meditations. The four elements, Structure, Boundaries, Discipline and Spirit, are vital in dealing with the challenges of our lives. Be in a relaxed state when you read these short installments. Keep track of the thoughts and/or questions that come to mind; they may give you a new way to look at yourself, and provide ideas for your life path.*

The forest path is calling you. As you stroll, you look up and see that the trees are hundreds of feet tall; they seem to touch the clouds. But through the canopy you can still see the blue sky and sunshine, and this gives you comfort as you walk on your path.

You notice two birds on a low fern next to you. It is a mother bird with her fledgling. The small young bird is flapping her wings and opening her mouth, begging for food. The mother bird patiently moves her head and points toward a leaf right next to the young bird. The chick continues her flapping and chirping, but still the mother bird patiently resists, pointing to the leaf and the seed pod beneath. Finally the young bird looks where her mother directs, and, finding the seeds, enjoys a nutritious meal. Her mother is teaching her to feed herself; this is the mother's role. She knows she cannot give in to her chick's pleas; she must have self-control, ignoring the cries of hunger so that her offspring will learn self-reliance, and pass along these life skills to the next generation. This is **discipline**, another important element of your life path. It takes discipline to be the person you desire to be, to respect yourself and others, to find time to move your body, care for yourself, move forward with your life and not be stuck in the past. It takes discipline to not give up; to keep looking until you find your passion.

Are there areas in your life in which you can show more discipline?

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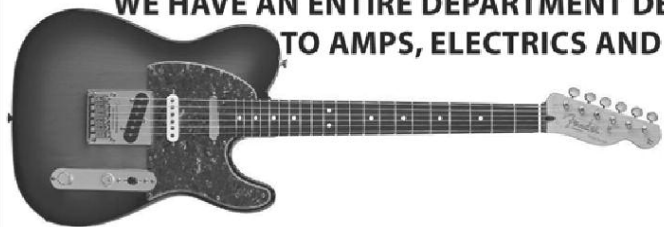
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