

T SAN DIEGO ROUBADOOR

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



December 2010

THE WOMEN'S ISSUE

Vol. 10, No. 3

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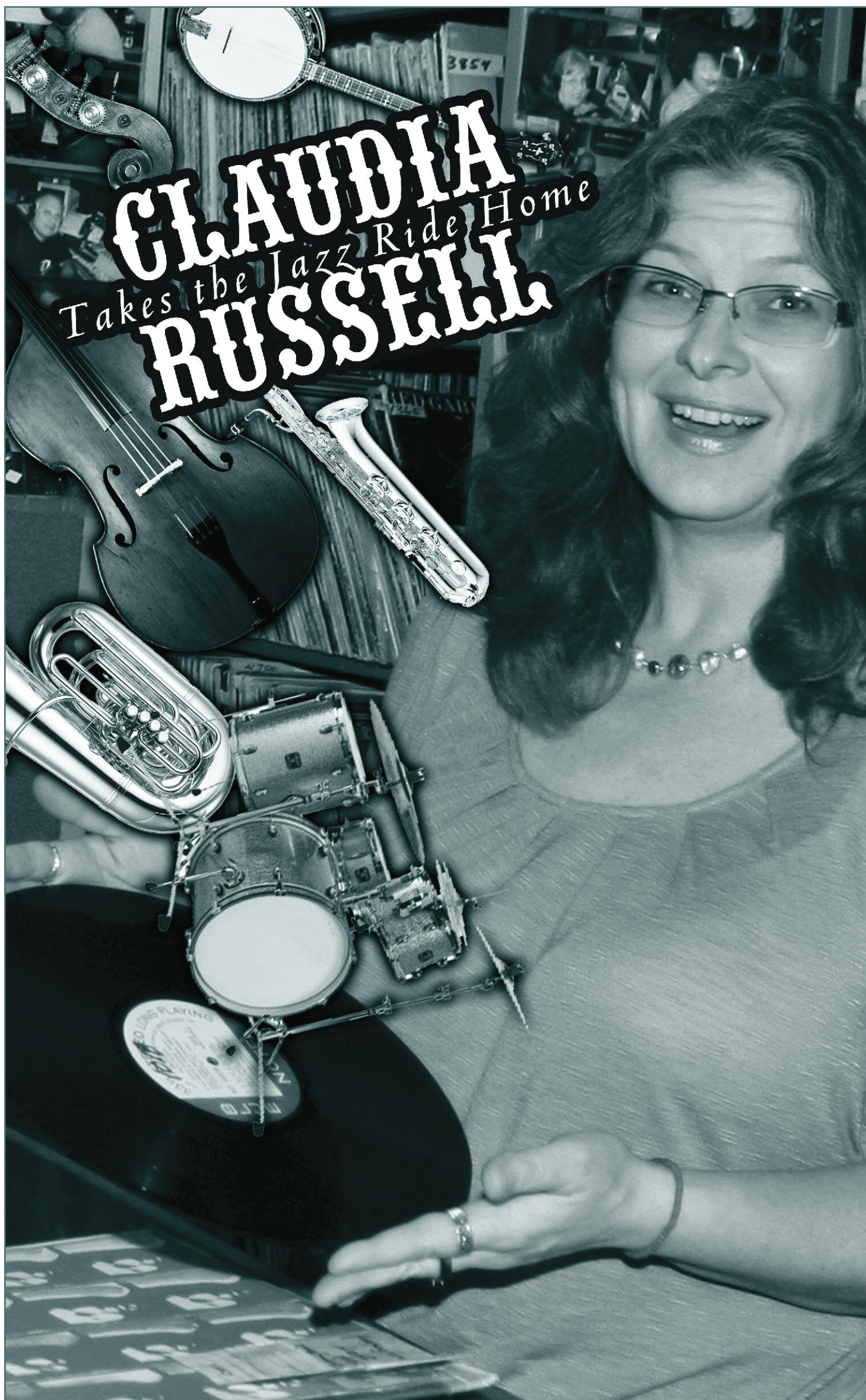
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MISSION

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

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

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SUBMITTING YOUR CD FOR REVIEW

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

SUBMITTING A CALENDAR LISTING

Email your gig date, including location, address, and time to info@sandiegotroubadour.com by the 22rd of the month prior to publication.

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

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'Tis the Season

Happy Holidays! I have to admit, this is my favorite time of year. I love the vibe of good cheer and celebration. I love the parties and the music. Everybody's happy. It's fun to dress up and go out. Maybe those feelings come from growing up in the Midwest — the crispness in the air, the anticipation of the first snow, coming in from the cold to a warm house. From October until Christmas, it's one holiday after the other, culminating in a frenzy of activity until New Year's Eve when poof! it's all over.

And although it is the end of the year, it is also the anticipation of another year and a significant year for the *San Diego Troubadour*. As we enter into our 10th year of publication (since September, actually), we'll be celebrating our anniversary throughout year by way of new features and expanded offerings for our readers. We're also planning a special music event to cap off our tenth year in the fall.

This month, the Troubadour celebrates women in music, local women — famous women, behind-the-scenes women, women business owners, women who have made a difference in our musical community here in San Diego. And let's not forget the women who support their husbands or partners who want to pursue their dreams of a career in music. Ellen Duplessie was the one who had the vision of a newspaper devoted to music. It was she who got it going and was the driving force behind the *San Diego Troubadour*. Kent and I helped her realized the vision with the practical skills we had experience in, while Lyle Duplessie did most of the writing. When Ellen and Lyle passed away in 2004, we became the guardian of the vision and have kept it going over the years. In this issue, we are only able to cover a few of the many women who have made significant contributions to the local music scene, but we know the rest of you are out there.

For the first time in our history, we are featuring a Holiday Gift Guide for our readers. We're excited about it and hope it can be a regular feature in this paper. Not only does it contain ads for a variety of small community businesses and individuals, it also looks great in color!

The *San Diego Troubadour* has always been the best and only pure-music publication in town! Within its pages you can read educated CD reviews of a wide variety of local artists. Now, with the re-launch of sandiegotroubadour.com, we'll be showing you exclusive video interviews and retrospectives. Our monthly podcast, with the help of Berkley Sound, features artists and personalities based right here in San Diego, who have influenced how music is written and played around the world. (This month Ingrid Croce is the focus of a fascinating interview to supplement the article about her on page 4.) New search and social media features will help you find out more about the local artists you love! Take a few minutes to see what's new on the new sandiegotroubadour.com and you'll find there's more to learn and more to hear! Many thanks to Will Edwards and Jeff Berkley for making this happen.

Finally, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have supported us over the years as well as our writers, columnists, photographers, delivery helpers, and team members who have donated their time and talents to make the San Diego Troubadour the publication that it is.

We wish all of you a very happy and safe holiday season!

Liz Abbott and Kent Johnson, Publishers
San Diego Troubadour

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by Bart Mendoza with Sandra Castillo

Today, downtown San Diego is a bustling, visitor friendly locale, both scenic and with a thriving nightlife, but go back to the early 1980s and the view is decidedly different. The catalyst for change? Ingrid Croce, who brought dining and music to the area in a big way, opening her namesake restaurant in 1985, at a time when the downtown area was avoided by most. It's been said before, but the Croce's name is now synonymous with downtown San Diego.

Last month, the *San Diego Troubadour* was fortunate enough to sit down for a conversation with Ingrid Croce, civic leader, restaurateur, and musician at Berkley Sound studios. Among many other projects, she is currently working on a biography with her husband, Jim Rock. The topics of discussion on this day were many and varied, touching on the music business and her late husband Jim Croce, her restaurant, and much more. Below are excerpts from that interview, further excerpts can be seen and heard on the *Troubadour* website's home page (www.sandiegotroubadour.com).

V

The Croces first arrived in San Diego in 1973. "There were a lot of opportunities in Los Angeles, but we just didn't fit in LA. I think I had a pair of jeans and a t-shirt and Jim had maybe a pair of jeans and maybe a work shirt that he used for performing in, I mean literally we had nothing. So, we thought, 'we're not going to make it here [LA]'. He had played at Funky Quarters [club] in the Gaslamp, which was an opportunity, he thought, to see [San Diego]. Of course, we'd spent some time in Ocean Beach that weekend and we thought Ocean Beach might be a place we could be. So we ended up in San Diego and liked it. It felt like it was the right place to be. Like kind people."

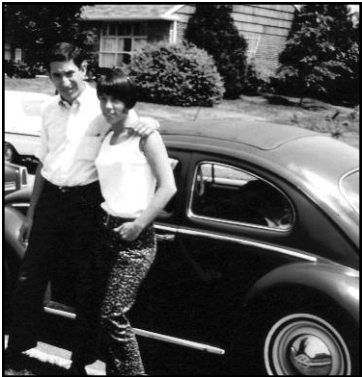
The tragic story of Jim Croce's passing is well known, much less so the events that followed, some of which would go on to have positive legal implications for all recording artists to follow. "I spent my last weekend with Jim in the Gaslamp and I had no idea, honestly, when I got that phone call, where life would leave me," she recalled. "I guess we could say that the next 12 years of our lives, we fought, I fought - A.J. was a baby [at the time] - for the music rights [to Jim and my songs]. Because I had not received any money and then all of a sudden - this is the strange part - I received a check for what seemed was an enormous amount of money," Croce recalled. "It probably was two or three thousand dollars, but it seemed like more money, ... It was more money than we had ever had. And I thought, 'wow! This is great,' but Jim never got this money while he was alive - why not? So I asked for what I thought was something typical, because I didn't know much about the industry, the 'A' word. I asked for an audit."

The reaction from the music industry was less than positive. "It turned out [that] was the worst thing I could've said. Because of all of these people in the music industry had been in charge of our money, had been in charge of our estate, had been in charge of our lives, financially. So, I felt it was really important to fight for artists' rights. It just came to me that that was the most important thing I could do, so I kind of put everything else on hold and started fighting. I spent 12 years in court and I did change some laws for artists; people are no longer allowed to keep people in perpetuity on any contract. That was the most important thing, because we had signed our agreements in perpetuity. So that's kind of how it all began."

Post courthouse, her next move wasn't obvious. "Twelve years later, I walked out of there, not knowing what I was going to do after I finished the litigation and had not really receiving money to do much," she noted. "But, I did start receiving my artist's rights from my part of the publishing, I did get my insurance and A.J. started to receive money from a wrongful death suit. And finally, it was at a time when I had been on the road a little bit; I couldn't sing any longer, my vocal chords were not in a posi-

INGRID CROCE

A WOMAN OF MANY TALENTS



Jim and Ingrid Croce in the early days

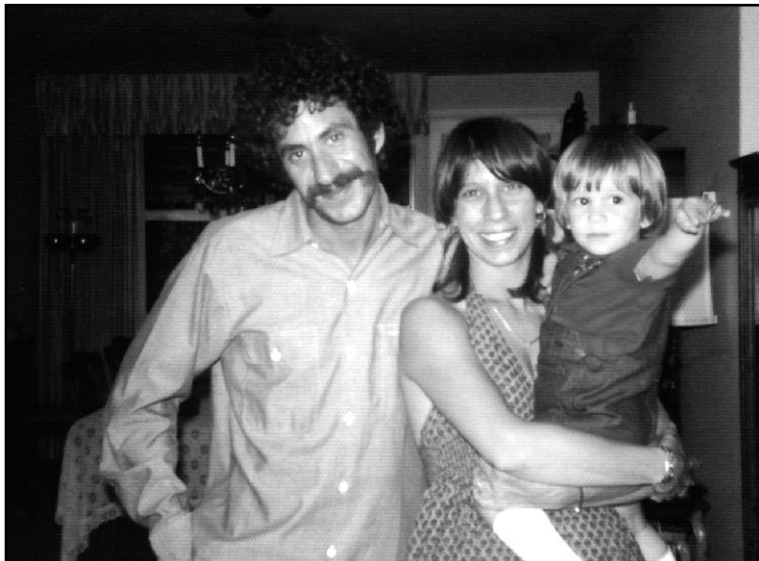


Jim and Ingrid in the Gaslamp

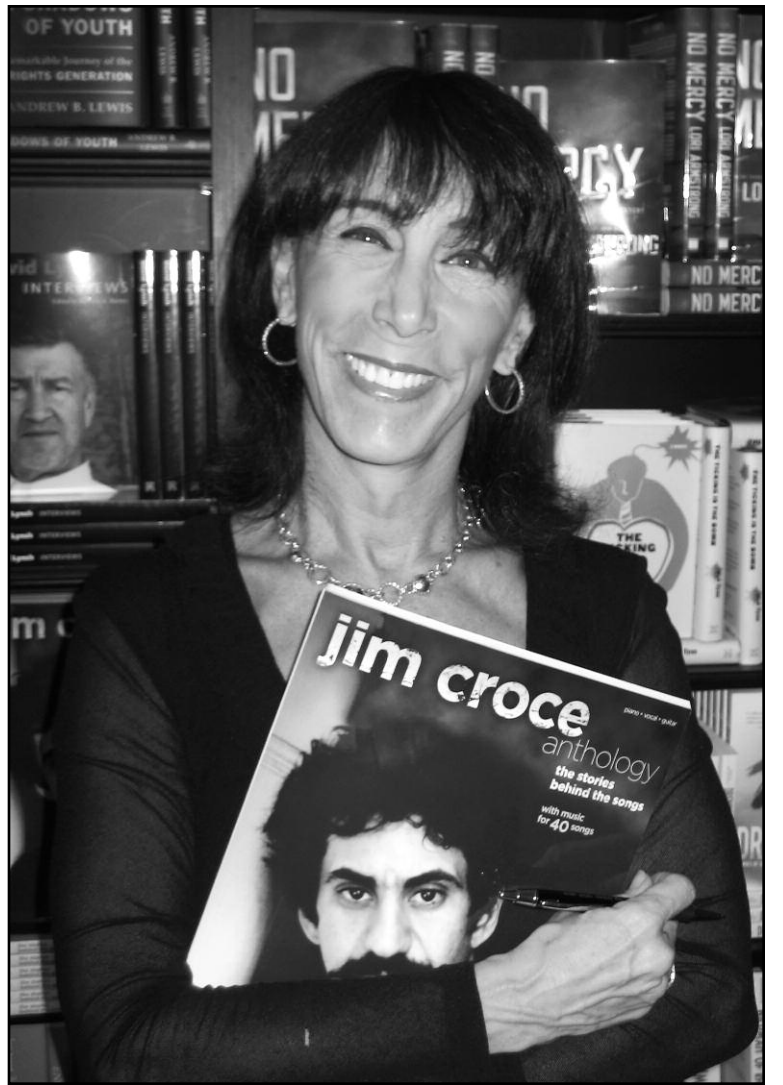
tion to sing. And I thought to myself, 'What can I do?' [I] invited a friend to visit, and said, 'okay, here's my resume, what can I do? I'm an artist, I'm a singer, I don't know anything about other things, I've just been through twelve years of litigation, what do I do?' We sat down and I made her some blintzes. And she said, 'this is what you should do.'" The very next day she got a business license, soon opening her first restaurant at 5th and University. Croce's at the 5th and F location opened in 1985.

Has she ever considered expanding Croce's outside of San Diego? "You know, it's funny you say that," she smiled. "Because everybody comes to Croce's and says, 'oh we could use one in New York or would you please come to Chicago. [But] this is such a homegrown business that if I wasn't there it wouldn't be Croce's. So, I'm not saying we'd never do it, but every time

Jim and I thought about doing it, we'd go 'how could we possibly have the quality of what we have at Croce's, how could we oversee it?' You know, it's just meant to be a mom and pop business, that's all I can say. To do it right, you've got to do it this way." She cites a long standing relationship with Martin guitars, who help provide a scholarship for the annual Jim Croce Award. "We're very lucky to have met some terrific people at Martin guitar," she said. "The reason I bring that in is that we honestly thought about, and we still may, doing a business with Martin guitars, we thought about doing the Croce's restaurant and Martin Signature Guitar Bar. It's not out of the question; we're still considering it. But once we started to think about doing that, the economy changed, and it was just one thing after another that just kept pushing us back to not only not getting bigger, but getting



Jim, Ingrid, and A.J. Croce, 1974



Ingrid Croce

back to the original size we were, where we could actually do food at a level that we feel is as quality as possible. We've always done everything to order, but we really wanted to offer food that was at the level of excellence that the music is, and I feel that we're there now. You can't really do things at mass level and offer the kind of options that we offer. And offer the kind of music that we offer."

Looking back, what is she proudest of? "It's kind of picking up where I left off," she said. "In going back and thinking about it, I don't know how it happened, but meeting my husband [Jim Rock] on table 21 and starting all over again and really picking up all the pieces, because going back and doing this biography right now. ... I have a very good memory." She continued, "I've always felt the need to document my life, I can't explain it to you but from the time I was little I wrote diaries and I wrote everything down every single day of my life. I taped my life, so in 1987, when I met my husband, for whatever reason, I stopped taping and started living. And, I think if I go back, to that time and go forward, I think the thing that I'm most proud of, is that I'm actually

doing that. It's exciting." She also takes pride in the venue, having nurtured the local artists' community. "The building of Croce's, for me - [it's] having AJ having start his career there, in a sense, at a very young age." She mentions local musicians who have performed there. "Having watched a whole generation grow up in that community and now watching new people, I mean just people who work at our front door who play music on the side, because they can make a living at Croce's. To be able to help them to get through college, to be able to help them to pay for their careers, that is the best thing that has happened," she stated. "I've actually done what I've set out to do, which was to find community. To have music, to enjoy the food, and have the experience of what we do. And I think if anyone can do that, I mean if you can actually pursue something and then wake up one day and then say 'oh! I'm doing exactly what I set out to do, then you should be really thankful. And that's what I'm thankful for."

You can hear more at: www.sandiegotroubadour.com

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MAKING A LIST AND CHECKING IT TWICE

Well, every year in January I've been making a list of songs (usually about a 102 or so) that you should spend the next year listening to. This time I decided to give you a Christmas list and remind you that on the Sunday before Christmas you can hear the jazzier and blusier of these tunes on my "Jazz Roots Christmas Show (KSDS 88.3FM and Jazz88.org on the net). That's from 8-10pm. It's up to you to find the rest of them. Good hunting and sweet listening.

Here they are. I should point out that if the same title shows up in more than one version, that's because they are so different.

1. The Santa Claus Blues: Clarence Williams Blue Five with Eva Taylor and Louis Armstrong
2. Christmas Night in Harlem: Paul Whiteman Orchestra with Jack Teagarden and Johnny Mercer
3. Christmas Carols by the Old Corral: Tex Ritter
4. Yingle Bells: Yogi Yorgesson
5. What Will Santa Claus Say (when he finds everybody swingin'): Louis Prima's New Orleans Gang
6. All I want for Christmas is a Doodley Boop: Baby Lee (also a version by Art Carney)
7. Swingin' Them Jingle Bells: Fats Waller
8. Blue Christmas Lights: Buck Owens
9. Mr. Santa Boogie: The Marshall Brothers
10. Christ Was Born on Christmas Morn: Frankie "Half Pint" Jaxon with Punch Miller and the Cotton Top Mountain Singers
11. Junior's a Jap Girl's Christmas for His Santa Claus: Willie Blackwell
12. Santa, Bring Me a 10-Pound Box of Money: Pearl Bailey
13. Your Papa Ain't No Santa Claus and Your Mama Ain't No Christmas Tree: Butterbeans and Susie
14. Put the Loot in the Boot, Santa: Mae West
15. Christmas and No Santa Claus: Bumble Bee Slim
16. I Yust Go Nuts at Christmas: Yogi Yorgesson
17. I Want You for Christmas: Mae Questel (Betty Boop) also a version by Dick Robertson
18. Christmas Date Boogie: Big Joe Turner with Pete Johnson
19. Santa Claus'll Come Down your Chimney Tonight: Bo Carter
20. Christmas in Jail: Leroy Carr
21. The Wrong Way to Celebrate Christmas: Rev. Edward Clayborn
22. I Want a Hippopotamus for Christmas: Gayla Peevy (Mary McCaslin also did a version of this one)
23. Meet Me Under the Mistletoe: Dick Robertson and his Orchestra
24. Christmas Morning Blues: Victoria Spivey
25. Be Bop Santa Claus: Babs Gonzalez
26. Fairy on a Christmas Tree: Gracie Fields
27. Merry Texas Christmas, You All: Ernest Tubb
28. Faraway Christmas Blues: Little Esther Phillips with the Johnny Otis Orchestra
29. I Want to Spend Christmas with Elvis: Debby Dabney

Recordially, Lou Curtiss

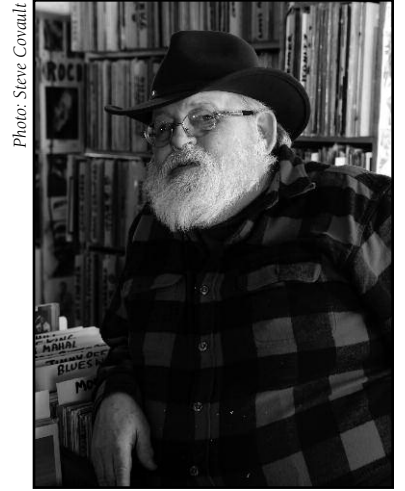


Photo: Steve Covault
Lou Curtiss

30. I Want to Trim Your Tree: Jimmy Butler
31. Christmas Balls: Larry Vincent with Ben Light and the Surf Boys
32. Santa's Secret (Santa Claus Is Smoking Reefers): Johnny Guarnieri
33. Santa at the Schoolhouse for the PTA: Yogi Yorgesson
34. Santa Claus Got Stuck in my Chimney: Ella Fitzgerald
35. Cool Yule: Louis Armstrong
36. Santa Claus Bring My Man Back: Ozie Ware with the Duke Ellington Trio
37. Merry Christmas: Lightnin' Hopkins
38. Santa Claus Came in the Spring: Putney Dandridge
39. 'Zat You Santa Claus?: Louis Armstrong
40. I Ain't Gonna Let You See My Santa Claus: Victoria Spivey
41. Hey, Santa Claus: The Moonglows
42. A Surfer's Christmas List: The Surfaris
43. I Saw Mommy Do the Mambo with You Know Who: Jimmy Boyd
44. I'm Getting Nuttin' for Christmas: Stan Freberg
45. Yulesville: Edd Byrnes
46. Santa Claus Goes Straight to the Ghetto: James Brown
49. Will Santy Come to Shanty Town: Eddy Arnold
50. Sock It to Me Santa: Bud Logan
51. Hello Santa Claus: Cecil Gant
52. Christmas Spirit: Julia Lee and her Boyfriends
53. At the Christmas Ball: Bessie Smith
54. Jingle Bells: Leo Watson
55. Christmas Time's a-Comin': Bill Monroe and the Bluegrass Boys
56. On a Christmas Day: Leadbelly
57. Death Might Be Your Santa Claus: Rev. J.M. Gates
58. Boogie Woogie Santa Claus: Mabel Scott (also versions by Lionel Hampton and Patti Page)
59. Empty Stocking Blues: Floyd Dixon
60. Christmas in Paradise: Mike Morgan and the Crawl
61. Young Girls Drive Me Wild at Christmas: Anson Funderburgh
62. Last Month of the Year: Vera Hall Ward
63. Jingle Bells: The Maddox Brothers & Rose
64. Breaking Up Christmas: Norman Edmonds
65. Christmas Morning the Rum Had Me Yawning: Lord Beginner
66. Sherburne: Alabama Sacred Harp Singers
67. Tane Pid Werbamy (Dance Under the Willows): Pawlo Humeniuk
68. Lady Gay: Buell Kaze
69. Decimas De Nacimiento: Los Jibaras
70. Holy Babe: Cummins State Farm Vocal Quintet
71. My Christmas Baby: Smokey Hogg
72. Christmas Eve Blues: Blind Lemon Jefferson
73. No Room at the Hotel: Lucy Smith Jubilee Singers
74. Lonesome Christmas Blues: Blind Blake
75. Christmas Is a Joyful Day: Lord Executor
76. Christmas Time Will Soon Be Over: Fiddlin' John Carson
77. Christmas Celebration: Jesse "Baby Face" Thomas
78. Christmas Time in New Orleans: Louis Armstrong (also versions by Billie Holiday, Lee Wiley, others)
79. Christmas in Pumpkin Center: Cal Stewart and Ada Jones
80. Go Where I Send Thee: Alphabetical Four
81. Christmas Party Shuffle: Lowell Fulson
82. Christmas Time Blues: Slim Seward and Fat Boy Hayes
83. Sonny Boy's Christmas Blues: Sonny Boy Williamson II with his Harmonica and Houserockers
84. Christmas Morning Blues: Sonny Boy Williamson I
85. To Heck with Ole Santy Claus: Loretta Lynn
86. Christmas at the Station: Slim Dusty
87. Randolph the Flat-Nosed Reindeer: Homer & Jethro
88. Mr. and Mrs. Snowman: Hank Thompson
89. Santa Claus Is Comin' in a Whirlybird: Gene Autry
90. I'll be Walkin' the Floor This Christmas: Ernest Tubb
91. Christmas Time Is Near: The Stanley Brothers
92. Here Comes Santa Claus Again: Buck Owens
93. I'm Trimming my Christmas Tree with Teardrops: Ernest Tubb
94. Christmas Is a Hep Cat's Holiday: The Cats & the Fiddle
95. Christmas Man Blues: Bertha "Chippie" Hill
96. How I Hate to see Christmas Come Around: Jimmie Witherspoon
97. Christmas Boogie: Sugar Chile Robinson
98. I'd like to Have an elephant for Christmas: Hank Thompson
99. Sweet Little Jesus Boy: Wings Over Jordan
100. Santa Claus Baby: The Voices
101. Hey Santa Clause (sic): The Moonglows
102. Begin a New Life on Christmas Day: Rev. A.W. Nix

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Recordially,
Lou Curtiss



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San Diego Nation

San Diego Nation is an on-going series dedicated to spotlighting San Diego's influence on the greater national and international music scenes.

Where the Southwest Meets Venus: San Diego's Top Female Musicians

"...send my love to Rosie, wherever she may be..."

— John Lennon

by Raul Sandelin

With the above statement, John Lennon launches into his cover of the Rosie and the Originals' hit "Angel Baby," which was featured in a collection of songs released posthumously in 1986 as *Menlove Ave*. Lennon also once claimed "Angel Baby" to be one of his favorite songs. The song was written and released in 1960 by 15-year old San Diegan Rosie Hamlin, who had only recently made her stage debut at El Cajon's Bostonia Ballroom. Recorded in a San Marcos airplane hanger-cum-studio, the song was first played over the loud speaker at Kresge's department store in San Diego before getting national airplay and vaulting to #5 on the U.S. pop charts. It's probably safe to say that Lennon first heard the song over Radio Luxembourg, which he listened to diligently at a time when the BBC refused to play rock n' roll.

It's somewhat eerie to think that a voice recorded here in San Diego County reached out all the way to Liverpool to touch the still-struggling, future Beatle. Certainly, the common bond of teenage rock 'n' roll angst and heartbreak somehow bridged the 7,000-mile gap that separated the two musicians. "Angel Baby" also projected the innocence of San Diego. It was and still is as sweet as a Southern California prom or a summer drive up old Highway 101.

Although "Angel Baby" was a one-hit wonder, a one-hit wonder that continues to garner a cult following, Rosie Hamlin was able to enjoy a spirited career, sharing a stage with the likes of Big Mama Thornton, Chuck Berry, and Little Richard. In fact, a revamped Rosie and the Originals continues making music to this day.

But, not every woman from San Diego sings like Rosie Hamlin or reinforces San Diego's balmy image. Avant-garde pianist and vocalist Diamanda Galas is another favorite of British rock royalty, a favorite of Led Zeppelin's John Paul Jones to be exact. Galas, who was raised in San Diego, is known for her opera of the macabre. Sometimes she sounds like fellow San Diegan Tom Waits although her five-octave range allows her to shriek her way into new orbits of terror; growl like a mangled animal; sample classical operetta; ponder melodies in Spanish, French, and her ancestral Greek; or belt out standard blues and jazz tunes.

Galas began performing around San Diego and Los Angeles in the late 1970s. As visual as she was sonic, she performed both as a musician and in improvisational and theatrical settings. Soon afterward, she moved to London where she recorded her first album *The Litanies of Satan* in 1982. Since then, she has produced some 20 albums including *Do You Take This Man?* and *A Sporting Life*, with John Paul Jones, in the mid-'90s.

Contrary to San Diego's "politics lite" image, Galas has always been deeply involved in various causes, always championing the oppressed and forgotten, a theme that underpins much of her music. She has sung for the victims of government and ethnic oppression in Turkey, Greece, El Salvador, and Armenia. When her brother became HIV positive and ultimately died from AIDS, Galas became a crusader against the disease and recorded her album *Plague Mass* about the disease's

devastating toll. She has also performed with other British royals including Marianne Faithfull and members of Depeche Mode. And, her music has been featured in such films as Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* and Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*.

In between these two extremes – the simple innocence of Rosie Hamlin and the haunting sound-shock of Diamanda Galas – one finds the broad palette that is San Diego's contribution to the female voice and touch in popular music.

It is inevitable that many deserving names will be left off any list. But, where would the King of Pop be without San Diegan Jennifer Batten, who took her two-handed tapping technique out on the road as Michael Jackson's touring guitarist in the '80s and '90s? Then, there's Jeannie Cheatham, musician and author, who, with husband Jimmy kept traditional gospel, jazz, and blues alive for six decades.

Of course, there are those occasional times when a San Diego artist not only makes it big but drags the entire local scene into the limelight with her. This happened in the mid-1990s when Jewel Kilcher, also known as just plain Jewel, went multi-platinum with her debut album *Pieces of You*. As the album went on to sell nearly 30 million units, fellow San Diegan Steve Poltz was adorned with accolades for his songwriting on the album. And, San Diego's café and open mic circuit found itself in the national spotlight as everybody rushed in to fill Jewel's empty spot at Java Joe's in Ocean Beach.

One area in which San Diego has long been known to shine is in roots music and Americana. Certainly, many of the guys, including the cow punks, have found national and international followings by exploring, updating, and juicing up the sounds of yesteryear's back roads. But, the women have done it too! Rosie Flores, Eve Selis, and Nickel Creek's Sara Watkins are all examples of San Diego's never-ending journey into the bayous, hollers, and honkytonks of the American dreamscape.

Of course, no list would be complete without mentioning Tristan Prettyman and Candy Kane. Prettyman is the youngest member of all the names mentioned here. The Torrey Pines graduate and Virgin recording artist has taken the



Rosie Hamlin



Rosie Flores



Sara Watkins



Eve Selis



Candy Kane



Diamanda Galas



Kevyn Lettau



Tristan Prettyman



Jeannie Cheatham



Jewel

concept of the singer-songwriter into the 21st century. Utilizing Ani DiFranco as her starting point, Prettyman uses her voice and guitar introspectively to survey the landscape of Love in a fragile and often-unloving world. Kane, of course, has been a mainstay of the San Diego scene since the 1980s. Developing out of the same milieu that gave us the blues and alt-country bands of that era, Kane's career grew along with her friends in the Blasters, Los Lobos, and especially the Paladins. (She was formerly married to Paladin bassist Thomas Yearsley.) Yet, whereas the scene waned here in the early-'90s, Kane's career continued to peak through to this day. For her efforts, she is mentioned in several published books on the blues, including the *Rolling Stone Guide to Jazz and Blues*.

In addition, we have Kevyn Lettau and Barbara Mandrell. Jazz artist Kevyn Lettau moved to San Diego as a child with her father, the late German writer and UCSD professor Reinhardt Lettau. (Lettau the elder was a good friend of New Left leader Herbert Marcuse, who was also teaching at UCSD in the '60s.) Lettau the younger started singing in her teens with a group of musicians around La Jolla and Del Mar, most notably with guitarist Peter Sprague in his late-'70s project: *The Dance of the Universe Orchestra*. In the '80s, she and Sprague formed Braziljazz as their love of Brazilian music grew. During this time, she was also a member of Sergio Mendes' group and toured with him for eight years. In 1991, Lettau released her first solo album, simply titled *Kevyn Lettau*. She has released 10 albums since then and continues to tour.

Barbara Mandrell is probably the least probable to be on a list of San Diego musicians, since many would assume she came from some red dirt road in the Deep South. But, the truth is that Mandrell

graduated from Oceanside High School, and her family ran a music store in the North County for many years. She started playing professionally at the age of six, attracting the attention of such legends as Chet Atkins, Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, and George Jones. While in her teens, she toured nationally with her family in the Mandrell Family Band while performing often in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Las Vegas. Soon after turning 21, she moved to Nashville to devote herself completely to country music. Between 1969 and 1997, she released over 25 albums and nearly 70 singles, seven of which went to #1 on the country charts. She continues to perform, often with the Mandrell Sisters, and make public appearances. She has been awarded top female performer and vocalist several times by both the Academy of Country Music and the People's Choice Awards. She has also been inducted into both the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Country-Gospel Music Hall of Fame. In addition, she has acted on TV and on stage.

Born in Germany, Alaska, Texas, and other parts far and wide, these singers underscore the idea of San Diego as a stop at the crossroads. As new influences enter, these women stop for

a spell, then leave to pollinate somewhere else. This is not exclusive of this list. Just look at bands like Crosby, Stills, and Nash or the Eagles. How many members actually came from Southern California even though both those groups are thought of as cornerstones to the Southern California sound? What really is surprising is how diverse the music is that comes from this list. From bubblegum to avant garde, from country to smooth jazz to gutsy blues, San Diego proves itself yet again as a platform for everything the world (and Venus) has to offer.

What is interesting about this list of San Diego's female musicians is that so many of them have traveled extensive journeys before making it to our fair city.

Raul Sandelin also teaches writing and cultural theory at Grossmont College and SDSU.



Barbara Mandrell

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by Steve Thorn

The invention of polyvinyl chloride has made a significant contribution to the quality of life. One of most easily recognizable and enjoyable forms of PVC came to forefront when the vinyl phonograph record was available to the public through assembly line manufacturing.

Although the death knell for records was felt in the 1980s, the general public was allowed little say whether to save or scrap vinyl discs. In an almost overnight coup, the major record store chains replaced the 13 x 13" record album covers with the smaller jewel cases containing compact discs. Much printed space at the time was devoted to articles extolling the "superiority" of CDs. But in the real world, there were many audiophiles reluctant to discard their albums or the turntables on which the discs were played. Jazz fans held on to their treasured copy of *Kind of Blue* while the original progenitors of long-haired music – classical music aficionados – kept their Deutsche Grammophon discs in safe storage.

Vinyl records may have been on the ropes, but the industry never delivered the fatal TKO. Those record labels, which maintained the philosophy of quality before profit, released limited edition discs on 180-degree vinyl. The *Beatles' Anthology* series was offered in both LP and CD formats, and landmark Beach Boys albums *Pet Sounds* and *Sunflower* were reissued on quality vinyl with the original album cover artwork.

Records – and the people who love them – have a sanctuary in this city. Long-time San Diegans Ruthie Bible and Betsy Scarborough were smitten by the record collecting craze in their youth. Twenty-six years ago they joined forces to open Nickelodeon Records. The store's title isn't named after the kid-friendly cable network where famous adults occasionally get covered in green slime. It was partially derived from the 1950 Teresa Brewer hit "Music!



The "transgender" section at Nickelodeon



The store's San Diego section

Music! Music!" That song's opening line was "Put another nickel in/in the nickelodeon." For further inspiration behind the store's name, the wandering soul needs to visit the Left Bank. Rue de l'Odeon is a Parisian street that is home to the famous Shakespeare and Company, an English language bookstore established by ex-pat Sylvia Beach. "What we were going to do for a very short minute was, we were thinking about opening a bookstore," said Scarborough. "We thought about that very briefly, because I was going to name it after Sylvia Beach and the Rue de l'Odeon. But then we said, 'No, [let's make it] music.' And we started with a milk crate of records. Then I got a business license. That's what we started with, and we rented a place."

From the lone milk crate, the record population of the store grew with the wild abandonment of fertile bunnies. Although the record store has always been in Normal Heights, its first location back in 1984 was at 3916 Adams Avenue, next to a famous house constructed from rocks. A few years later, Nickelodeon moved to its present location at 3335 Adams. In addition to Bible and Scarborough's stacks of wax, the walls of Nickelodeon are filled with memorabilia, much of it linked to the adolescent time frames of the store's two proprietors.

Bible was born in Waukegan, Illinois, but her family's reasons for relocating to San Diego were fairly typical for the times: her dad was in the navy. She grew up in Southeast San Diego and attended Ocean View (now Kennedy) Elementary School. Bible was a student at Lincoln High when it was a combined junior and senior high school and graduated as a "Hornet" in 1958. At 17, she was hired as a messenger for the Union Title Company downtown. The business was noted for its collection of archival photographs and the devoted efforts of Larry and Jane Booth, a couple that supervised the categorizing of the collection. These priceless photographs eventually found a permanent home at the San Diego Historical Society. "Sometimes, I'd go in and help them file negatives," said Bible. Upper management at Union Title was impressed by the work ethic of the messenger. "Tony Bachman, the president of Union Title, left to take over La Jolla Federal, and I was one of the lucky ones that he took with him. I was a corporate officer, so I came up from being a messenger to becoming a corporate officer until the time they merged. That's when I quit and we started the store."

Opening up a record store and surrounding herself with melodies was a natural progression for Bible. "I had a very active musical family. I am a singer – I was a mezzo soprano, but now I sing torch songs – I like the PAINFUL ones," she said, raising her eyes with a combination of deadpan humor and mock despair. "My mother was a church organist at a Japanese church for more than 30 years. I sang in church and at weddings and my brothers and my

For These Record Store Owners Platters Still Matter



Betsy Scarborough & Ruthie Bible, owners of Nickelodeon

father were [musically] involved." Growing up during the golden age of doo-wop, Bible said the first record she remembers buying was "Gee" by the Crows. I bought 45s all the time."

Scarborough also was born in the Lone Star State – in Corsicana, Texas, which she described as having "the biggest oil field west of the Mississippi. It's the home of DeLuxe Fruit Cake, the only business in town." Scarborough's grandmother was the secretary to Texas Governor Beauford Jester. In 1959, Betsy's family also moved to California for an industry that was just as well known as the San Diego's Pacific Fleet. "All of the aerospace [contracts] moved out to California," said Scarborough. "My father was an engineer for Rohr and Solar Turbines." Scarborough attended Horace Mann Junior High in East San Diego and was a member of the "Colt" class of 1963 at nearby Crawford High. She attended SDSU when it was a much smaller campus called San Diego State College, earning master's degrees in English and education. During her college years, Scarborough had what she described as "a really nice gig" at the Lion Clothing Company, which was located in an impressive edifice at the corner of Sixth Avenue and Broadway in downtown. "I was a PBX [switchboard] operator and a model there. It was a really fancy high-end store with a personal clothing line. It was in a beautiful building."

After college, Scarborough joined the teaching profession, her most rewarding assignment was at Morse High. Thousands

of students were enrolled in a Betsy Scarborough class over the span of more than three decades, and many were able to see the bigger picture through her instruction. "It was just a great experience," said Scarborough. "The nice thing about Morse at the time was that most of the teachers – the good teachers – stayed. So, toward the end, I was teaching the children of my former students. A lot of them had stayed in the neighborhood, which of course was fun. But you also had some leverage – all you had to do was pick up the phone and make a call." Her English classes were doing more than diagramming sentences. "I still believe firmly that history and music and art and literature all go together, and that if people would quit separating them, you could get kids to understand that it all goes together. When you look at an 18th century painting, you need to look at the history [of the time] and how it all fits together." Scarborough retired from teaching in 2007.

While the walls of the store feature old records from San Diego groups like the Accents ("You Better Watch Out Boy") and Rosie and the Originals ("Angel Baby"), there are other relics equally captivating: old sock-hop posters ("Marsha and the Esquires!"), high school football programs ("Now, there's a lost art form," Scarborough sighs), and photographs of drive-in diners. San Diego's closest drive-in to match the fictional Arnold's on "Happy Days" was Oscar's. Fondly remembered for its "double-decker" burger and chocolate shakes (in a glass, thank you!), Oscar's has been pre-

served on a popular black t-shirt, available for purchase at Nickelodeon. Oscar's was created by San Diego native and restaurant pioneer Robert Oscar Peterson. Pretty car hops greeted patrons at Peterson's first drive-in, Topsy's, in 1941. Topsy's eventually evolved into Oscar's and post-World War II San Diego saw the expansion of Oscar's all over Southern California. It became a teen hang out and a place for mom and dad to treat the kids if they behaved. Peterson, like McDonald's guru Ray Kroc, was a wizard at time management and efficiency and created one of the first automated drive-ins (the clown and the speaker) with Jack-in-the-Box. Jack and Oscar's peacefully co-existed as part of Peterson's Foodmaker Incorporated empire, but by the end of the '60s, the curtain was being drawn on the era of Oscar's and the pretty car hops. The T-shirts Bible and Scarborough sell feature a nighttime photograph of Oscar's Pacific Highway location. Gen Lai Sen, a popular Chinese eatery across the street from San Diego City College, is the site of the old Oscar's at Park Boulevard and C Street. Although the double-decker burger has been replaced by roast duck, the exterior of the restaurant retains much of Oscar's architectural design.

Nickelodeon follows a fairly typical format in the categorization of musical genres. There are large sections devoted to rock, folk, jazz, and soundtracks. But it's in the quirkier selections where the vinyl junkie will find discs that often seem to originate from another time, and, in some instances, another galaxy.

The "Spoken Word" section features some interesting discs. Most prominent among the selection are the recordings of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas and poet-historian Carl Sandburg. A "San Diego" section offers a potpourri of subject matter. You won't find the usual local suspects in this category – Tom Waits and the Iron Butterfly records are found in other parts of the store. But what is featured will cause the customer to do a double take. The *Sea World Water Fantasy* is a record that celebrates a long-defunct attraction at the Mission Bay aquatic park. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the album is the arranger on board making a "splash": Nelson Riddle, who was Frank Sinatra's most important collaborator. Dr. Michael Dean, a hypnotist who performed before SRO audiences in local nightclubs during the '60s and '70s, found time to make an album when he wasn't putting willing volunteers under a restful sleep. Another San Diego nightclub act of the same era were Fred and Mickey Finn. They recorded several albums that captured the Dixieland atmosphere of their Hillcrest "Speakeasy," a venue that served as a rite of passage center for anyone who turned 21 during the '60s. *San Diego After Dark* is a romantic "mood music" recording that sported a cover of a smaller downtown skyline. Country legend Smokey Rogers (whose enormous contribution to the West Coast

continued on page 13

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by Paul Hormick

“I love being on the radio,” says Claudia Russell

as she steps into her studio. “It means that I get to spend time with music!”

Monday through Friday Russell hosts the KSDS afternoon radio show, “The Jazz Ride Home.” For two hours, from four until six, she plays a mix of new jazz releases and old classic jazz, everything from Duke Ellington to Bonarama, from Sonny Rollins to the Bad Plus.

Russell occupies a prime time for broadcast radio, when most San Diegans have finished a full day of work, have picked up the kids, and are driving back to the suburbs. That’s why she calls her program The Jazz Ride Home. The afternoon time slot sets the mood for the show’s playlist. She says, “I shoot for tunes that are medium up-tempo. You know, you’ve put in a long day, you’re tired. Maybe you’ve had a rough time with your boss. But there is still a lot remaining to the day, so you’re not quite ready to be mellow. I try to pick it up a bit with the selection that I play.” The first tune is usually from a well-known musician or band; it’s usually up-tempo but not super fast. “I want the first tune to be something that would appeal to someone who has just tuned into the station for the first time, a high quality tune, but one that would still be accessible to a more general audience.”

She broadcasts from a three sided wedge of a studio. One small wall is dominated by the doorway, the other is carpeted, with office memos and a pronunciation guide pinned to the fibers, and the third holds the studio control panel, VU meters, and a microphone that looks to be about the size of a coffee can. As she starts her show, Russell updates her Facebook page with a note about her program. She says that good number of fans follow her on Facebook and appreciate the reminder to tune in. As the show progresses, she also updates the section of the station’s website that chronicles their playlist. If you can’t remember the name of the musician or band that you heard earlier in the day on KSDS, you can go to jazz88.org and find out. There is also a purchase link that lets you buy, right then and there on the internet, whatever song or tune that you like.

For Russell, there isn’t a time when she is not programming her afternoon show. When she wakes up or while she’s having breakfast she might think of a tune and consider whether it might be a good pick for her show that day. She says that in radio less really is more, that, paradoxically, the shorter the radio show, the more effort it takes to program. With a show of only two hours, she has to be very particular when it comes to pairing down the list of selections she plays. That being said, there are some days when she does not have a specific playlist, but she does keep to a formula, usually two recordings per hour of singers and about a half dozen new recordings throughout her whole show. “I also like to have really good classic tunes in there, too. And a classic could be from 20 years ago or even 70 years ago,” she says.

Since the time that records and radio came together about 100 years ago, there have been disc jockeys. Their on-air personalities can run a full gamut of styles. There is the Alan Freed/Wolfman Jack school of radio personality, in which the disc jockeys try to maintain an atmosphere that is as exciting as possible. In other words, they YELL. In a transcript of one of these

disk jockey’s radio shows exclamation marks would predominate. They are the radio equivalent of folks who send emails in ALL CAPS. Then there are the ultra-low key DJs, the ones who came to prominence in the 1970s, when FM stations made the transition from playing Andy Williams and Montovani to playing album cuts of Jethro Tull and Emerson, Lake, and Palmer. Their tone is subdued, knowing, and with a slight conspiratorial edge. Perhaps the best example of this is San Diego’s own Art Good, who combined a raspy whisper and speaking mostly in sentence fragments into the ultimate jacuzzi jazz persona. [I don’t believe anyone can forget the relish with which he would say his favorite word: *bashia*.]

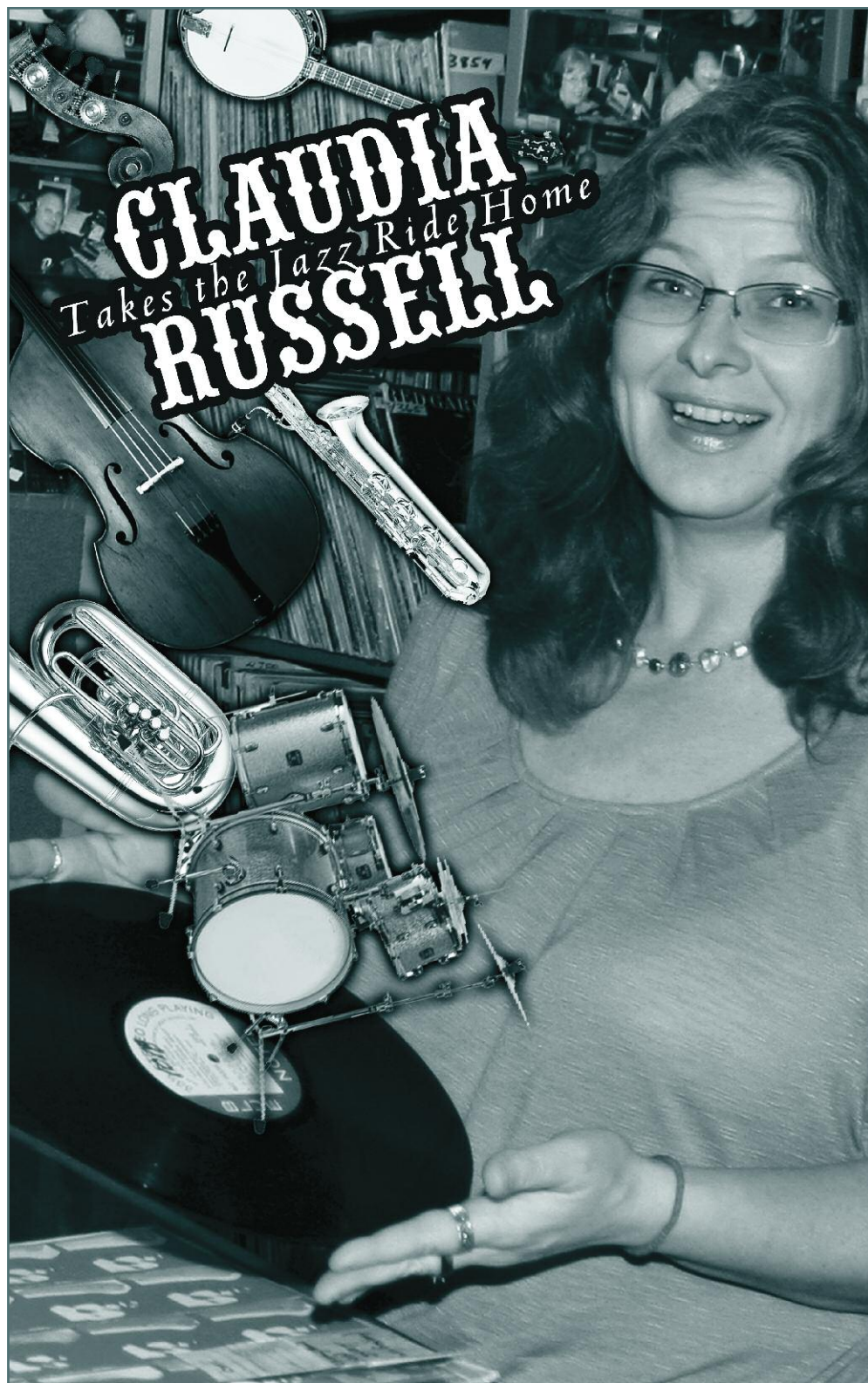
“Radio is an intimate experience. ... So when I’m on the air, I’m only talking to one person. I’m talking to you.”

Russell fits none of these molds. She says, “I’ve never gone for that routine of being somebody else, that I needed to be a character when I’m on the radio.” Perhaps it’s her upbringing in the Midwest, an area of the country known to produce folks with a straightforward common sensical approach to life, but she never seems to be harried, excited, or in any hurry. “Maybe if there’s some emergency in which I’ve had to run down the hall, you’ll hear that I might be a little out of breath, but I will always be relaxed and at ease.” She recognizes that most of her listeners are alone in their cars or settling in to cook dinner for family, which for most people the radio is companionship. “Radio is an intimate experience,” she says. “So when I’m on the air, I’m only talking to one person. I’m talking to you.”

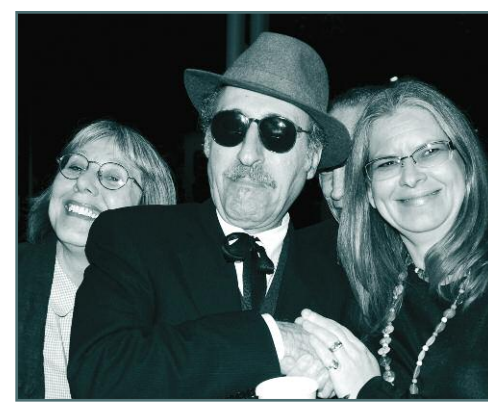
The voice that comes across the radio is informal, without being too casual or chummy, authoritative yet relaxed. Most certainly, it’s a bit sexy, not as deep as Patricia Neal’s when she said *Klaatu barada nicto*, but certainly in the alto range. Russell grew up in South Bend, Indiana, north of a southern drawl, and west of the Appalachian twang. You’d have to travel a fair distance north from her hometown to get the Wisconsin/Minnesota accent that Garrison Keillor likes to poke fun at on his “Prairie Home Companion” radio show. She naturally has that general American accent, the one that predominates in the midsection of the 48 states, which people like to hear coming out of their radios.

For those of you who are not in the know about KSDS, go find a radio and tune it into 88.3 on the FM dial. You will make a rare find: a full-time, commercial-free jazz radio station. Some public radio stations feature jazz, but only for a portion of the day or only for a portion of the week. Putting “jazz radio station” into Google will get you a lot of stations and programs, but a great number of them contain the word “smooth” in their titles, the musical code word for contemporary funk and pop music that many jazz aficionados dismiss as not really jazz at all.

KSDS might be thought of as the little station that could. Years ago it was more of a student project than a station, churning out all of 800 watts – about as much electricity as that used by a toaster or coffee maker – to deliver music to the jazz lovers in San Diego who were



Claudia with Jeannie Cheatham



Claudia with Leon Redbone and Troubadour publisher Liz Abbott

dedicated enough to find that certain spot in the house for their radios or antennas that allowed for some sort of reception. In the car, reception would drop in and out as you drove into a valley or around large buildings. The station now broadcasts with 22,000 watts, ensuring that good reception is available even in east and north county. The station actually reaches the entire world now with streaming audio on its website. Although it has not been a powerhouse station, KSDS has been recognized for its outstanding programming. In 1992 the station was nominated for “Jazz Station of the Year” by the radio industry trade publication The Gavin Report. The following year the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) gave KSDS the honor of “Jazz Station of the Year.” Over the years the station has received other awards,

including the NAB Marconi Award.

The studios for KSDS are on the campus of City College, and the radio station is part of City College’s Foundation, although the broadcast antenna is up on the Mesa College campus. It started broadcasting in 1951 and is a non-profit organization supported by listener contributions. Listeners are thus spared from the 15 minutes of ads every hour normally heard on a commercial station.

Besides her afternoon show, Russell also serves as the program director for KSDS. It’s her job to keep a cohesive format for the station, determining what it will and will not broadcast. When she started at the station in the spring of 2001, it was a student lab, an all-volunteer workforce that pretty much played anything they wanted any time they wanted. Under her



direction, Monday through Friday, six in the morning until six in the evening, KSDS plays straight ahead jazz. So what is straight ahead jazz? Even certain lifelong jazz fans have a hard time with that question. The term "straight ahead" is one more of negation, defining what it is not more than what it is. Straight ahead jazz is not fusion music with loud electric guitars or loud electric anything for that matter, nor is it the free jazz from the iconoclasts of the fifties and sixties, such as Ornette Coleman's micro-tonal work or the performances of John Coltrane in his later life when he made his saxophone sound like Godzilla destroying Tokyo in the key of Bb. More than anything, jazz lovers will quickly tell you that straight ahead is not, in any way shape or form, smooth jazz. Mention smooth jazz to a jazz lover, and you've just ended the conversation. Tell your conservative friends that you just enjoyed seeing the latest Michael Moore movie. That's the reaction you'll get from a jazz lover when the topic of smooth jazz comes up. Straight ahead jazz might then be thought of as the main body of jazz after World War II, neither too experimental and extreme nor too sweet, milquetoast, or designed for mass commercial appeal.

As jazz has such a rich heritage, it would be easy, and possibly a safe programming move, to only play old vinyl platters from the jazz halcyon days of the forties, fifties, and sixties. These classics are of course part of the music of KSDS, but Russell believes that her station needs to be more than a musical museum, that new music and musicians need to be heard as well. "We have to keep in mind that this station needs to be accessible to all, that we need to present a full spectrum of jazz. We have a rich history, yes. We have Duke Ellington and Miles Davis. But there is so much else out there," she says. "We also have to keep in mind that we have a young audience. They want to hear new things. And our relationship with the community is constantly evolving. It has to evolve. You can't stay static with anything dealing with radio. People grow out of the audience, people grow in. You have people moving here from other places. So the audience is always changing." It is also her belief that KSDS, as a public radio station, has a mandate to educate and inform, that the station should expose its listeners to music that might pass them by if they are tuned into another station, or even if it's another jazz station.

Although its weekday format is straight ahead jazz, each disk jockey is allowed to play whatever he or she may choose within that framework. This is unusual in broadcasting. At almost every other station, jazz or otherwise, the disk jockeys simply make the announcements between recordings, while each tune is specifically chosen by the station program director. For the time that lies outside the straight ahead jazz format on KSDS – from six in the evening until six in the morning and during the weekend – the disk jockeys have more freedom to choose formats besides the straight ahead, and they range widely within the jazz framework. KSDS has about 30 announcers, including *Troubadour* columnist Jim McInnes, an army compared to a commercial station's count of about a half dozen, so there are almost as many differing programs. The jazz shows range all the way from the "Jazz Roots" show, which features Lou Curtiss playing 78 rpm recordings of jug bands and other ensembles from the early days of jazz, to a show called "Free Time," in which some of jazz's most experimental and "out there" recordings are played. Other jockeys feature just about everything between these musi-

cal dipoles, from big band, world beat jazz, to swing. A couple of the shows feature nothing but blues. Being the program director for a station with a premium on variety and freedom could be a huge headache for Russell, but she says that her relationship with the other disk jockeys is based on a great deal of trust and respect for their professionalism.

"... this station needs to be accessible to all ... We have Duke Ellington and Miles Davis. But there is so much else out there"

For Russell there was no grand career plan that brought her to KSDS. She simply left herself open to possibilities of life and career as they came along. She says, "I was the operations manager at WVPE. This was northern Indiana. Somehow – I still don't know how this wound up in my email inbox – I got an email that there was an opening here at KSDS, so I applied." Although the director gig was fulfilling, Russell felt that her career had taken her about as far as it could at that particular station. Additionally, the promise of living and working in sunny San Diego had a particular appeal, as she received the email in the dead of winter when ice and snow blanketed the midwest landscape.

Russell has light green eyes and wears square framed glasses. She parts her brown, shoulder length hair in the middle. Katherine Hepburn might be a relative; Russell and the actress have the same nose. Her pantry sized office once served as a photographic darkroom, and she jokes that remnants of developer and other noxious fluids still reside within the nooks and crannies of her workspace. Perhaps to fend off any residual darkness left over from the times when Kodachrome images came to life here, she has painted the room a bright yellow. A few music or concert posters hang on the walls. As though she consulted third graders for advice on interior design, a handful of smiley faces, the kind that plastered this country in the 1970s, beam from the walls here and there, and little toy action figures pose in their action figure way across the top of her desk's hutch.

A touch of serendipity led Russell along her career path. She had not originally planned to go into radio. When she went off to college, she started out as a psychology major, which did not last long. She quickly realized that she had two ways to go if she were to stay in the field: becoming a researcher, a scientist, which did not interest her, or working as a therapist, something for which she felt she did not have the disposition. She dropped the psych courses and spent a couple of semesters as a journalism major.

Taking a hiatus from college, she wound up waitressing at a restaurant in her hometown. During one of her shifts a vice principal from her high school spotted her and called her over to his table. He told her of a job opening at WROI, a station in nearby Rochester. The station needed an intern for their news director. Russell applied, got the gig, and has been in radio ever since. "I was lucky to be offered jobs early on. Also, I started radio in 1989, 1990, and I've



Claudia (center) with her twin siblings in South Bend, 1970

never been out of work," Russell says about her career in an industry in which long-term steady employment is an anomaly. Radio stations routinely fire, rehire, and then rehire disc jockeys about as fast as Charlie Sheen goes in and out of rehab. Within the first years of working in broadcasting it became apparent to Russell that she had found her life's work, that she loved radio and wanted it as her lifelong career. In her first decade of working in broadcasting she held a number of positions, and she credits her ability to be flexible and taking on different challenges with keeping her out of the unemployment line. "I was always willing to do what needed to be done. And no matter where I was working, I always wanted to make sure that we were doing all that we could do, giving all that we could give," she says.

Russell has always been a music lover. The youngest of seven children, most of her brothers and sisters played musical instruments, and she herself sang in a number of choirs. Besides the music that came from her siblings practicing and performing, wide musical tastes abounded in her household, where folk songs were sung and classical recordings were played on the phonograph. Reminiscing about her childhood and formative years, she waxes over cherished experiences: listening to a relative's copy of Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, spending afternoons with the

television tuned into the urban funkified version of Dick Clark's "Bandstand, Soul Train," which gave her the ability to appreciate just about any kind of music.

Having catholic musical tastes is a badge of honor for Russell. She proudly proclaims that not only does she still have her original copy of Ted Nugent's *Double Live Gonzo*, but she still plays it from time to time. It's almost a calling for her to open up new musical horizons for others. "If you came to my house, I would force you to listen to something that you've never heard before," she says. And she shrugs off the criticism that she receives from the directors of other jazz radio stations that, because of her love of all types of music, she is not a "real" jazz person.

Although she enjoys a lot of different music, Russell is nonetheless a total jazz fan and likes that she is involved in music that has devoted fans, die-hard committed jazz lovers who really care about the music and who are knowledgeable about the minutia of the music, who are able to name all the sidemen or even the recording engineers on recording dates. "People will call and let us know if we've gone off the deep end or goofed," she says. "As a member-sponsored station, we are accountable to our listeners. We have a very interactive relationship with our listeners, and we want them to be engaged. We are really what public radio was intended to be. When people call in, they will let us know if they're a member. We take that very seriously.

"Above all this station tries to be authentic. And more people would like us if they just gave us a chance. You don't have to give up your rock and roll. You can still listen to that and listen to us. There is no reason why you can't listen to Lady Gaga and Dizzy Gillespie."

Find Claudia Russell on Facebook: www.facebook.com/#!/jazzkitty

Claudia Russell is handing over the wheel to student drivers on the "Jazz Ride Home" for the next couple of weeks. She'll be back at the station on December 13.





BLUEGRASS CORNER

by Dwight Worden

STANDOUT WOMEN IN BLUEGRASS

In keeping with this month's theme of women in music, let's take a look at some of the standout women in the bluegrass world, but both past and present.



Mother Maybelle Carter

Any discussion of women in bluegrass should start with the Carter Family and its matriarch "Mother Maybelle" Carter. Mother Maybelle and her Carter Family Act wrote and performed some of the very earliest "mountain" music, which greatly influenced Bill Monroe, the man who later "invented" bluegrass in the 1940s.



Sally Anne Forrester

For those of you who think that Bill Monroe and the other early bluegrass bands that followed the Carter family were all male, think again. Sally Anne

Forrester was an important member of the earliest of Bill Monroe's "Bluegrass Boy" bands. And, Hazel Dickens was a powerful force writing and performing music generally associated with the bluegrass genre in the early days.

Another early woman of note in the bluegrass world was Louise Scruggs, recently deceased. Louise Scruggs was the longtime spouse of banjo pioneer Earl Scruggs who was part of the seminal bluegrass band Flatt and Scruggs. What many do not know, however, is that Louise took care of all the business management and booking for the band.

Flatt and Scruggs is generally recognized as the most influential bluegrass band of all time, reaching even greater heights of popularity than Bill Monroe, and much of that success is attributable to Louise Scruggs. Louise was inducted into the International Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame in 2010, thereby conferring on her bluegrass' highest honor.

In the early days of bluegrass women were often found playing the stand-up bass and singing but were less commonly found playing the other instruments or stepping out as lead instrumentalists. Beginning in the 1960s, concurrently with the rise of the women's movement, the role of women in bluegrass blossomed and expanded.

Among the standout women pioneers of this era are Laurie Lewis who has led many bluegrass bands over the years and who has played lead fiddle, guitar, and bass while carrying lead vocal duties as well. Laurie is still going strong with her new band, Laurie Lewis and the Right Hands. Lynn Morris has also been a very influential woman bluegrass band leader fronting the Lynn Morris Band. Until a stroke sidelined her about 10 years ago she fronted her band on guitar and lead vocals and was extremely popular.



Sara Watkins in the studio

As we move into the modern era we find women excelling in all aspects of bluegrass

music. Today, there are too many bluegrass bands led by or featuring women to count, and there are a number of all female bands performing at top quality.



Likewise, we find female standouts on virtually every instrument.

If you think that all the best guitar pickers are men, you haven't listened to Nina Gerber rip it up with a flat pick - Tony Rice take note. Have you heard Alison Krauss or Laurie Lewis play the fiddle? Both are decorated champions and masters of the instrument. They can hold their own with anyone.

On banjo Kristin Scott Benson has won "banjo player of the year" the last two years running, and Sally Van Meter and Cindy Cashdollar can handle the dobro with the best of them. If bass is your passion, I'm sure you're aware that Missy Raines has won bass player of the year more than any other bass player. And, Sierra Hull is one of the young and upcoming stars displaying an uncanny mastery of the mandolin. So, the modern bluegrass world is truly open to female players and it is a great pleasure to see so many doing so well.

Taking a look at the local scene, we are blessed with a number of local standout female bluegrassers. Yvonne "Vonnie" Tatar has been doing a great job holding down bass player duties and singing with San Diego's Virtual Strangers, while Mary Birkett has done the same with Shirthouse Band and the Full Deck. Ramona Ault has done a great job as lead singer and guitar player for San Diego's Second Delivery and now for Prairie Sky. Likewise, Rosie Selwitz is a key part of the bluegrass sound of the band Driftwood.

Becky Green played outstanding bass in San Diego's award-winning Down the Road band, where she also did some singing, and more recently she performed with 117° West and now with Old Town Road. Paula Pearson was an important contributor to the vocal sound of the Bluegrass Ramblers, and Tanya Rose has a golden voice that has graced many local bands.



Janet Beazley

Janet Beazley, standout banjo player and teacher, has recorded her own solo CD and has been an important

part of the nationally recognized Chris



Alison Brown

Stuart and Backcountry band for many years. And, let's not forget that Sara Watkins (fiddle), of Nickel Creek fame, is a San Diegan as is Alison Brown (banjo and guitar), both of whom are

have gone on to prominent national stardom and acclaim on their instruments.

Beyond these standouts (my apologies if I forgot someone) there are a number of competent women jamming, performing, and playing in a variety of formats. Among this cast of females are a number of youngsters who, no doubt, will go on to be stars in their own right one day. Bluegrass has, and always will have, a strong female presence contributing in positive ways to the music and leaving us all better off for that presence. We salute all the women pioneers, and tip our hat in appreciation to the women currently engaged in producing and presenting bluegrass music at the national and local level.

The Zen of Recording

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

COVER UP

Stepping from the evening's dusk into the burnished entry of Casa de Oro's Club 94, I pause for a moment. Though the light outside is slowly fading, it's already shadowy and foreboding within these darkly paneled walls. As my eyes adjust to the new surroundings, I recognize the lovely but hardened features of the woman who has recently invited me to perform here.

"Hey, hon. Just set up over in that corner there," she says distractedly as she pours a draught for one of the bar's regulars. "This young man's gonna play some music here tonight for you boys."

Trying to ignore the fact that her announcement sounded suspiciously like an experiment with a prison's activity roster, I look to the spot her head has gestured toward and see a jukebox, a rack of pool cues that appear to be in various states of disrepair, and an orphaned black vinyl bar stool with a rip across the top of it. What few expectations I had were now swiftly sinking to the floor, which was already strewn with crumpled napkins, peanut shells, cigarette butts, and spilled Budweiser. However, I am all of 18 years old and this is only the second time I've even been inside a bar. I'm not about to make any waves at my first gig ever.

I set up. This involves all of plugging a microphone into a small amp for both my voice and my acoustic guitar to share. Eventually (after what seemed to be an eternity of feedback, apologies, and the words "check. 1...2..."), it looked as if I was finally ready to perform for what was now a room full of leather clad and intimidating looking motorcycle enthusiasts.

I don't recall being all that nervous, but I do remember thinking that if the end of the pool table was just 18 inches farther away from me, the pool cue butts

wouldn't come so close to jabbing me in the eye.

Fearing the wrath of 30-40 musically disappointed ruffians, I decide to open with three of my strongest original songs, so as to ensure a contented (if not all that attentive) audience. This, of course, does not go well...at all.

About halfway through my opening song (which should be noted was a ballad in ¾ time) I began to perceive a broad sense of, oh...let's call it unease. Add to it the thick, musky atmosphere born from a combination of sweat, stale beer, and my own insecurities (which were blooming ever larger with each passing nanosecond), and the whole world whirled and blended into a gradual crescendo of distrust, disgruntlement, and general dissatisfaction.

It all went silent at the exact instant the following words were bellowed in my direction:

"PLAY 'DEAD SKUNK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD!'"

I froze like a novice burglar caught in the act. I knew of the Loudon Wainwright song to which he was referring, a catchy but forgettable novelty tune that was a hit some years earlier, but I certainly didn't know how to play it. But this guy was really, really big and he looked a little drunk and a little mad and...

"PLAY 'DEAD SKUNK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GODDAMNED ROAD!'"

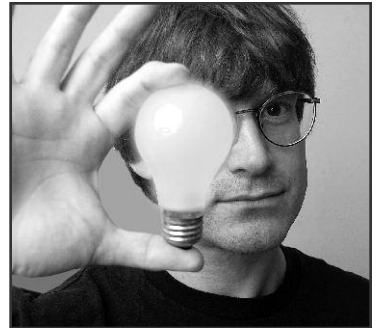
My mind raced as my thoughts spun round my head like frenzied hornets. Suddenly they all stopped like wheels on a slot machine: cherry...cherry...cherry.

Just play it cool, Sven.

"Oh hey, sorry man...I don't do requests, but I..."

His massive, tattooed hands twirled his pool cue around like Chuck Norris instructing an Aikido class as he took a menacing step towards me.

"PLAY 'DEAD SK..."



Sven-Erik Seaholm

"Dead skunk in the middle of the road!" I sang with all my heart, as if I'd done it for years...

It certainly wouldn't be the last time someone else's song would be of considerable help to me.

As artists, many of us are very protective of what we feel is unique to us; what sets us apart from everyone else. Some (like myself for many years) try to avoid covers altogether, hoping to explore fresher avenues as a result.

It was in studying recording techniques that I first found covers to be of great assistance. Working on a song that was not my own allowed me to free myself of the fear and judgment that would accompany the making of a permanent record of my original art. With these out of the way, I could concentrate more fully on the technical issues in a more objective and less pressured fashion.

Some years later, I began a year-long residency at Bondi, a very popular bar and restaurant in the middle of Downtown San Diego's Gaslamp District as part of an acoustic duo with my friend Jesse LaMonaca. The vibe was intense, the crowd was transitory, and expectations were high.

Audience feedback: instantaneous.

We immediately put ourselves on a grinding pace of learning two to four new songs a week. These included requests collected from the previous gig and from Bondi's management.

We began to notice that we were learning a lot more about songwriting structure and musical dynamics, and how certain recurring techniques were common amongst the most popular covers. We were also able to really give our original songs a tough and strenuous litmus test that allowed us to judge how strong a song really was.

Plus, any time you're playing, you're getting better at it.

Cover songs may seem like a diversion from the path of your songwriting destiny, but as I've hopefully illustrated, they are also excellent tutors, manikins and um...bodyguards.

And yes, the next week I opened with 'Dead Skunk In The Middle Of The Road'.

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning independent record producer (kaspro.com) and performing artist (www.svensongs.com). He also provides private instruction for recording and songwriting: 619-287-1955. He will perform songs about deceased skunks only for the mean and/or generous.

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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

WHEREFORE MY LADY'S MUSICK?

Nothing – absolutely nothing in the world is as capable of making my senses so profoundly ecstatic as is the Right Woman. Touch, taste, sight, smell, and sound are gratefully enslaved as soon as the remaining one, *common* sense, has been tossed away to flail about in its own usual state of delirium. Once it is barred from the equation, one can quickly adapt to the handicap; indeed, the other senses seem to sharpen instinctively. If women aren't magic, I'm Harry Houdini.

A visiting beauty, after stealing my heart and promising to return some of it when she comes back on January 5th, told me that the most obvious difference between San Diegans and cucumbers is that cucumbers probably know how to use their turn signals. That started me thinking about women *vis-à-vis* popular music and where they took the wrong turn. I fell into such deep concentration that, having successfully seen Michelle off on her flight back to Paris, I forgot to surprise her with her fondest wish, which rested in an envelope under her seat. It was an 8 x 10 glossy of Cher, personally autographed to her. Yes, it'll be at least as thrilling for her after New Year's, but it's a shame whenever I'm forced to delay the release of even the simplest of my heartfelt forgeries. Women can be hypnotic and disorienting, but will never inspire patience in a man.

Are men pushovers? Slaves to a pretty face and voice? Or do we primarily fall for the insight, the strength and meaning of a song's expertly executed emotions?

The answers are yes, yes, and you've got to be kidding. Women figured all this out a long time ago and men refuse to accept it. Women possess the greatest tangible power in the universe: hell, they should have been running this world for at least the last few thousand years. But something happened. One moment, perhaps, their attentions were elsewhere while men stumbled upon a way to fake strength and authority. Women are simply too kind to see all our macho posturing for the pathetic b.s. it really is.

But the idea to emulate a bunch of b.s. wasn't a terribly wise one.

I blame the American press for planting the bizarre seeds of the Musical Option in women with their original assessment of the Beatles as a bunch of zany musicians who looked like chicks.

In the hundred or so years since Woman's great awakening, the females have been systematically testing the waters of society's many ponds. They knew they could never totally conquer the choppy waters of popular music, which tasted far too sweet to abandon. It's been a joy to watch and listen to them splash about for these many decades. Even if they've created their own consequential share of pollution, I, for one, have always welcomed any effort on their part to make me feel dirty. If they might secretly seethe over their inability to match the dudes in the cumulative quality of their music, their patience, talent, sense of adventure, and the novelty of their genitalia will keep them forever in the race. Within a greater understanding of life, this single important deficiency is less than trivial, when balanced against men's pathetic track record when it comes to giving birth. All true artists are destined to suffer for their most exquisite gifts, and in this regard men remain comparative pussies.

It was a girl's voice – Darlene Gillespie's in *Once Upon a Dream* in 1959 – that did much to make me love both music and women. Then Lesley Gore and Dusty Springfield crashed into my heart's *boudoir* a bit later, making me feel for the first time in my life like a Real Boy. Then two Marys – Travers and Hopkin – nursed me through my thirstily adoles-



Nut roasting: Open fire! Ho ho Hose.

cence. My lips still throb.

Troubling have been the songstresses of my alleged manhood, and shamefully numerous as well. Concerning this latter group: is the fact that I would accept one night of playing doctor with any of them in exchange for never being allowed to hear any of her songs again an indictment of her artistic ability or my own candor? The answer, of course, is for me to know and each of them to find out. One at a time, I guess, but I'm willing to entertain multiple suggestions.

Inarguably, the greatest modern super-talent among women – the female Orson Welles, if you will – has been the superb Cheryl Ladd. Too often we are guilty of overlooking the musical evolution/revolution she nearly pulled off some time ago when she fronted the legendary Josie and the Pussycats. The timing was just a tiny bit too early, when the public was a tiny bit short of the wisdom needed to understand the significance of Saturday morning cartoon series (or graphic alternative universes, as idiots are probably calling them now). The Pussycats offerings were thus buried by the earth of indifference, to dry up and become forgotten. Everything coming after them could only unknowingly draw nourishment from the warm freshness of what the Pussycats were able to squeeze out with such admirable regularity.

The pervasive sexuality of so many of our modern *chanteuses*, from Madonna to Britney, to L'il Kim and Shakira, is strange, kinky, and often perilously close to perverse. Even though I would gladly volunteer to personally and privately do any of their laundry as my way of giving back, I sometimes feel that they all just might be promulgating some sort of moral degeneracy. In dreams I often see some of them all trussed up and about to be burned at the stake. The townsfolk have branded them witches and have demanded the penalty. Suddenly, I come charging in on my massive steed just in time to start the fire, thus saving them from themselves. I want only the best for them, but they must realize that their misadventures have the power to turn some people (and I'm not naming names) into slathering imbeciles whose impure thoughts don't do no one no good, no way, no how. Do I hear an Amen?

Forgive me. I didn't really mean some of that.

No, this isn't so much about how women have taken a wrong turn with music as it is about how they have used their considerable drive to continue to drive men nuts. It's a moderately sincere appreciation of their musical exploits, even if the greatest chick record of all time remains the Beatles' *Please Mr. Postman*. Still, I'll never lose my worshipful affection for several sets of gams yet unmentioned among the estrogen-fueled greats: Michelle Phillips, Mama Cass, Sandy Shaw, Kate Bush, Whitney Houston, Rita Coolidge, both vowels in Abba, and yes, the early Wayne Newton.

Merry Christmas, you sweet things. Mistress, play us out, if you please. A new year awaits us all, and may the ladies rock it well.

RADIO DAZE



by Jim McInnes

2010: THE YEAR THAT WAS(N'T)

In this year's January column I made 13 predictions about the coming year. Now it's time to revisit some of those predictions...

The Chargers defeat New Orleans, 35-34, in Super Bowl XLIV. Phillip Rivers is named MVP.

Well, I wasn't too far off on this one. New Orleans won the Super Bowl, but the Chargers lost their first playoff game. Can you say Nate Kaeding?

An El Niño will drop so much rain on Southern California, the San Diego river will become an actual river.

Unfortunately, the El Niño was more like a La Niña, but we sure got a lot of rain, didn't we? And there was flooding in Mission Beach, Mission Valley, and Fashion Valley!

The city of San Diego will end mandatory water conservation and urge homeowners to water their lawns continuously and shower four times a day, seven or eight days a week.

It never happened, but we still haven't had to water our lawn in weeks!

The Children's Pool in La Jolla will become a mecca for nude sunbathers.

The rope went back up, but there are many nude sunbathers there. They just happen to be seals!

California will legalize marijuana possession for everyone 21 or older.

Oops! Missed it by a bong length!

The Padres will amaze the baseball world by winning the NL West with a 92-70 record, despite trading Adrian Gonzalez and Kevin Kouzmanoff to the Red Sox for a handful of magic beans.

I am proudest of this prophecy. The Pads DID amaze the baseball world! They finished 90-72, Bud Black was named National League Manager of the Year, and only Kouzmanoff got traded...to Oakland.

A new neon-lit "Kensington" sign will go up over Adams Avenue, east of the 15 freeway, only it will be misspelled, "Kengton," because they want to keep the "sin" out of the area.

I almost nailed this one, too. The new sign is up but there's "sin" in Kensington!

I will buy a new pair of pants and, maybe a pair of shoes (or not.)

Thanks to Christmas, I won't/didn't have to!

Survivor: Tijuana!

That may be just a little scary for the producers. I'd sure watch!

Finally, there was this one:

By November, I'll be as eloquent (and erudite) a writer as my idol, José Sinatra.

Nah, I don't think that'll ever happen. There's only room for one hose in this rag!

These are some of my predictions that weren't printed back in January:

I knew Jerry Brown would be elected governor because Meg Whitman slimed all her opponents. Calling Steve Poizner a former Nazi death camp guard? Boo!

I predicted a Carnival cruise ship would lose power off the coast of Mexico.

I knew for certain that the DSC show would go to 100.7 JACK-FM.

No one but I prophesied General Motors' stunning comeback from bankruptcy.

And I knew that I would use my January article to write my December article. That way, I wouldn't have to think. Next month, I'll write my visions for 2011. Ooooh.

Happy holidays, my friends!



by Peter Bolland

THE BRIDGE GENERATION

The low sun of December casts a long shadow. There's more darkness than light. But the darkness holds a promise. Something is waiting to be born.

I've been thinking about the twentieth and twenty first centuries, how we are the bridge generation between the two – born in one, living and dying in the next, one foot in the old world, one foot in the new.

It was only ten years ago that the great twentieth century – the most violent century, the most inspiring century – came to a close. A time of unprecedented brutality and catastrophic environmental degradation, the twentieth century stands forever as a cautionary tale about what can go wrong when we put a narrow sense of tribe and short-term profits before the needs of the earth and the human family. Yet the twentieth century was also a time of hard-won gains in basic human rights, a time when entire categories of people began to emerge from centuries of oppression, a time when the sciences and the humanities joined forces to envision and manifest a world that works for everyone – in short, a time of awakening.

What will the twenty-first century bring? We're ten years in, and it's still too soon to tell. If we've learned anything, it's the complete unpredictability of the future.

Yet here, in the early morning of the twenty-first century, I can't shake the feeling that we're awakening from a long dream, and in the gradual dawning of our new awareness, we are re-imagining our core values and the social structures and institutions that emerge from those values. We are redefining success. We are redefining peace. We are redefining prosperity. We are learning how to let our vision lead and our practicality follow. We know that a small group of people can change the course of history – we've seen it happen too many times to ignore. And we know that no matter how dire the situation, no matter how dark the night, there is within every human heart enough light to illuminate the whole world.

We don't trust government as much as we used to. We know that we cannot wait for others to solve our problems. We know that within each of our homes, our families, our neighborhoods, and our spiritual communities, it is we who lead, it is we who set priorities, it is we who articulate values, it is we who vote with our dollars to support businesses that uphold our vision of the good.

It is our growing conviction that each of us has wisdom within us, wisdom that emerges as insight, intuition, and compassionate action each time we are faced with injustice and needless suffering. It is drawn out by our increasing awareness of the tremendous need around the world. We no longer think of ourselves as just Americans or just Mexicans or just Canadians, but as citizens of the world proud of our local affiliations, but not bound by them. Old institutions are crumbling and new institutions are taking their place. New technologies are shattering barriers that used to keep us apart. We are no longer beholden to powerful information distribution systems however well-meaning they may have been. Just as in the twentieth century the train, then the automobile, and then the airplane closed great distances, today the internet (and whatever's next) has destroyed the very concept of distance itself. With each cataclysmic change much was lost, and much was gained. We have had to learn to let go, over and over again. And we have struggled to adapt new technologies

PHILOSOPHY, ART, CULTURE, & MUSIC

STAGES

to the service of our humanity, not the other way around. With each change, the underlying constant remained – us. It is the indomitable human spirit that springs forth forever new from the dissolving forms of the past.

And here we are ten years into the new century, on the verge of the teenage years. I believe we have a choice. I believe that each of us has the power within the privacy of our own conscience, our own decisions, our own actions, to co-create with those around us the world we hold in our visions. We know that our intentions have creative power. We know that evolution isn't over. We know that something is emerging, and we get to decide what that is.

Evolution has been going on for a long time. It's absurd to think it has stagnated or that we have reached the end. If anything, we are in a period of accelerated change. This is not the final stage. As we continue to fall forward into the ever-new world, we carry with us the values and convictions that serve our deepest sense of the good. We let the old ways fall by the wayside. We take what we need and leave the rest. We buy less and give more. We move into smaller houses. We drive smaller cars. We consume fewer resources. We finally believe that there's nothing more we really need, and that our wants are often born from the wound of spiritual dissatisfaction, and so we learn to feed ourselves not at the mall but at the well that springs from the sacred source deep within us and all things.

Maybe you're discouraged. Maybe you're moved to despair by the endless bad news streaming into our awareness. Make sure you're looking in a balanced way at the information you use to reach your assessments. Yes, there is abundant evidence of brutality and misery. But there is also ample evidence that we live in a time of great transformation where change-agents famous and obscure are working tirelessly around the world and making real progress. Find a place to lean in and help us push away the debris of the old forms that no longer serve us. Make a decision: stay caught in the disease or be a part of the healing.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world," wrote Margaret Mead. "Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

We won't always agree about how to change the world. But we share the conviction that it is our sacred duty to do so. If not us, who? If not now, when?

We are the people born in a time of great pain and promise. We are the people born in an age of unprecedented change. We are the people who remember where we came from and hold a vision of where we are going. We are the people who know in our bones that it is possible to give birth to a world that is environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling, and socially just. We have been given all the tools we need. We have each other. We have trust, faith, hope, love and wisdom. We can span the distance between the world we imagine and the world we behold. We are the connection between what was and what will be. We are the bridge generation.

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 or write to him at peterbolland@cox.net.



Wilson Phillips Bring Family Gifts to Their New Album

by Terry Roland

If Christmas is ultimately about giving then it's greatest gift may be found in the music of the season – especially in the music found within the family. In the case of Wilson Phillips and their new release, *Christmas in Harmony*, this seems certainly true. While this new release, their first in six years as a group, is a holiday delight and one that shines like its own silver musical ornament, the album's heart-center is found on their interpretation of Carnie and Wendy's legendary father, Brian Wilson's song recorded by the Beach Boys 44 years ago, "Our Prayer." Recorded in 1966 for Brian's visionary, but lost masterpiece (completed in 2004 by Brian minus the Beach Boys), *Smile*, "Our Prayer" was to open the album with wordless layered harmonies distinctly Beach Boys but a step beyond anything they had ever recorded. Really, in 1966, it was a step beyond anything anyone in pop music had recorded at the time with a spiritual Bach influence.

In my hour-long conversation with Carnie Wilson references to the "gift" given to her by her father came up. But, the gift she refers to wasn't easily found. Like many of the children of legendary '60s pop innovators, Carnie, Wendy Wilson, and Chynna Phillips grew up with the mixed blessings of famous parents. Pop icons like Brian Wilson and John Phillips are once-in-a-generation kinds of talents. But, personally and professionally, in 1990, the girls sang their way out of the shadows and images of the excess and sometimes tragic lives of their parents (fathers). Growing up together, there was a certain sensibility to Carnie, Wendy, and Chynna coming together musically. After all, they were children of the melodies and harmonies found in their fathers' music. And ultimately, it was clear, they shared the gift of the music. With their debut album, Wilson Phillips created a melodic and harmonic soundscape in the over-produced, often overwrought music of the late '80s and early '90s. With the help of producers Richard Perry and Glen Ballard, they recorded two platinum selling albums, three #1 hits and extended the California legacy of melody and harmony well into the next century.

It's been 20 years since they first recorded. They are still well-remembered and regarded among fans and insiders in the music industry. So much so that when Sony Masterworks called and offered a deal for a Wilson Phillips Christmas album and the chance arose to work with their much in-demand producer, Glen Ballard, they jumped. The result is a gem of an album

including the appealing opening original contribution to our American Christmas cannon, "I Wish Everyday Was Christmas," with the much-expected, sweetly layered harmonies. But it's the closing track, "Our Prayer," that brings the family Christmas spirit into focus. Try this: sit down between two speakers, and listen. You'll hear how their gift for vocal harmony was handed down from father to daughter as the song melts away into your heart. It's one minute and 30 seconds of musical bliss. This is a classic Beach Boys song that belongs on a Christmas collection and Wilson Phillips have done it justice.

Artistically, the past has been good to the trio with a follow-up platinum selling 1992 release, *Shadows and Light*. Even though they disbanded after this album to pursue solo projects, their reunion in 2004 yielded an excellent concept album of influential past songs with California themes, including Joni Mitchell's "California," John Phillips' "California Dreamin'," Brian Wilson's "In My Room" (with Brian included on vocals) and even an acoustic version of the Eagles/Jack Tempchin song "Already Gone" and Fleetwood Mac's "Go Your Own Way."

2004 also saw the release of Carnie's *A Mother's Gift: Lullabies for My Children*, which served to enrich the artistic story of father-daughter reconciliation. While there were favorite pop songs turned lullaby like "Wonderful World" and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," it's the gift of the Beach Boys influence that sings with the soul of innocence alongside the irony of loss and tragedy when she covers her two late uncle's songs: Carl Wilson's rarely heard, "Heaven" and Dennis Wilson's classic "Forever" are sweetly and lovingly rendered. And, perhaps the song on this record that rings the truest is her duet with Brian on Billy Preston's classic "You Are So Beautiful."

So, it seems, as I'm listening to Wilson Phillips new Christmas album, there is a natural quality of grace, peace, and reconciliation that has been found through both the music and the personal stories embodied in the lives of these three unique artists. And as they raise their own young children and bring them through this Christmas season, it seems that the legacy will continue.

San Diego Troubadour: tell me about the new release?

Carnie Wilson: We never made a Christmas album as a group. We were thinking about doing an album of original material, but to bring Glen Ballard on board, who is really like our fourth member – and we love collaborating with him – we needed to wait a few months. I started the album at my house with my husband [Rob Bonfiglio]



Wendy Wilson, Carnie Wilson, and Chynna Phillips

and Sony Masterworks offered us a record deal to do a Christmas album. It was too good to be true. We could get Glen to do a real fast recording and to get it out. My God, it's my favorite of the Christmas music I've done. I couldn't wait to get the three of us to together for it and figure out which songs to record. Glen set the pace for the tone of the record. There are some great songs on it. I had recorded the track "Warm Lovin' Christmas Time," already. Then, we did my father's song, "Our Prayer," which was really special and important. It was done really fast. Glen is the best – a magnificent producer and so tasteful.

SDT: So you're doing some Christmas shows here in California behind the album?

CW: Yes. We're doing a lot of Christmas songs – it's a Christmas show, but also we'll be doing the hits and special favorite songs of ours. We've been doing about eight to ten shows a year for the last three years ... our vocals are tighter than ever. My husband, Rob, is playing with us and producing. We have a great band. We do a lot of cover songs, the hits and personal favorites. The audience has been really receptive. It shows the songs are still alive.

SDT: How has the touring and pop music changed since you first started?

CW: Well, you know it's been 20 years. This is really a 20th anniversary reunion. It's mind blowing. It's a special year for us. I feel like much of the record business has gone to shit. Artists don't sell as many records as years before. It's been hard and sad for the record companies. But music is forever. It will never go away. There will always be a way to buy the record. It may not be on the radio, but the connection between the performer and the artists is always there. You know, with computers, it's nice to have that accessibility. But, my head is really stuck in the '70s when I was growing up. Right now, I could not tell you who's on the top 20 on the pop charts. But, we still want to be in touch with what's happening, we are still a group that is out there and wants to produce today.

SDT: Do you think a new album from you provides a kind of influence to what's out there today?

CW: I always kind of thought of us as a female Crosby, Stills and Nash. You know,

we drew from those rock harmonies – the Eagles, Little River Band.

SDT: How did you get started singing together?

CW: Wendy and I had been singing forever. Our Mom taught us to sing harmony on everything from Elton John to Streisand. We started innocently getting together one day to sing harmony on the floor. We taught Chynna how to sing harmony. I'd get kids together to do Eagles songs. It was like we were always meant to be singing. At times it didn't matter how or with whom. But, when the three of us started singing together as teens, it all came together. It was magic. We then met Richard Perry and Glen Ballard who taught us how to strengthen our song-writing.

SDT: Yes. You write your own material. Did that start at the same time?

CW: Yes. A song like "Hold On" became like Chynna's outpouring of her personal struggle. Wendy's always been poetic. But, we met Glen who really encouraged us to write ... The first song we wrote, "Release Me," was just heartbreaking honesty. It was like a raw nerve. We loved the track. We did it with live instruments, some great players. It was a real collaborative effort. It really came together and the best part was putting the vocals on down. When we came together for the Christmas album, we knew it was going to be magical. Wendy and I had done "Hey Santa" and everyone really loved that album. For this one, the biggest chal-

lenge was "Our Prayer." We had the idea, but I thought, how are going to break down these harmonies? Fortunately, my husband, Rob, is just brilliant. Of course, first we called my dad, but he was on tour. It took Rob like ten minutes. He went in and came back with a CD and said, 'Here ya go.' He did all the parts, all five broken down mimicking exactly the Beach Boys' version. We went in to the studio and, you know, he had the conductor's stick. ...

SDT: It sounds like his ear is similar to your dad's for harmonic parts.

CW: Yes. He is so talented and he's also a wonderful songwriter and musician. It showed a lot that Glen let him into his circle and believed in him enough to let him produce and engineer tracks on the album.

SDT: So did you play "Our Prayer" for your dad?

CW: Oh my God. A few weeks ago, on a Sunday, I played him the record. I have never seen his face like that before. He was so flipped. He listened to each interval. With each section he was more flipped out. He couldn't believe we got those parts. He said, 'It's better than the Beach Boys.' I said, 'Dad, come on!' Then, he asked me what inspired him to write the song. He said it was inspired by Bach. I'm not kidding. First I'm covering my dad and now Bach!

SDT: How is your relationship with your dad?

CW: Being his daughter is incredibly complex for me. You know, it's not the kind of father-daughter relationship you'd think a girl deserves. But, I'm so appreciative of the music he has given me. And he gave me all that he could. And that's enough. I'm so proud of him. You know, he has this life inside his head, that's sometimes real and sometimes not so real. He struggles constantly with his demons. But, all of his family and friends understand that music is his outlet, his love, his purpose. I've accepted that and I can celebrate who he is. I mean, he's not just an artist who did a one-hit wonder. He actually changed the music of his time and I'm so proud of him. And I'm proud that I can carry on anything he's given me. And you know he's proud of me. He's not the kind of man who's open with his feelings, but he does tell me that today. We have a love now that we didn't have for many years. He appreciates what we do. And I still feel like a young girl who comes to him when we finish music and I want his approval.

Wilson Phillips will perform in the Dreamcatcher Lounge at Viejas on Thursday, December 18, 8pm, at 5000 Willows Road in Alpine. Tickets are available at: viejas.front-gatetickets.com/



Carnie Wilson, Chynna Phillips, and Wendy Wilson in 1974

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Nickelodeon, continued from page 7.

sound have been described by Lou Curtiss in this publication) is shown beaming on the cover of an album called *The Complete Entertainer*. Rogers was certainly that. True-life "Mad Men" of high profile advertising agencies in the '50s and '60s looked for every possible source to promote a client's product. Why not deliver the message through a record? Bible and Scarborough have been able to collect many of these "pitch" albums and filed them in the "Advertising" section. Capitalizing on the "Mariachi Jazz" of Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass and the Baja Marimba Band, a popular Mexican fast food chain in California released *Taco Bell Presents the Tijuana Taxi*. No doubt, the "suits" spent many a long night in a smoke-filled conference room coming up with that idea.

Speaking of smoking (which they do a great deal of on "Mad Men"), there were many album covers devoted to the act of nicotine inhaling. In the '50s and '60s, smoking was associated with s-e-x, and the "Smoking" section of Nickelodeon's record library is devoted to album photos of blonde, brunette, and redhead femme fatales seductively lighting up. For tobacco enthusiasts seeking a more domesticated setting, there is an album depicting smoking in the family circle. Mom is shown happily puffing away as she prepares dinner and dad rewards himself with a drag after surviving another day in the rat race. Whether it was an intimate setting for love or the depiction of a happy home life, album covers showing people smoking quickly vanished after the Surgeon General's 1965 warning put a damper on the party.

Another wall of the store has albums depicting glamorous women who are not smoking. But a closer look at one of the models shows the making of a five o'clock shadow under all the Max Factor. Apparently, there was a demand more than 50 years ago for recordings of drag queens. One of the records has the title *She's a He* and features – for your dining and dancing pleasure – the vocals of a Mr. (?) Lynn Carter.

In addition to foot traffic, Nickelodeon has long drawn customers from the internet. Bible and Scarborough were early commuters aboard the information highway. "One of my students designed the website," Scarborough revealed.

"You know, it's not exciting, but it works for us," said Bible. People see it, and they call."

Nickelodeon occasionally engages in spirited bidding wars on Ebay. Bible said, "I found two San Diego records that had a Logan Heights address [on the label]. No one had ever heard [of these records]. Betsy and I put them on Ebay, and a guy from Belgium paid \$900 for the two. People wanted them, there were so many bids. One of the records was in terrible shape, so we said we'd take \$900 for the two." Bible and Scarborough researched the records and found no information; they were never able to ascertain why the records were considered valuable by collectors. But the bidders knew what they were looking for, and Scarborough called the online auction "pretty exciting."

The owners have no idea when they will be closing the door and turning the key at Nickelodeon for the last time. They love the location, and have no goal of expanding into the world of collectible eight-track tapes, cassettes, or compact discs. Just what is it about records that's so much fun? "Well, for one thing, with vinyl you can judge the condition of the album cover and you can look at the condition of the vinyl," said Scarborough. "Tapes or CDs? I was never really into CDs. They're just not exciting. They're not sexy like vinyl is."

"If there's something I haven't seen after 26 years, I want it," Bible adds. "And if somebody's on the front cover, and I have never seen them and they have an especially funny-looking nose or something, I want it. My mother was a quilter, and I feel like these records are like my material blocks. I'm really into it and I get passionate about it. It just depicts so many times in our lives."



Simeon Flick Piquant

by Frank Kocher

On his 2006 release, *Reactive Soul*, San Diego's Simeon Flick played all of the instruments on music that varied from heavy, '70s-style guitar rock to sophisticated R&B. Since then, he has played live in acoustic and electric trios, worked with an instrumental group (Followers), appeared on these pages and elsewhere as a music journalist, and worked on his new disc, *Piquant*. On the new one, like on *Reactive Soul*, multi-instrumentalist Flick plays virtually all the instruments on his 12 originals, and his powerful voice complements the imaginative songwriting for a surprising and soulful experience.

Nearly everything in music sounds at least a bit like something that has come before, and Flick and some of his songs are no exception. As a vocalist, he is a chameleon who can believably pull off anything from smooth Motown-style soul tunes to a saucy falsetto, to straight-ahead Steve Winwood style R&B/rock. On this disc, the songs are strong enough to stand on their own, as Flick blends influences with his unique muse.

"Rock the Boat" opens strongly, recalling some of the best of Winwood's '80s hits – with no keyboards, as Flick smartly conveys their sound with guitar harmonics. Here, like in several of his other songs, Flick has a message about improving the world through change in his lyrics. The stutter-step time signature of "Miracle for the Cynical" propels a rocket-fueled Flick guitar solo. A highlight is "High on You," about how he "Don't need no ecstasy/Cause that's what I feel with you next to me," and similar references; it's a catchy delight with great wordplay – and yes, the lyrics are included in the artwork.

Many talented guitarist-keyboard players end up having studio drummers and percussionists sit in for such projects, but not Flick, and the result doesn't suffer – his drumming is fine. His bass playing is also rock solid, and his few guitar solos possess neo-Hendrix fluidity. Not bad, all together.

Flick is in peak vocal form on the smooth soul of "Wild Is the Heart," a swift and memorable love song that has a classic R&B feel. At three minutes, it is over too soon. "Druthers" seems a nod to Stevie Wonder and pulls in perhaps one chord change too many from an old Huey Lewis song, "If This Is It." For "I Got Love," Flick hits the bullseye again, singing "I got love no doubt about it/And I need a mountain from which to shout it"; the beat and rhythm guitar drive the message right to listener the way the old Stax records did. "Little By Little" is listed as a bonus track, and the arrangement is different and winning – a piano, 12-string, and finally strings join Flick on a ballad that shows another dimension of a talented singer. Good call to put it on the disc.

Piquant is a disc that, if the listener didn't know that one guy played just about every instrument, they never would guess; it is too expertly performed and recorded. Simeon Flick is a great singer, and his songwriting is at a high enough level to match it.



Michael Tiernan L.A. Can Wait

by Frank Kocher

Drawing on life experiences that include teenage cancer and a stint in the Vatican seminary, Michael Tiernan has been winning awards for his songwriting and keeping very busy on the local singer/songwriter scene. Since his 2007 solo release, *Spaces*, he has been involved (with Sven-Erik Seaholm and Peter Bolland) in the side project Allied Gardens, added two children to his family, and lost his brother Joe to cancer. *L.A. Can Wait*, his new disc, expands on the acoustic guitar-based, folksy sound of *Spaces* with more filled-out, keyboard-dominated alternative rock. Producer/engineer Andre de Santanna has a connection with singer/songwriter Jason Mraz, and on some of the tracks here it shows.

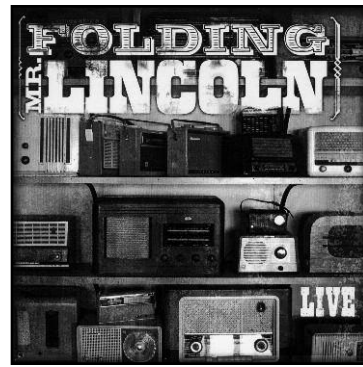
On the opener, "Write Me a Love Song," Tiernan is surrounded by a big buildup, Coldplay style, as he sings about his need for musical rescue from alienation – "I hear the music play/And these four walls melt away." His tenor has the upper range and authority to fit well in many settings, like the autobiographical "Let Go." To choppy blues-rock and wah-wah guitar licks, he tells about his days with the monks and his changing philosophy since – and it works fine. The title track is a fully realized opus, a reality check about his grand ambitions and appreciation for what is here and now. The memorable harmony choruses float in on strings; this is one of those "made for radio" tracks.

There are echoes of Mraz and Jack Johnson in "You With Me" and "Easy," both light, stripped down tunes with a trop feel, and both are good songs. Recent father Tiernan has something to say in "Father and Child" to his new baby. The emotions are genuine, the tune catchy as he sings about the world being crazy, but promising to be there. "Small Things" is a soft love song that overuses strings and lacks a hook.

Not all of the songs have ringing resonance of the title track or the warmth of "Father and Child." "Dying Tree" is a breakup ballad that uses an overly busy arrangement and metaphor-loaded lyrics without the impact of other tracks. On "Here," Tiernan goes for "meaning of life" words about the makeup of the universe with a romantic twist, but the melody isn't very strong.

"Strong" is an arresting first-person account of a terminal cancer patient, inspired by his late brother's battle with the disease. The gut-wrenching initial news, impact on relatives, quest for inner strength, and moment of passing are all laid out in stark lyrical clarity, a brave statement about a topic rarely written of in song.

L.A. Can Wait clearly shows why Michael Tiernan has collected accolades for his songwriting. His lyrics paint touching portraits of life and relationships, and his melodies are engaging. This new disc essentially frames him as the centerpiece of an adult-alternative rock outfit more than his past persona as an acoustic/folk performer, and it is rousing and enjoyable.



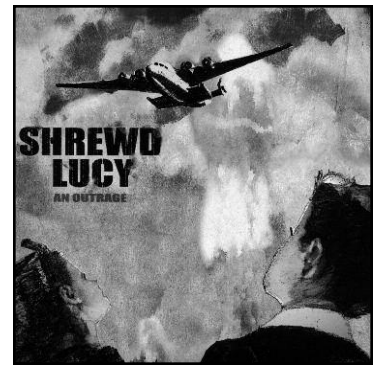
Folding Mr. Lincoln Folding Mr. Lincoln Live

by Mike Alvarez

Folding Mr. Lincoln has become one of San Diego's leading purveyors of acoustic music. By fusing folk, country, and rock they create an appealing Americana sound that is comfortingly familiar while also being original and unique. Their debut CD *Within My Reach* gave them an opportunity to craft their original songs into full-blown arrangements. Fronted by husband and wife musicians Harry and Nancy Mestyaneck, the band lineup includes fiddler Alicia Previn, bassist David Ybarra, drummer Bill Ray, and guitarist Charlie Loach. While the Mestyanecks frequently perform as an acoustic duo, it's when the whole band takes the stage that they fully conjure the magic of their studio release. This is precisely what was captured on disc when they performed at Old Time Music in North Park earlier this year.

Their approach is straightforward and direct. Harry utters a brief introduction before they launch into "Missing Her Pretty Green Eyes," an uptempo love song that showcases all of their musical trademarks. A sinuous fiddle melody snakes its way over a solid backdrop of rhythm guitar, bass, drums and percussion. Immaculate vocal harmonies perfectly counterpoint Harry's warm and unforced voice. Loach finds just the right place in the mix for some tasty electric guitar licks. One of the real treats on the album is an as-yet unrecorded song called "Sunday Morning," which brings Nancy's vocals to the forefront as she takes lead on a number of passages. Alternating solo spots by Loach and Previn give them a chance to stretch their musical legs. Nancy gets to spend more time fronting the band as she sings lead on "The Cuckoo," a bluegrass song that has been "Linkun-ized," as Harry humorously declares. He plucks a mandolin during this tune, giving it an appropriately rustic atmosphere. The band puts its formidable skills to good use as they alternate between tight ensemble playing and impressive instrumental solos.

This is an superbly recorded and mixed live album, with every player and vocalist placed perfectly in the audio spectrum. Each part can be heard distinctly as it interacts comfortably with the rest of the mix. The songs convey their own distinctive feel and are sequenced to create an emotional arc that runs the gamut from exuberance to melancholy, with just the right amount of whimsy where needed. As the album approaches its conclusion, the band tones down the mood with its wistful "Trucker Medley" before ending on a triumphant note with a high-energy performance of their original song "On Wings." Folding Mr. Lincoln is truly one of San Diego's premiere original music acts. They have a strong set of original songs, the interpretive power to put their own stamp on an impeccably chosen set of covers, and the musical chops to fully realize them on the concert stage. Theirs is a sound that will appeal to a wide variety of listeners.



Shrewd Lucy An Outrage

by Frank Kocher

Readers who are long-time fans of rock music will fondly remember the flannel days of the Seattle sound. The genre developed in the mid-'80s, and took off in 1991 as the commercial success of high profile bands Nirvana and Pearl Jam led the way for others. The formula was the same for most of the music – a hard-rocking hybrid of serious lyrics and fuzzed guitars without pop hooks, funk, or metal hysterics, centered on a charismatic lead singer.

Flash forward nearly two decades, and Oceanside's Shrewd Lucy is here with their disc *An Outrage*, a dose of nineties nostalgia and rock adrenaline. Singer/songwriter/guitarist Collynn Pankratz penned the dozen songs, and the overall sound blends a two-guitar attack that recalls, depending on the track, the listener's favorite old Seattle band. Pankratz has just the voice to do this kind of thing, a ringer for Soundgarden's Chris Cornell with a hint of Alice in Chains' late Layne Staley's swagger.

As for subject matter, Pankratz hasn't strayed too far from 1991, either, at least on the opener, "Suicide in Disguise," a nod to Nirvana that lacks the dynamics of some of the later tracks. "Take" stays with the brood mood, but changes things up between pounding power-chord choruses and floating, guitar effect bridges. Even better, "It Is What It Is" nails a haunting bass riff, adds acoustic guitar, then full band – dialing things down overall for an ear-catching, musically different highlight. Social commentary is a critical ingredient of traditional grunge, and Pankratz uses "Politician" to sing "Tell me what I want to hear/Make me think I need to fear," as lead guitarist Derek Dossey takes a few bars for a slick solo. "The Devil in Tow" shoots for an "unplugged" groove, but falls short of "What It Is," though the introspective, dirge-like words are helped by harmonies and a good arrangement.

Shrewd Lucy has released two previous discs, both actually solo projects by Pankratz. The new lineup also includes Jason Kowalskie on bass and Steve Wilkes on drums.

The rather typical soft verse/power chorus structure of most of the material here comes through on "It Goes Without Saying," as acoustic guitar and vocals shift into crescendos with everything in the studio thrown in; this tune actually uses harmonies, guitar feedback, and drum accents to pull off a catchy surprise. "Poor Mr. Fall Down King" has the opening lick from 10 other hard rockers, then gets down to business with the best of the riff-rock tunes on the disc as Dossey pours on fluid lines and backing vocals give the chorus added depth. By the last few bars of "The End" and its lyrics about "Sell yourself to death," the listener may feel a touch of relief at the letup of the angst.

An Outrage rocks hard and is clearly the work of a band committed to a certain sound and audience. Shrewd Lucy's music isn't light, or quiet, and requires listening and involvement, but for fans of straight-ahead rock and the Seattle sound in particular, it's quite enjoyable.

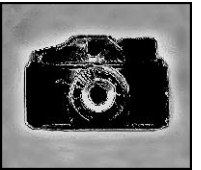


Photo: Steve Covault

Chad & Jeremy @ AMSD Concerts



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Anna Troy @ Lestat's



Photo: Steve Covault

Marc Cohn @ the Belly Up



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Jamie Shadowlight @ Neifest



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Dennis Caplinger @ Oasis



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Local band Brawley plays in Brawley



Photo: Steve Covault

Coco & Lafe @ Joe Rathburn's Folkey Monkey



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Joe Rathburn @ Dizzy's



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Chuck Perrin @ Neifest



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Billy Bushwalla



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Peter Bolland @ Oasis

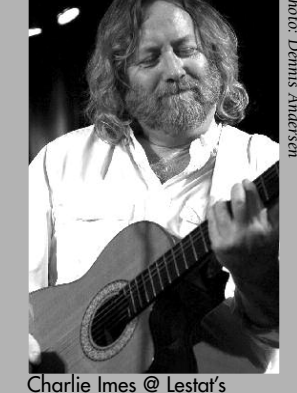


Photo: Dennis Andersen

Charlie Imes @ Lestat's



Craig Ingraham Group @ O'Connell's



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Cahill & Delene @ Dizzy's



Miff Laracy CD Release @ O'Connell's



Photo: Dennis Andersen

Sven-Erik Seaholm @ Neifest



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The Criadillas @ Lestat's



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Dawn Mitschele



Photo: Steve Covault

Michael Tiernan CD Release



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Kim Divine @ Lestat's



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Jim Reeves @ Dizzy's



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Donovan Frankenreiter

Structure • Boundaries • Discipline • Spirit •

This is the last 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.

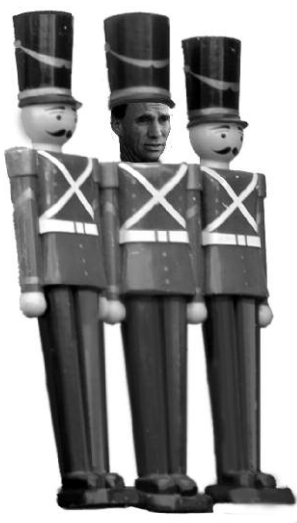
You hear the sounds of the forest now. The breeze moving through the branches above sounds like whispering... Animals, life and energy are moving about as the breeze turns to wind. Fog begins to roll into the forest and above the canopy you can see dark clouds; the air feels like rain and the wind is picking up. Small twigs move off of their old attachments and flower petals swirl in the air around you. A light mist starts to form in this beautiful, alive, thriving place... This is the connection of the forest with the earth, the sun, the wind, and the water – this is **spirit**. Think of how the spirit of the forest is nurtured by the rays of sunshine, and the gentle mist; now think about how you nurture your own spirit. Does it feel like a breeze or a strong wind over your heart and soul? How do you move it; what can you do to increase the spirit inside you? How can you awaken your spirit so that it can be in total harmony with your life path?

Now you find yourself coming to the end of your walk through the forest. Lessons have been learned and beauty shared by many. Remember to keep the keys to your life path close by. Structure, boundaries, discipline and spirit. Find your way to balance these elements and they will support your life path moving forward.

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"Things are moving too fast when we're told we can microwave minute rice."

—Robert Orben

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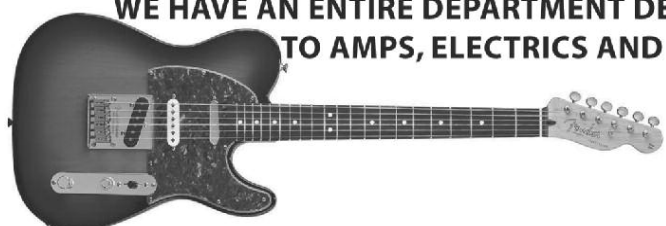
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