

T SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR

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



December 2004

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- Fri 3 • Seth Horan, Aaron Bowen, Raining Jane
- Sat 4 • Alfred Howard & the K23 Orchestra, J Turtle
- Sun 5 • Pete Thurston Night W/ Christmas Gala and Gregory Page
- Wed 8 • Bad Credit, Reeve Oliver
- Thurs 9 • Dave Barnes, Renata Youngblood, Matt Wertz, and Leah
- Fri 10 • Coyote Problem, Shawn Rohlf, Victoria Robertson
- Sat 11 • Edie Carey, Saba, Tom Brosseau
- Sun 12 • The Shelly's, The Shrines
- Wed 15 • James Kersans, Just John, CJ Hutchins, Butch Berry
- Thur 16 • ACOUSTIC UNDERGROUND
- Fri 17 • Robin Henkel
- Sat 18 • 6-8pm Allison Lonsdale, 9-11pm Jose Sinatra & Andrew Foshee
- Sun 19 • The Nervous, Chasing Paper
- Wed 22 • Annie Bethancourt, The Natters
- Thurs 23 • Gregory Page and Friends
- Fri 24th • Christmas Eve
- Sat 25th • Christmas Day
- Sun 26 • Emerson Band
- Wed 29 • Dustin Shey, Greg Laswell, Saba and Jane
- Thurs 30 • Mt. Egypt, Manic Swing
- Fri 31 • New Years Eve

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welcome mat



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To promote, encourage, and provide an alternative voice for the great local music that is generally overlooked by the mass media; namely the genres of folk, country, roots, Americana, gospel, 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.

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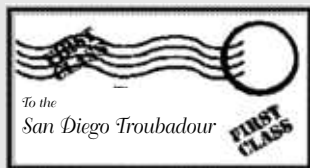
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Cover photography: Bill Richardson

I WAS SO MUCH YOUNGER THEN, I'M OLDER THAN THAT NOW

Folk Pioneers Roger McGuinn and Tom Rush Play to a Sold Out House in Poway

by Steve Covault

Last month, Roger McGuinn and Tom Rush performed for a full house at the Poway Center for the Arts.

Opening for McGuinn, Tom Rush played an energetic and entertaining solo set full of amusing stories from his life. The stage was set simply with several potted trees.

As Rush told the story of his long folk music career, beginning in Boston where he played in local coffeehouses during the early 1960s, he asked the audience whether anyone remembered Club 47. It was in this legendary coffeehouse that quite a few notable artists began their careers including Bonnie Raitt, Emmylou Harris, James Taylor, Joan Baez, and Richie Havens, to name a few.

After leaving Boston, Rush lived in Wyoming for several years but is now living in California. Wearing a bright and colorful Hawaiian shirt, Rush performed Joni Mitchell's song "The Circle Game," a song she had written for Neil Young.

Following his set, during the intermission, Rush signed autographs in the lobby for his appreciative fans. If you'd like to see him live in a small, intimate venue, he plays regularly at McCabe's Guitar Shop in Santa Monica (www.mccabes.com) and has concerts scheduled for January 6, 7, 8, and 21. Hurry, though. This place is tiny and his shows sell out fast.

After intermission McGuinn entered from stage right, wearing a black hat and strumming "My Back Pages" on his blond Rickenbacker 12-

string electric as he walked on stage. Nice touch, very theatrical.

In addition to alternating between electric and 12- and 6-string acoustic guitars, McGuinn alternated playing Byrds classics, such as "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Turn, Turn, Turn," and "Mr. Spaceman" with traditional folk songs like "Finnegan's Wake," which he explained was a ballad about an Irishman who liked whiskey for breakfast. After too much breakfast one day, he fell and split his skull. A fight broke out at his funeral wake, during which a bottle of whiskey was spilled and Finnegan awoke when it splashed on his face.

McGuinn demonstrated his love and commitment to real folk music and blues by playing a nice version of Leadbelly's "St. James Infirmary."

At one point McGuinn shared a story from the past about Bob Dylan. While attending a low-budget movie screening in New York, Dylan wrote the lines "The River flows, it flows to the sea" on a cocktail napkin and gave it to Peter Fonda with the instructions "Here, give this to McGuinn. He'll know what to do with it." McGuinn used Dylan's first verse, completed the lyrics, and turned them into the classic "The Ballad of Easy Rider." Dylan later insisted that his name be removed from the song's credits — perhaps because he disagreed with the film's downbeat ending.

McGuinn also encouraged his fans to visit his web site (www.McGuinn.com) where there are hundreds of MP3s available for download in his "Folk Den." He said,



Roger McGuinn



Tom Rush

"You can download all the MP3s you want from my website and I promise not to sue you!"

Autographed copies of his recently self-released album *Limited Edition* were for sale in the lobby during the show. The new CD, which opens with the George Harrison song "If I Needed Someone" is also available at www.McGuinn.com.

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Eugene Vacher's Living Legacy: 85 Years of Music and Still Playing

by Lois Bach

PART ONE

When Eugene Vacher celebrated his 95th birthday recently, he was surrounded by members of his City Guard Band and the San Diego Mandolin Orchestra whom he referred to as his family. Although they were not related by blood, many in attendance have known Gene for decades and all of them have shared the same love for music that Gene has since he was a youngster. Regarded as a true pioneer of San Diego music, Gene was the subject of a booklet published by the El Cajon Historical Society in 1995 called *The Boy Who Loved Music*. Today, many years later, Gene is still arranging, conducting, and performing the music that he loves.

Born into a musical family, music has played an important part in Gene's life for as long as he can remember. His first memories date back to when he was two or three years old, sitting on his mother's lap while his father played the cello. His mother's family had their own band, the Asher Family Band, which included Gene's father on cello and Gene's mother on viola as well as other members of the Asher family. Gene's paternal French grandmother played the harp and even had the opportunity to play on occasion for Napoleon Bonaparte at the family home, because Gene's great grandfather was a cavalry officer in Napoleon's army in France.



Eugene Vacher in his 20s

Gene's mother was a school teacher, but married women were not allowed to teach in San Diego schools in 1910, so she worked in Tecate while little Gene stayed at home with his father on the family ranch in El Cajon. The majority of the family's income came from the citrus groves on their property, which was then sold to the local markets. Mr. Vacher's family was French, but because Gene's grandfather was secretary to the French Consul, sometimes the family lived in Paris and sometimes in London. Both English and French were spoken in the Vacher household, a tradition that Gene's father continued. Gene and his father would practice speaking French while

in the orchard together, so the boy naturally became fluent in both languages at an early age.

On weekends the family would hitch up a pair of horses to their carriage and visit Grandfather Asher (Gene's mother's father). He owned 40 acres he called Castle Rock Ranch, located at the western end of where Parkway Plaza now stands. The Asher Family Band, consisting of Gene's father and uncles, would play their favorite tunes. Before Gene was old enough to handle an instrument, he learned how to conduct the band. That opportunity came when he went on vacation with his parents to Coronado where they rented a cottage in Tent City. Gene would sit by the bandstand every night, listening to the orchestra play. One evening the first cornet player came down from the stage and asked if he wanted to play his horn. Gene was delighted, knowing then which instrument he was interested in. Three years later he finally got his own cornet, along with 25 free lessons at the San Diego Conservatory of Music.

On Saturdays Gene and his father rode the train from El Cajon to San Diego for his music lessons, which he always enjoyed; he loved the hustle and bustle of the big city. Downtown was filled with theaters that offered two or three shows a day. Following his music lesson Gene and his father would take in a Vaudeville show at the Pantages Theater or attend a classical music concert.

Growing up in El Cajon on a ranch during the early 1900s was lonely for Gene. There were no children who lived close by to play with, so his books and his cornet became his friends, especially when he was diagnosed with a heart murmur and almost died. He spent that year at home, away from his schoolmates, whiling away the afternoons reading and playing his instrument. He attributes the cornet for helping to restore his health by strengthening his respiratory system as he played.

Gene studied the trumpet at Grossmont High School and, while still a student there, was invited to play with the San Diego Symphony under the direction of Nino Marcelli, the man who created the orchestra in 1927. Since he was underage, he had to get special permission to join the musicians' union. The orchestra played their summer concerts at the Balboa Park Organ Pavilion. Earning \$10 per concert, Gene performed with the Symphony for eight summers. His final

year with the Symphony was in 1935, the year of the California-Pacific International Exposition where Gene had the opportunity to play in the Exposition band. Folks traveled from all over the world to attend the fair.

While studying music at San Diego State University, Gene assembled a small orchestra made up of fellow members of the San Diego Symphony. After graduating he followed in his

mother's footsteps and received his teaching credentials. In 1931 Gene began a career he loved: teaching junior high students at the Cajon Valley Union School, where the principal had been a college friend of

his. Although he was hired to teach math and music, he desperately wanted to form a school band and orchestra. One day he saw some old bugles hanging in the window of a pawn shop. He bought all 25 of them, restored them to playing condition, and took them to school for his students to use. Although it was a primitive beginning, the students eagerly took to playing and Gene began a drum and bugle corps at the school. He acquired more instruments "from here and there" and finally his dream of a school band and orchestra became a reality.

In order to support his family after World War II began, Gene spent his summers away from teaching and took on war-related

work in a defense plant and also dug trenches for the telephone company. At the age of 35, however, Gene became troubled after learning that former students of his had been killed at war. He approached the draft board and told them to enlist him into the service.

"I thought I was going to the Navy but they sent me to the Army in Texas. After basic training I was put in radar."

During his off hours Gene practiced his trumpet in the band area, until one day he met the leader of the band and was quickly transferred to perform with the Army Band. While a member of the band, Gene drum majored, drilled, and conducted the band. He was later transferred to New Mexico, where he ran the radio station for the military hospital.



Schubert-Liszt Little Symphony Orchestra, 1929, Vacher standing on left



El Cajon Grammar School Orchestra, Vacher in back row, fourth from left



Eugene Vacher today at 95 years old

"I had a daily half hour news program and following that, an hour of classical music. They installed a fine studio just for us and I had the chance to see, every week, an outstanding jazz band from the West Coast."

When the studio closed in 1949 Gene was transferred to Port Townsend, Washington. There he played French horn in the concert band when he wasn't conducting. Two years later he received orders to go to Korea. He was with the second infantry working alongside a French battalion, which gave him a much-desired opportunity to practice his French again.

"Our sole purpose was to entertain the troops. There were 150 people in the band. We formed combos, a singing quartet, a dance band, and a bagpipe band." Gene led the bagpipers in front of the troops to the line of fire. After 13 months Gene returned to Seattle where he remained in the service for the next two years. But in 1955 he received orders that would change his life.

"I was surprised that the Army would send me to France as it was a place I'd always wanted to see," Gene spoke as the memory filled him with emotion. "We walked out in the streets of Paris from the Gare de Lyon. The mist and the whole

atmosphere just hit me. Everything I'd ever thought and everything I'd ever seen, the pictures we had at home of France; it was there."

Gene was sent to Orleans and spent the first few nights at a hotel. One night around midnight, there was a knock on his door. The woman who owned the hotel told him that an American woman was downstairs and asked if he could he translate.

Her name was Mary. She worked for the Department of Army Civilians and had been traveling for more than 70 hours by train between Germany and various towns in France. She was tired and hungry. While Mary ate, Gene carried her luggage to her room.

Mary began living at the hotel, so Gene saw her frequently in town. They shared dinner on several occasions and

spent time exploring the region together and visiting French chateaux and museums. It became quickly clear to Gene that he'd found the love of his life.

"The better part of the next three and a half years was one glorious honeymoon," Gene fondly reminisces.

During his time as Bandmaster in France, Gene's band played at the dedication of six World War II cemeteries in addition to many other celebrations and parades, including a Joan of Arc parade where he played La Marseillaise, the French national anthem, for the first time.



Thearle's Music Company flyer with Vacher on cover

"When I finished, I turned to salute the French flag and there were a bunch of old men, all in tears. That gratified me."

In 1965 Gene returned to the U.S. before retiring from the Army. He spent seven more years teaching music at junior high schools in Santa Rosa and Fontana, California, before he retired in 1972. He still keeps in contact with his former students.

"One of my students is the organist of the First Presbyterian Church in El Cajon. Another was the first violinist concertmaster. One student attends a Grossmont reunion from Texas every year. Sometimes people will say 'I was in your orchestra or your band; do you remember me?' A student from the last school where I taught writes to me every Christmas. It's rewarding."

"Retired" was not a word that Gene was comfortable with. When Mary took an interest in playing mandolin, her husband was ready to begin conducting again. Gene's legend continues next month in Part Two with the history of the San Diego Mandolin Orchestra and the City Guard Band.



full circle



GITTIN' ON DOWN TO THE WEST SIDE

When Folk Arts Rare Records moved into the little craftsman cottage at 3611 Adams Avenue back in 1977 (after two five-year stints in other locations), no one thought that it would be our home and our business and the center for all the other things we do for the next 27 years.

The place had been a massage parlor, one of the kinky kind (we had to change all the purple light bulbs) and the neighborhood folks were just as happy that we (me, my wife Virginia, and our 11-month-old son) had come to stay awhile.

Much as been written here in this column and elsewhere about the various folk festivals, concerts, banjo and fiddle contests, research projects, street fairs, roots festivals, writing, recording, and other creations that went on during those 27 years. Needless to say, I'd be glad to talk anyone's ear off about most any of that, along with the way I found, sold, and collected a few records, which sort of kept the pot that included all the other stuff churning.

We were never able to get enough money together to negotiate a lease or, even better, to buy the place. We went through seven or so landlords and rent that was \$300 a month when we moved in rose

Recordially, Lou Curtiss



to \$1,000 until about four months ago. It was at that time our landlord raised the rent to \$1,700 a month, citing the usual cost of living, etc. At the time we felt like we were caught in that old Catch 22. We worked hard to help make the neighborhood a better place, but it turned and bit us on the ass. Two months later our landlord, Ernie Vaca, informed us that he had sold the property and we had 30 days to vacate the premises. That was on October

5. It's now November 16 and I am sitting in the doorway of the new Folk Arts Rare Records at 2881 Adams Avenue waiting for my first customer. It's been a stressful month. Between moving boxes of stuff, I watched the new owners take sledge hammers and knock down and turn into kindling wood shelving that my Dad, who was a wonderful carpenter, had created. Outside, a scorched earth policy was going on as they cut down all the trees and plants they could get their paws on. I understand that the new owners will operate a women's gymnasium (a franchise called Curves) and I wish them well. They bought the property, which is something I could never quite accomplish although I tried several times. I just wish they had kept some of the greenery. The Adams Avenue Business Association tries so hard to plant trees on the Avenue and these folks cut three or four mature trees. So much for the environment.

Well, we're open now at our new location (2881 Adams Avenue) — same hours and same phone number. Right now I have about 100 boxes of records piled in front of the phone jack. We're planning to have front porch music from time to time (live and free), the first as part of AABA's Holiday on the Avenue December 11. Virginia and I will do a few tunes. Roy Ruiz Clayton promised to drop by and I'm hoping Liz and Kent might do some picking and bring some others with them, maybe Patty Hall and Tanya and Larry Rose? It ought to be a good time and there will be lots of other stuff happening up and down Adams — maybe a tree planting at 3611!

Well, one advantage of moving is that you find so much stuff that you didn't

know you had. Over the next few months there'll be lots of excellent records of most every kind. I figure about eight tons of recordings got moved, most of it by my son Ben who really came through for us. Many other people helped too. I can't thank you all, I don't even know all of your names, but you know who you are, and you can be sure that I'm grateful as hell. You can all get in free of charge to the roots festivals and the street fairs here on Adams Avenue as long as I'm involved with them.

Right now we're smack dab in the middle of the Adams Avenue Antique Row. Lots of folks around here call it The West Side. At any rate, I've checked out the burritos and hot dogs and good black coffee at some of the eating and supping places around this West Side and proclaim myself satisfied and glad to be here, hopefully for a long, long time. If you keep listening to



Photo: Bill Richardson
Lou Curtiss

and buying those old, rare, and hard to get phonograph recordings, we'll do just that. Thanks.

Recordially,
Lou Curtiss





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front porch

What You Always Wanted to Know About Insuring Your Instrument But Were Afraid to Ask

by Dwight Worden

Do you worry about your instruments being lost or stolen? About airline or other travel damage? Are your instruments insured? Here is an outline that can help you answer these questions. Remember, though, that there is no substitute for reviewing your own situation with your insurance agent, reading your own policy, and consulting other advisors before deciding what to do.

INSURANCE

Here are the main ways to insure your instruments:

HOME OWNERS INSURANCE

Many home owners' policies cover the contents of your home against fire, theft, damage, and loss. Unless musical instruments are excluded from coverage, there is a good chance your existing homeowner's insurance may already cover loss or damage to your instruments while they're in the home (i.e., if your house catches fire or your roof leaks on your instruments). Under some policies you must list the specific instruments you want covered.

There is no way to know for sure where you stand without talking to your insurance agent (assuming he or she knows!) and reading the policy. If you have the courage to read your policy, look to see whether the contents of your house are covered under "coverages." Then, look in the "definitions" section to see whether the contents category is defined in such a way that your policy includes instruments. Then, look at the "exclusions" section to see if musical instruments are specifically excluded from your coverage.

If your policy covers the house and its contents — if the definition of contents includes instruments and if instruments are not listed in the exclusions section, you probably have coverage! Contact your agent and ask him or her to confirm that fact in writing. If you see that instruments are not covered or are excluded, ask your agent what it would cost to include them in the policy's coverage. It might not cost

too much. One person I know reported obtaining \$15,000 worth of coverage for her instruments from her Allstate homeowners policy (subject to a deductible) for only \$55 a year.

It's important that you check your deductible. All or nearly all homeowner's policies have this, i.e., an amount below which they won't pay. This is likely to be \$250, \$500, \$1,000, or possibly higher if the deductible applies to the losses of the "contents" of your home. Check your policy and ask your agent what your deductible is for loss or damage to the "contents" of your house.

CAVEATS

- Many policies may exclude "antiques." If you have old instruments, it's possible that they fall into that category. You should ask to know for sure.
- Insurance policies are hard to read — I'm a lawyer and even I find it difficult — so confirm your conclusions in writing with your agent or insurance underwriter. You can do this by writing to them, reporting that you have reviewed your policy, and concluded that it covers your musical instruments as part of the "contents" of your house. Unless they promptly advise you otherwise and point out why your musical instruments are not covered, you are relying in good faith on your reading of the policy that they are covered.
- Some homeowner policies may also cover instruments while anywhere on the premises and not just inside the house — for example, if your boyfriend accidentally runs over your 1935 Martin that you left in the driveway for just a moment. And some policies may cover instruments that are off premises. Check and ask your agent.
- You should also know about other exclusions from coverage. For example, earthquake damage is not covered under normal homeowner coverage. You need special earthquake coverage to recover your Martin if it gets crushed in the Big One.
- If you are a professional musician

earning a living with your instruments, they may not be covered in your homeowner's policy. Again, check the exclusions and ask your agent.

RENTERS INSURANCE

If you rent rather than own, there is renters insurance. If you have purchased a renter's policy to cover your possessions contained in your rented apartment or house, check your policy much as you would a homeowners policy.

If you don't have a renters policy, you may want to consider getting one if you have lots of valuable stuff. Also check with your landlord, who may have an owner's policy covering certain tenant losses. Find out whether there is coverage for your instruments, then confirm it in writing if the landlord says there is.

AUTO INSURANCE

If you have comprehensive coverage for your car, you are covered for more than just liability. Liability coverage is required by law in California, which pays the other guy who you hit and/or injure but does not pay for your own losses; other coverage is optional. Comprehensive coverage will cover damage and loss to your own car against theft and fire. Most important, it usually covers things that get damaged or stolen while in your car or in the trunk. Check your policy or ask your agent which type of coverage you have and whether it covers the contents. See the discussion and caveats under homeowner's insurance above. The explanation of "contents," "exclusions," and "antiques" will likely also apply to your car insurance.

If you are in an accident that is not your fault, even if you don't have your own coverage, make sure you claim the loss or damage to your instrument against the other guy, who is fully responsible for paying you if it wasn't your fault!

INSURANCE FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The Clarion Insurance company specializes in selling insurance policies that cover musical instruments. Go to www.clarionins.com/index/index.asp.

There may be other companies doing this, but I am not aware of them.

Clarion will sell you \$10,000 worth of coverage for about \$250 per year. They will ask you to send them a list of your instruments, including the designated value of each one (backed up by receipt, appraisal, or other acceptable valuation methodology, which is apparently not strictly enforced). Clarion will carry your instruments as covered up to the \$10,000 limit. If one or more is lost, stolen, or damaged, including airline damage (except for double basses), you are required to report the loss after which they send you a check. The coverage applies anywhere, and it is my understanding that there is no deductible.

If you are an IBMA (Int'l Bluegrass Music Assn.) member, or if your organization (such as the San Diego Bluegrass Society or the Bluegrass Assn. of Southern California) sets up a group account, members can get the same policy for about \$160 per year. If you need more than \$10,000 worth of coverage, you can buy more; each time you add \$10,000, the rates go down.

RECORD KEEPING

Whatever your chosen method of insurance, or even if you go "naked," it is strongly recommended that you photograph all your instruments from all angles, keep records of their serial numbers, where and when you bought them, and the amount you paid. If your house burns down, your insurance carrier may be skeptical if you say you lost six Martin guitars from the 1940s in the fire and have no photos or records to prove your claim! And, if one of your instruments is stolen or lost, you will need this information for a police report or for Internet postings about missing instruments. Likewise, if someone else hits your car and damages your instrument in the trunk, you will need this information to go after the other guy's insurance. Keep a copy of these records outside your house, too. Otherwise they will burn in the same fire that claims your instruments!

THE BOTTOM LINE

The insurance business is nothing new. Insurance companies that cover musical instruments make their money by knowing that, on an average, most instruments will not be lost, stolen, or damaged. However, if you do lose one or more of your instruments, the law of averages doesn't help you, and you may bless the day you bought that insurance!

Evaluate your risks. If you travel a lot, play at festivals, jam with strangers where instruments sit around in the open, there is naturally a greater risk for theft, loss, and damage. If you only play in your living room at home, the risk may be less. Consider how easy it would be to replace your instrument. If you can afford to replace all your



instruments easily, insurance may not be as important for you.

Here is an example of how you can look at the issues: If I have a guitar worth \$3,000, a mandolin worth \$4,000, and a fiddle worth \$2,000, I can get \$10,000 of coverage from Clarion for \$160 per year to cover all three through my membership in IBMA. At that rate, I will make money with the insurance unless I still have the instruments at the point in time where I have paid in premiums what it would cost to replace the instruments. Following my example I would have paid the cost of the fiddle in premiums over a period of 12 years, the cost of the guitar in 18 years, and the mandolin in 24 years. Seems like a pretty good deal to me. If I got this coverage through my homeowner's insurance for \$55 per year, it's an even better deal.



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WEEKENDS



Birdie Carter: Jazz in his Tree

by Chuck Schiele, Jr.

Baseball and jazz have a lot in common if you think about it. In baseball, for instance, the game changes subtly or dramatically with each pitch. If you don't understand this, you don't really "get" baseball. Likewise, in jazz the game changes — subtly or dramatically — inside one measure, or even in the space of one quarter-note. And if this doesn't make sense to you, you don't "get" jazz either. Its a yin yang thang ... the art and science of balancing a new set of circumstances vs. the decisions that render how one responds to that reality. In one moment at a time. The decision to swing at a pitch and the decision to swing the bridge are very much of the same zen. Mastering the ability to make the right decision requires a natural talent for understanding what's really going on in either regard. Kinda like life.

Why make this comparison in an editorial about one of San Diego's foremost jazz masters? Well, I'll tell you why. For Birdie Carter it begins around the time he was ready to start college and had to decide whether to attend Texas University on a baseball scholarship, enter the St. Louis Browns farm system, or go to North Texas State College on a music scholarship. Despite the deadly gun most shortstops refer to as an arm, the Birdman saw his future in music and accepted the scholarship at North Texas State, only to decline that same scholarship (because it required that he play in the marching band and concert band) and opt for the esteemed jazz program.



And this is where our story begins. Excelling in this program, Birdie received honors at the top of his class, and before long he was working like a madman in jazz and big band ensembles around the country and playing with dozens of name acts over the last few decades. The

list includes Frankie Avalon, Sammy Davis Jr., Milton Berle, Andy Williams, The Four Freshmen, Bobby Vinton, Jack Jones, Bob Hope, Ray Price, Lou Rawls, Tony Bennett, Johnny Mathis, Big Tiny Little, The Micky Finns, The Bill Greene Orchestra, and so many, many more.



I met the "Birdman" through my father (Chuck Schiele) who was a mainstay bass player in many of Birdie's bands after moving to San Diego in the early '70s. (I met the Bird in 1979). At that time Birdie was simply one of my Pop's cool jazz buddies, along with guys like the Marillo brothers (Joe and Tony), Charles McPherson, Hollis Gentry, Rod Cradit, Ron Satterfield, Carlos Vasquez, Dick Lopez, Mike McClellan, and Duncan Moore, to name a few.

A true character in every sense of the word, Birdie was funny, even wacky at times, having tried professional comedy for a while, and always kind and gracious. Deliciously charming. Magnetic. After many get together with our families, I came to realize that he and my father were pretty much best friends. Ironically, now my Dad lives in Texas, and Birdie lives six blocks away from me in Ocean Beach. By way of visiting my Pop vicariously through each other, we began to hang out as neighbors and eventually adopted each other as family.

This is a beautiful thing. Sitting at Tony's over a glass of red wine, or while at a Padres game, I get to hear off-the-wall stories that took place in Ciudad Juarez, Las Vegas, and even right here in San Diego. Our music conversations about things like minor 13ths are always laced with pitching theory. I remember a time in college when my Dad and Birdie had just finished a gig at 2 a.m. They called me, kidnapped me, took me to Tijuana (in Birdie's VW bus, circa late '60s) to go drinking at the Corona Bowl. It was there that I was introduced to the late night post-gig ritual of Carta Blanca, Tequila, real burritos, and irresistible

musical war stories, i.e., how to play dirty tricks on the other guys in the band. For instance, they'd tell the trumpet player that "Tunisia" is in E-flat simply to see how long it would take him to figure out that the band is in on the joke, and it's actually played in the key of E. They once stuffed a bottle of aftershave into Hollis Gentry's Sax (as a Christmas present), giggling every time Hollis pulled away his ax to inspect what was wrong with the sound. It took Hollis a whole set to figure it out. My favorite anecdote happened one evening when I found Birdie walking down the street and we stopped for a beer. After a brew we decided to go over to his office (a short walk away) and talk music and photography (he's also a stellar photographer). I had a lot of theoretical questions at this time because I was a mere triad playing rocker. (To a jazz guy, we rockers play simple nursery rhymes with the aid of Marshalls.) He put on a Bill Evans record and took me through it, bar by bar, as we burned one, humming this, pointing out that. After 40 minutes of that listening ride, I started to really understand jazz. And with this, I know I am the most fortunate and grateful music brat in our city.

But enough about my personal affections and insights for the man.

Birdie decided in an instant to move away from Grand Prairie, Texas when he discovered a cross burning in his parents front lawn while returning from his jazz gig that evening, which was with a black band. He waved good-bye, hit the road, and set his own trail ablaze by playing every state in the U.S., every province in Canada, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. He wound up on dozens of recordings with some of the very top guys in the biz. Eventually he found his home in Ocean Beach and is very much an icon here, along with his beautiful wife, Linda.

With a name like Birdie I don't need

to tell you he's a sax player. And if you're a jazz-head, you can figure that he's got a strong foothold in bebop as an overt matter of personal style. To wear such a moniker, one has to be beyond exceptional. He is that. He also plays clarinet and flute but is mostly noted for his alto and tenor sax work. Birdie stresses the importance of chops without excuses. More so, however, Birdie exerts ultimate importance about one's own matter of style, claiming that most of the new generation is lacking in this department.

"Musicians in the jazz world of today sorely need personal identity. So many sound alike. With one phrase, you can tell Stan Getz from Coltrane from Zoot Sims from Bird from Dexter Gordon, the Prez and so on. That quality is missing in today's player and I miss that."

In fact, Birdie feels so strongly about individuality that in his usual role as bandleader, he insists on letting his players "play."



"I never tell my guys how to do what they do, let alone what to play. I never worry about anyone shining above another. I simply choose virtuosos and give them space to virtuositate."

His confidence in himself and in his pals is remarkably refreshing in a business where a musician's own insecurity

typically breeds an uncontrollable quest for control over others, which is much different than remaining pure to one's artistic vision. (I personally learned this subtle difference with this insight, and it caused me to practice everyday, whether I



Birdie Carter with his wife, Linda

got any good or not.)

As a formidable soloist, writer, and arranger in his own right, Birdie has delivered passion and style via his fearless and enthusiastic openness to creativity, his love of beauty, his command of the language and chops, and his dedication to the purity of jazz, itself. In a constantly changing musical climate (he attributes the decline of jazz popularity to Elvis), Birdie has only stood the ground of his jazz heart, never bending to the whims of what he considers insipid pop culture. The man is retired now. But whether he was fronting a trio or contributing to a 19-piece orchestra, Birdie Carter has bebopped through four decades of jazz, big band, and ensemble work, rendering himself an integral and important part of the fabric and history of our own San Diego music scene.



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parlor showcase

by Paul Hormick

Gypsies, Django, Genius, and Jazz

The Story of

Dell' Arte Instruments

John Kinnard, master luthier and part owner of Dell' Arte Instruments, is an artist. He paints scenes from the neighborhoods he has lived in as well as portraits of great jazz musicians, such as Thad Jones and Woody Hermann. These canvases decorate the workrooms and offices of Dell' Arte in sunny Santee, and an upstairs studio there seems to resemble a small museum more than a luthier's workshop. Of all his paintings, one portrait is particularly significant. Behind the desk of his partner, Alain Cola, hangs Kinnard's rendering of the man whose legacy has spawned the music and the industry at which Cola and Kinnard find themselves at the forefront. That man is Django Reinhardt.

Great musicians are known for their lyricism, spontaneity, and prowess. They can also be identified with a sound. Miles Davis and Chet Baker brought a softer, even muted, sound to the trumpet. And two bars of a silky smooth tenor easily identifies Paul Desmond. Similarly, the marriage between Reinhardt and his Maccaferri guitar was almost perfect. All of Reinhardt's passion and tenderness easily found their expression in those beautiful instruments. Just try to imagine Django with a different sound.

In 1998 Bob Page, owner of Buffalo Brothers Guitars in Carlsbad, introduced Alain Cola to John Kinnard. That same year the two formed a partnership that would merge Kinnard's company, Finegold Guitars and Mandolins, with Dell' Arte Instruments, which Cola had established several years earlier. Drawn together by a lifelong passion for beautiful stringed instruments and the sounds they produce, Kinnard's master craftsmanship is well

complemented by Cola's keen sense of business. Since they became partners, Dell' Arte has gained an international reputation for excellence in building the Maccaferri style of guitar favored by musicians who play Gypsy jazz in the Reinhardt style. Endorsed by guitarists Jimmy Rosenberg, Angelo DeBarre, Boulou and Elios Ferre, and Robin Nolan, Dell' Arte's Maccaferri guitars are carried by 60 dealers in the U.S. as well as by dealers in Germany, Holland, Japan, France, Italy, and England.

Cola believes that he has the knowledge to make the right kind of Gypsy guitar. "I've played these guitars for 40 years. I know the way they should feel and sound." Indeed, he spent his childhood in Toulon, a small town on the Mediterranean coast where painter Emil Savitry introduced Reinhardt to jazz back in 1932. And Cola himself comes from a long line of musicians. His great grandfather was a clarinetist, his grandfather a guitarist, and his father played the mandolin and banjo.

He began learning the guitar in 1963, taking to jazz and soon becoming interested in the music that is Reinhardt's legacy. "There was a guitar player who was a Gypsy. Tchan Tchou Vidal was his name, and he lived in my hometown. He was a blazing guitar player, played really fast. I used to follow him around like a dog," says Cola. Vidal taught

Cola Gypsy jazz and the distinctive chords that Reinhardt had used. Cola also received some experience as a performer, subbing for Vidal's rhythm guitarist when he got too drunk to play.

The Dell' Arte design recreates the large bodies with the characteristic large D and small oval sound holes of Selmer guitars, which were precursors to the Maccaferri. Cola says, "Dell' Arte guitars are built to the specifications of the original Selmer guitars. We buy the best woods: spruce tops from Germany and Italy, rosewood from India, German maple, and mahogany from Honduras."

Kinnard enjoys the challenge of building the Maccaferri. He says, "It's more labor intensive than your average flat top. It takes some skill, but I kind of thrive on the reward of accomplishment." Part of that skill is in forming the top of the guitar, known as a stressed top. A cross

between a flat top and an arch top, the stressed top gets its curvature not from carving, but from bracing the interior. Kinnard says that he is always trying to improve on their instruments and adds, "We're still working on the tone, on getting a louder Maccaferri sound."

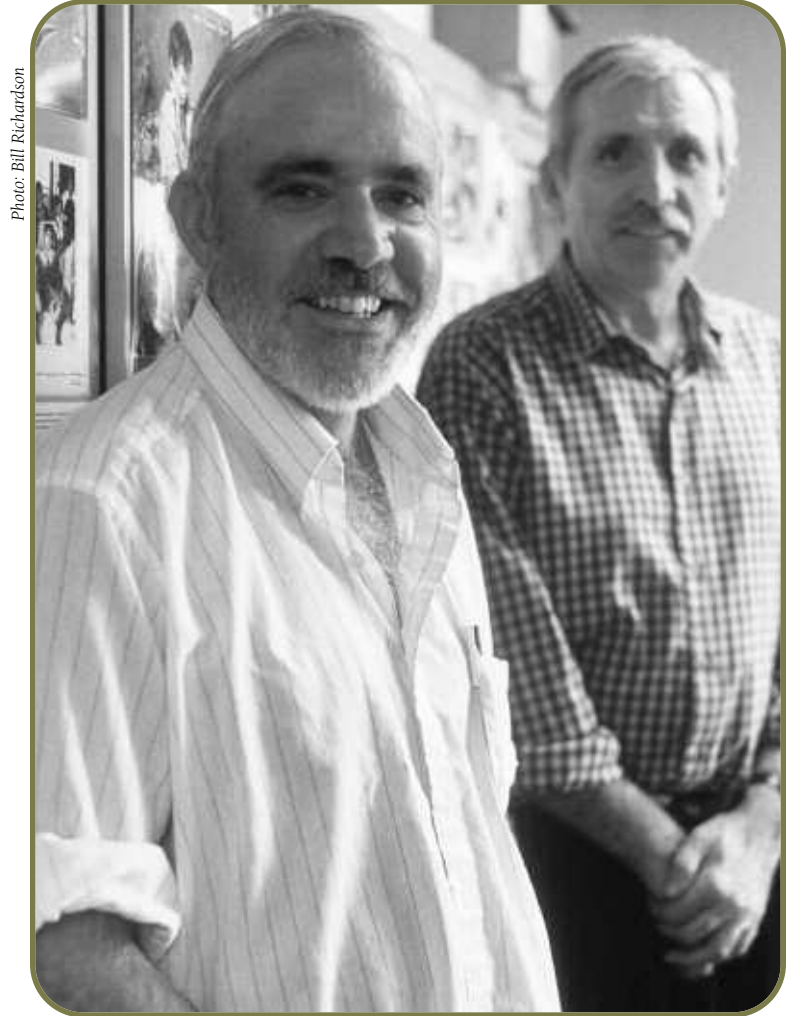
"There has been a revival of this music since 1994, and it grows bigger every year," says

Cola. He attributes the increased interest in Gypsy jazz to the popular 1991 movie *Django's Legacy*, which showcased Babik Reinhardt, Jimmy Rosenberg, and others who have carried on in the Django style. Another film, *Latcho Drom*, a documentary by Tony Gatliff, takes a glimpse into the lives and the music of Gypsies throughout Egypt, Turkey, France, Spain, and elsewhere. Kinnard is delighted with the increased interest. "It's exciting to watch the movement grow and know that I have a little part in it," he says.

At an early age Cola found that he had a drive and talent for business. His first venture was installing front door peepholes in the neighborhoods of Toulon. "I was 16, on my moped. I bought a toolbox and a white frock. I knocked on every door and did all the sales and service," he says. The success of these first efforts was significant enough that he was able to buy his first car.

"I've played these guitars for 40 years. I know the way they should feel and sound."

— Alain Cola



Dell' Arte co-owners, John Kinnard and Alain Cola

Cola's business sense has led him down many different paths, such as seeking out fortune in Canada and in Senegal on the west coast of Africa. Cola spent the late '70s in Italy running his import/export business when he met and fell in love with a young American woman. After they married Cola found himself heading to his new home across the Atlantic.

The couple first moved to Chicago, where his wife Susan was a college student, then to Sacramento. Unable to speak English, which prevented him from starting a business, Cola says, "I was the best dressed dishwasher in town." He moved into the restaurant and food service business when the croissant craze of the early '80s hit, which presented further opportunities that led him to San Diego.

With the death of his father and turning 50, Cola found himself reflecting on his life and what he should do. "I was taking a business class and the teacher said something very profound. He said, 'Do what you like.'" The teacher went on to explain that you're more likely to be successful at something that you're enthusiastic about. For Cola, figuring out his next step was easy. "I like music. I like the guitar. And I love the Gypsy guitar," he says.

"It had to be Gypsy guitar and Gypsy jazz. That's my passion." He thus started Dell' Arte to manufacture and market Gypsy jazz instruments. At the time there was no proven market for the Maccaferri style guitars, but he wasn't worried whether his business venture would succeed. Cola says, "I've run so many businesses in my life, you get a sixth sense for this sort of thing."

Through Roger Beloni, Cola's partner in a Gypsy jazz ensemble, he made contact with a luthier in Tijuana, who agreed to make the Maccaferri copies. Cola was soon driving up and down the California coast with his guitars, getting them placed in some of the finest shops, including the Blue Note in San Luis Obispo. When he took his guitars to Europe he sold 12 on the first marketing tour in his native France.

Business was going well but Cola was unhappy with the business relationship south of the border. Production was often delayed and, "The guitars were lacking that last two percent," he says. Around this time his first customer, Bob Page of Buffalo Brothers, introduced Cola to John Kinnard, who had some of his instruments on consignment at Buffalo Brothers. Their partnership was about to develop.

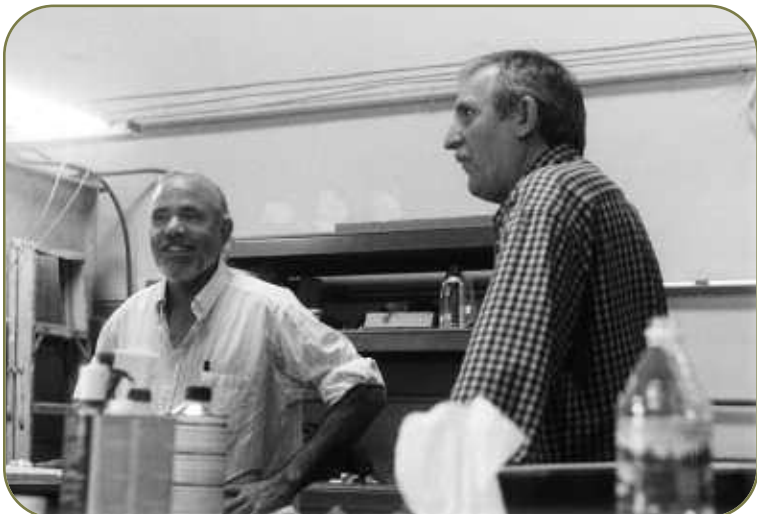
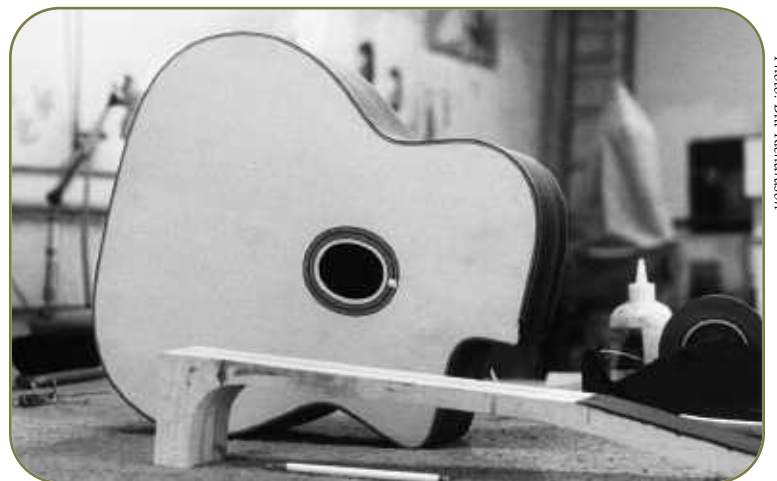


Photo: Bill Richardson



A guitar sound box before the addition of the neck and tailpiece

Photo: Bill Richardson

parlor showcase



John Kinnard's migration to Dell' Arte began back in the '60s at the time American youth saw the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show, grew their hair long, smoked pot, and picked up guitars by the ton. He followed along and began playing guitar when he was 14. At the age of 18 he was inspired to make his first instrument, a lute, when he saw a photograph of Julian Bream holding one of the beautiful baroque instruments.

Being a total autodidact, Kinnard made quite a few mistakes, such as mismatching the grain directions, but he continued working at making instruments. His first tools were those donated to the Christian commune in Encinitas where he was living. Not always the exact saws or files that he needed, and lacking others entirely, he improvised with what he had. Without a vice or other proper instruments to hold the wood, he would fit the pieces, glue them, then hold his handicraft in his hands until the glue set. Becoming a full-time luthier was not Kinnard's idea of a career at the time. "Back then I was just having a lot of fun. I'd pick up wood off the beach and try to make stuff out of that," he says.

After moving to Fresno, Kinnard developed a deeper interest in woodworking, becoming inspired when he began working with Pete Webster, a friend from San Diego who was a third generation woodworker. He started a music store, Heritage Guitar Works, and specialized in instrument repair. He was still teaching himself and picking up what he could from his friends and associates. As though it were as simple as crossing the street, Kinnard explains the independent method by which he learned his trade by saying, "You bust into a Martin [guitar], and it's all there in front of you." His years of work started to pay off. "Around '75 or '76, I built some decent instruments, something I could be proud of," he says.

His artistic bent led him to a position as a professional jeweler and gem cutter, but the business he was involved in went under during the economic downturn of the early '90s. He began working for Taylor Guitars, where he spent four and a half years, and concurrently set up his own shop, selling his instruments on consignment. One day, while working in his shop Cola stopped in. "He just walked in one day and wanted to know where he could get a tailpiece made," Kinnard says. After that initial encounter, Cola kept coming by, letting Kinnard know that he wasn't

happy having to travel to Mexico constantly, and suggesting a business relationship.

Having been burned by partnerships in the past, Kinnard was wary of entering into another, but his mind began to change at a trade show in San Raphael when they shared a table. "My guitars went unnoticed," he says. He saw, however, the enthusiasm for what Cola was offering. "People would jam in the booth we shared. I saw the beginning of a scene," he says.

Cola performs Gypsy jazz with one of his Dell' Arte guitars. In 1993 he was interested in learning more about the blues and found a teacher through an ad in a local paper. That teacher was Beloni, an Italian who was looking to form a

Gypsy jazz band. Cola says it took all of 30 seconds for them to form their musical unit. They began playing at San Diego cafes and coffee shops, with a lot of gigs in Tijuana. The duo was later rounded out with a string bassist and violinist. He performs now with fellow

Frenchman and Django wiz Patrick Berrogain in the Hot Club of San Diego. Joining the two Gypsy guitarists on their disk, *West Swing*, are bassist Kevin Hennessey, Tripp Sprague on tenor sax, John Stubbs on violin, accordionist Lou Fannucchi, and "Bongo" Bob Goldsand and Monette Marino on percussion.

Besides the Maccaferri style, Dell' Arte offers other classic style instruments, such as a dreadnought and a parlor guitar. They also produce a 12-string, called the Leadbelly, which resembles the instrument favored by the folk singer. They sell silver-plated copper-wound steel strings specifically designed for use on their instruments and are the biggest importers of Gypsy Jazz CDs.

"More and more jazz players are picking up this style of music," says Cola. "We'll be there for them. We're in this for the long haul."



Django Reinhardt: The Original Jazz Gypsy

Django Reinhardt was the greatest guitarist of the twentieth century. If you aren't familiar with his music, you should be.

Django's Gypsy heritage was the greatest influence on his music. In fact, Gypsy music was a major influence on all the music of the Mediterranean region, leading to the development of Flamenco and Afro-Cuban music. Traditionally a nomadic people, Gypsies roam Europe, North Africa, and the near East; the largest concentration of them live in Rumania. Although the term Gypsy stemmed from the belief that they are from Egypt, they actually descended from a diaspora in the Indian subcontinent, which occurred around 1,000 A.D. Their language, Romany, is related to Hindi and Punjabi. No one knows the reason for the diaspora, but legend has it that the Gypsies were of such a low caste that they chose to leave rather than live under such repression.

By the fourteenth century Gypsies were in the Balkans, and by the sixteenth century they had made it to Scotland and Sweden. As nomads and forever outsiders, Gypsies have always aroused suspicion, often regarded as congenial thieves. In fact, the term gyp comes from their name. Over the centuries, they have suffered intense persecution. Of the people thrown into concentration camps by the Nazis, Gypsies were considered lower than prostitutes, communists, and homosexuals, and suffered the same slaughter as the Jews. The Nazis killed 400,000 of them.

Reinhardt was born in a Gypsy camp outside Liberchies, Belgium on January 24, 1910. Later moving outside of Paris with his family, he grew up the way Gypsies had for generations, in mobile or semi-mobile encampments of trailers and wagons. In fact, he didn't live in a house until he was 20 years old. Reinhardt had originally taken up the violin, but at age 10 had begun playing the guitar when a neighbor gave him a banjo-guitar. By the time he was 13, he was playing professionally in and around Paris and won a music contest that same year.

At the age of 18 and newly married to his first wife, disaster almost changed Reinhardt's fate. Late one night in his trailer he accidentally ignited a cache of plastic flowers that his wife was planning to sell the next day. The flowers burst into flames, starting a fire that burned his leg so badly, doctors thought they would have to amputate it. The fire also burned and fused the small and ring fingers of Reinhardt's left hand.

Reinhardt talked the doctors into not amputating his leg. The physicians were able to unfuse his two fingers, but they were left permanently semi-paralyzed. Such was the passion of this man for his music, however, that he over-



came his set back. He was able to use the two fingers for some chording, and he developed a technique using only the index and middle fingers for his lead.

Legend has it that when Reinhardt's friend, Emile Savitry, introduced him to the music of jazz in 1930, Reinhardt was so overcome with the beauty of the music that he laid his head in his hands and sobbed. He was soon playing the music of Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington. When Reinhardt formed the Hot Club of Paris Quintet in 1932 with violinist Stephane Grapelli Reinhardt, they became a new sensation. They also recorded a great deal, committing to vinyl such American jazz classics as "Night and Day" and "Saint Louis Blues." Reinhardt also contributed his compositions

"Minor Swing" and the evocative "Nuages."

When World War II broke out while the Quintet was touring England, Grapelli remained in England, but Reinhardt returned to Vichy, France despite the Nazi's hostility toward Gypsies. It is believed that because his talents charmed the Nazi occupiers, his life was spared. Indifferent to politics and often performing for Nazi functions, Reinhardt paid for this after the war, as few were willing to hire someone thought to be a collaborator.

Following the war he scored the music for the film *Le Village de la Colere* and toured the U.S. with Duke Ellington. During the tour he played on borrowed instruments, including an electric guitar for the first time. Using the unfamiliar guitars probably contributed to his uneven playing during the tour, which resulted in unenthusiastic reviews.

On the morning of May 16, 1953, Reinhardt told his wife that he was in pain and was having trouble moving, so he asked her to fetch a doctor. Before the doctor arrived, he felt better and went off to visit friends but collapsed in the street unconscious. Despite being rushed to the hospital, he died that day of a cerebral hemorrhage. He was 43 years old.



The Hot Club of Paris Quintet

Mario Maccaferri: The Man Who Gave Django his Sound

A significant contribution to the unique sound of Django Reinhardt's playing, and for three fifths of the Hot Club Quintet's sound, can be credited to Mario Maccaferri, an Italian-born classical guitarist and instrument maker. The Maccaferri guitar, with its distinctive design and sound, has become synonymous with the Gypsies and French musette music, and it is still copied by guitar makers all over the world.

Born in Italy in 1900, Maccaferri began learning the skills of instrument making at the age of 11. During this period he took an interest in playing classical guitar and at the age of 16 had earned a reputation as a concert guitarist. In 1923 Maccaferri opened a shop in Cento where he produced and sold stringed instruments, including violins, cellos, mandolins, and guitars.

By 1926 he had moved to London, where he was teaching, and developed the initial prototypes for his guitars. Spurring his innovation was the same thing that motivated the development of the Dobro and the electric guitar – more

volume. Another feature of his guitars was the internal tone box, about the size of a mandolin, which helped give the guitar a more even sound on all the strings. The Selmer music company was so impressed that they set him up with his own factory to produce his unusual instruments with the large D-shaped sound hole.

Maccaferri left Selmer in 1934, but the company continued to produce guitars in his style. An accident that permanently injured his arm ended his performing, but Maccaferri continued an active life as an innovator. He produced plastic guitars and violins in the late fifties and later helped develop the cassette tape.



Mario Maccaferri



ramblin'

Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden

THE STANLEY BROTHERS

True influential greats of early bluegrass music can be counted on one hand. Among them are the Stanley Brothers, Carter and Ralph. These two talented brothers and their Clinch Mountain Boys band wrote and performed some of the most influential and lasting mountain bluegrass music ever composed. Dr. Ralph Stanley, as he likes to be known, is still performing today, enjoying a well deserved boost to his long career following his standout performance in the film *O' Brother Where Art Thou?*, singing the song "Oh Death" during the Ku Klux Klan scene, and his marquee performance in the following *Down from the Mountain Tour*. Great stuff to be sure, but to really appreciate the Ralph and Carter Stanley, one needs to look back to their earlier days.

Carter Stanley was born August 27, 1925, followed by his younger brother Ralph on February 25, 1927, in the Virginia hills. Although perhaps not as well known as Bill Monroe or Flatt and Scruggs, the Stanley Brothers deserve to be recognized as part of the early trinity of bluegrass music greats. Carter and Ralph were true Virginia mountain boys who took those mountains, their traditions, and the Appalachian music of the era and wove them into a traditional and authentic bluegrass sound of utter purity, simplicity, and astonishing beauty.

Ralph and Carter came from a musical family; their father sang and their mother played banjo. The brothers performed locally as teenagers before graduating from high school and serving in the army during World War II. Carter was discharged before Ralph and when he returned to the States he got a job singing with Roy Sykes' Blue Ridge Mountain Boys. But he dropped out as soon as Ralph returned from the army in October



of 1946, and the brothers formed the Clinch Mountain Boys. At that time, the Stanley brothers had a

series of gigs, including one at radio station WNVA and another on *Farm and Fun Time*, a program at WCBY. Both earned them a good following, which led to a contract at Rich-R-Tone Records where they cut their first records in 1947. During this period the brothers and their five-piece Clinch Mountain Boys were developing their own style, moving from a traditional string band sound to a Monroe-inspired bluegrass style. During the late '40s and early '50s, several well-respected musicians passed through the band, including Curly Lambert, Pee Wee Lambert, Chubby Anthony, and Bill Napier. The Stanleys were then signed to Columbia in 1948 where they stayed for three years, producing 22 songs that have become bluegrass classics. Briefly in 1951 when the Stanley brothers had broken up for awhile, Carter sang and made a few records with Bill Monroe while Ralph was sidelined for several months following a car crash. The hiatus was short lived, though, and the brothers were back together by the year's end.

In 1953 the brothers moved over to Mercury records. During the mid-'50s they made a series of recordings that included gospel, honky tonk, instrumentals and also cut a number of original songs. At the end of the decade the brothers left Mercury, signed to both Starday and King, and moved to Live Oak, Florida. There they began playing the *Swanee River Jamboree*.

The early 1960s found the brothers performing in concerts and in a number of television shows throughout the South. Notwithstanding their apparent productivity, finances became a problem at that time,



leaving the brothers unable to afford to pay a full band any longer. Nevertheless, they continued to play and tour but rarely outside of the South. Their career was clearly suffering financially, although not artistically, during this period. Throughout the 1960s they also recorded for smaller labels, but sales were few. Then, in 1966, Carter became seriously ill and died that year on



Ralph (left) and Carter, 1950s

December 1, at the young age of 41.

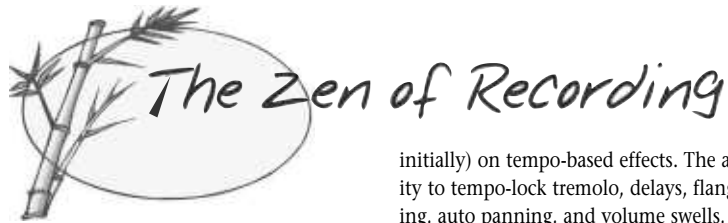
Ralph, typical to his determination and pluck although devastated by the loss of his brother, continued performing with a new lineup of the Clinch Mountain Boys. For the next three decades, he performed with various new band lineups, playing festivals and clubs and recording numerous records. Finally, following the smash hit film *O' Brother*, Ralph began to receive the recognition and financial reward that he so well deserved. It's just too bad that his brother Carter didn't live to see it. If you've never heard classic Stanleys brothers music, do yourself a favor and pick up one of their early CDs.

LOCAL HAPPENINGS

November saw Chris Stuart and Backcountry put on a great show at Acoustic Music San Diego (Carey Driscoll), performing music from their excellent new CD, *Mojave River* (reviewed in this issue, page 13). The San Diego Folk Heritage hosted a rare San Diego appearance by Laurie Lewis and Tom Rozum in Encinitas last month, along with bass player Bill Bryson and guest fiddler Mike Tatar Jr. A few of the songs they played reminded us all how much great music can come from just two folks who really know what they are doing! Finally, the San Diego Bluegrass Society's Bluegrass Extravaganza hosted an event honoring San Diego's queen of bluegrass, Emma Radcliffe, with nine of San Diego's top bands performing classics and originals at St. Marks Church in Clairemont.

Look for a special concert at Templar's Hall in Old Poway Park on January 8, co-sponsored by the SDBS and the Folk Heritage Society. The evening features Virtual Strangers, with an opening set by the Baja Blues Boys rounding out an all-star presentation of local bands. And, of course, you won't want to miss the regular jam sessions every Tuesday evening. For more information see the San Diego Bluegrass Society's calendar at <http://members.aol.com/intunenews/calendar/calendar.htm> or Wayne Rice's KSON Bluegrass Bulletin Board at www.waynerice.com/kson/bgevents.htm Keep on pickin'!

Banjo Facts for WOMEN



by Sven-Erik Seaholm

AIN'T NOTHIN' LIKE THE REAL THING, BUT SOMETIMES . . .

What an interesting time I've had recently, musically speaking.

Dizzy's downtown hosted its second annual NeilFest, a tribute to the songs of Neil Young. Now, I understand that for a lot of people Neil's just not their cup of tea. They're usually the ones who break out into a nasally, whining rendition of "Hey Hey, My My" upon the mere mention of his name. Hey, that's cool, he is an easy target. However, it was the brilliant renderings of his work by a handful of San Diego singer-songwriters (and I'm proud to say, good friends of mine) that profoundly affected me. I sincerely believe it to be one of the top 10 concerts I've ever been to, and I was in the thing. So were Berkley Hart, Gregory Page, Lisa Sanders, The Coyote Problem, John Katchur, Jim Earp, Derek Duplessie, Marcia Claire, Cathryn Beeks and Matt Silvia, along with the *S.D. Troubadour's* own Kent Johnson and Liz Abbott.

Don't get me wrong. It's already happened, so this is no advertisement. Just my personal testament to the depth, breadth, and wealth of talent waiting for fans of every kind of music here in the land of Sun 'n' Fun.

This was given even more poignancy by a trip up to the L.A. Music Awards in Hollywood the following week. Award shows, being what they are, are pretty predictable, and most of us go to support our friends, network, and take in the spectacle. But in my opinion, it seemed for many of the participants that music wasn't as high a priority as was being noticed by the record industry *glitterati* rumored to be in attendance. To that end, everyone looked the part. There was the Sugar Ray-looking dude. The Kid Rock guy. The hot chick with one name. It was all entertaining to a certain extent, but it was musically vacant until the sole San Diegan among the nominees (Michael Tiernan for Male Singer-Songwriter of the Year) performed. There it was again, that connection between artist and audience that is based not on "look at me" but rather "listen to this." Michael won (which is more than I'll probably ever be able to say once this gets published), but it was his uncompromising commitment to his music and his audience that I was most proud of.

Maybe that's why I'm not really into guitar amp simulators. I like to "feel the molecules" — all the little things that happen among the amp, the room, the guitar, and your hands when your plectrum starts those strings in motion. The Line6 Pod, SansAmp, Zoom, Yamaha, Digitech, and a zillion software-based emulators are all useful as textural add-ins, but I wouldn't serve them as the main course. That was until I purchased the AdrenaLinn (which I've since upgraded to the AdrenaLinn II) from Roger Linn Design a couple of years ago.

The unit is a combination amp modeler, drum machine, and multi-effects device, with an emphasis (in my mind,

initially) on tempo-based effects. The ability to tempo-lock tremolo, delays, flanging, auto panning, and volume swells, along with a myriad filtered sequences, offer an overwhelming realm of possibilities in a package the size of a paperback book.

True to its promise, I've found a great many uses for this thing. From trippy vocal treatments (Waterline Drift) to startlingly unique lead guitar tones (butterFace), it has been my secret weapon (until now), but my previously stated experience with amp modelers kept



The AdrenaLinn

me from relying on it for anything other than a dash of spice, not the main course. Then one day something curious happened. I was trying to find a way of lowering the overall level of my band's rehearsal volume and decided to try running through the AdrenaLinn directly to the P.A., bypassing my amp entirely. I dialed up preset #23 Twin Reverb and played a bit. To my amazement, it sounded exactly like my amp, a Peavey Classic 30. I messed around with my overdrive and volume pedals, and found that the sound broke up very naturally right where it was supposed to, without a single unnatural artifact.

While working on a forthcoming album by the Coyote Problem (featuring ace guitar slinger, NeilFest organizer, and all-around cool dude Peter Bolland), the AdrenaLinn played a major role in shaping the album's sound, helping us to tie together the many layers of guitar heroics beautifully without detracting from the



Sven-Erik Seaholm

overall sonic picture.

Later, while working on Mr. Tiernan's album, we actually replaced the undisputed king of rock guitar sounds, a Les Paul through a Marshall, with the AdrenaLinn.

Why? Because (and I've recorded a lot of damn guitars, mind you) it just plain sounded better.

Many of this unit's reviewers (myself included) have focused primarily on the effects offered, and there are plenty on hand. Play one chord through preset #73 Harmonic Minor, and you'll hear just how unusual and downright bitchin' this thing is. Rather than taking up space describing the relatively indescribable, just go find one and scroll through all the presets. There goes your afternoon.

The drum machine is very good sounding and serviceable, if not particularly easy to program, and it doesn't offer pattern chaining for structuring songs. It's mostly there to lay down a groove for you to jam over, and there are some cool beats in there. You can also run the drum machine through the effects (I've come up with some cool loops this way) or have the drum machine modulate the effects without actually hearing the drum sounds at the output. Like I said, lots and lots possibilities here.

For guitarists looking for a way to *rawk* without fear of eviction, or those just looking to play through something different and inspiring, go to www.rlin-ndesign.com and find a dealer near you.

Or if you'd like to hear some great music that is both different and inspiring, welcome to San Diego.

Sven-Erik Seaholm is an award-winning recording artist and producer. He plays in The Wild Truth, and will be performing a solo/acoustic evening Saturday, December 18 at Cosmos Café, 8278 La Mesa Blvd., La Mesa.

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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

Well, I ended up doing *lots* of whistling (see November issue). So much, in fact, that other exercises and duties to which my lips had become accustomed were becoming frightfully neglected. Recordings remained unfinished, correspondence with loved ones became infrequent or nonexistent, and my world-class ministrations in nature's supreme garden were essentially curtailed, leaving me figuratively malnourished and one exquisite lady uncommonly irritable.

After far too much repetition and a vow to avoid it, my repertoire of tunes became noticeably finite. I was running out of songs. My life, I feared, might end up entirely devoid of melody, a commodity on which I had for so long deliriously overdosed.

When I considered the raw, physical act itself, I became nervous. In whistling, my lips were now responsible for most of my intake of oxygen, leaving my superbly trained and toned nasal hairs at risk of atrophy in disuse. Well aware that unfiltered air in today's world invites disease and distemper, it was no surprise that my spirit began growing rebellious, nasty, even cosmetically unattractive.

My obvious loss of valuable *joie de vivre*, even as I whistled, brought forth no small amount of council from trusted friends and frustrated concubines. Bless their hearts, but their independent advice was always summed up in three words. Three worthless portions of rotting squid served to me on a four-syllabled, foul smelling plate.

Get over it.

So now I'm gifted with a companion to the dreaded "cool." One more invisible enemy that can start my enviable blood boiling at its every mention. Try whistling that, Caruso.

Get over it.

A little boy's pet goldfish drowns. There, there, Timmy. Get over it. A

friend loses an expected promotion. Get over it, dude. Charles Pudend of Rockville, Maryland loses his only son to an insane war, his wife is butchered by a maniac, his daughter votes Republican, and he can't find his sunglasses. Hey, Chuck. Get over it.

Surely there's an end to this insanity, I whistled to myself in my nightmares for several weeks.

It finally came, just as surely as the darkest hour always remains the one following the one that came before it. The savior of my melancholy was a certified letter. I, the Hose, had been selected to represent our country in the first International Air-Mic Contest (F.I.W.T.) in Brussels. An offshoot of the Air Guitar craze of the '40s or something, this elite competition involves unamplified singing and invisible microphone technique. In addition to vocal ability, contestants are judged on dexterity, gesture, poise, and something the rules term "evocative envy."

Suddenly I was off to Belgium, unable to speak Belge but delighted to serve my deluded country once again. My chronic whistling was now a rotting memory, my outlook as fresh as my lady's underwear, which once again proudly girded my loins.

Norway's entrant, an Asian-looking fellow named Pablo, was annoyingly overconfident, executing all manner of Roger Daltry chord twirls and pelvic thrusts until finally trapping that rocket-like bit of air in his hairy palm. The conceited spaz didn't even make the top five, which caused him to vow an immediate investigation of the air quality within the judges' heads.

At the hotel the night before the competition, France's entry, a saucy exhibitionist named Anicée, asked if I could help her find something to practice with. I offered myself, thoroughly enjoying her ensuing run-throughs. I wasn't about to give her an edge by pointing out that she seemed to be constantly swallowing the "mic," a deli-



Photo: Brinke Stevens

The scintillating Mr. Sinatra

icious little quirk that actually moved me deeply.

I won the contest by keeping things simple. During my introduction I explained that I would be "wearing" a head mic, since they were becoming so cool everywhere, and if any of the judges had a problem with that, they'd better get over it.

What followed was a triumph; the hard work was left entirely to the judges' own arrogant imaginations. Aside from my five or six quick hand "adjustments" of the "mic" (which had worked so well for Michael Jackson's Lip Sync Super Bowl deception years ago), I was able to concentrate entirely on my emancipated gestures and vocal volcanics, showering the arena with my lava of love.

Gentlemen can understand the unique sensation of feeling like a damn man occasionally. Winning first place in this grueling, dangerous combat instilled in me the confidence that I'm as damn a man as there ever was, at least in my shoes.

And to my sweet female readers: in spite of my international championship, nothing's changed between us. My mouth is even better now — it's smiling and anxious to take on, once again, all comers. And I ain't whistlin' dick, see?



RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

THE STATE OF RADIO

"In North Dakota, where Behemoth Communications (a pseudonym) owns 24 of the state's 80 radio stations, railcars carrying poisonous material overturned in 2002, emitting toxic fumes that killed one person. The police in the town of Minot called a nearby radio station, hoping to broadcast a warning to citizens. But there was no one available to get the word out. Behemoth was filling airtime with on-air personalities who were anchoring from thousands of miles away."

— Forbes magazine
October 18, 2004

In the example above, there were probably two people at each station — one, a rookie to make

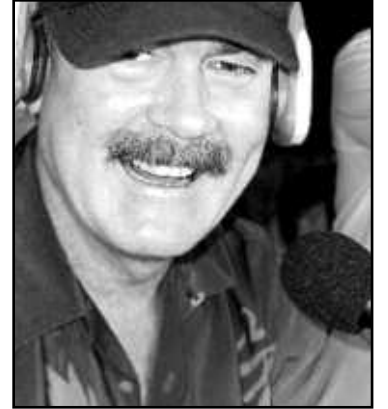
sure the computers were running, and the other, an unpaid intern, to watch. Such is the state of the radio business in the twenty-first century.

Hah!

When I began my glorious radio career in the early 1970s, I had to take a written test in front of an FCC examiner just to get my toe in the door of any radio station ... and I liked it!

Back in those days I actually had to know how radio worked, technically speaking. If the transmitter went off, I could turn it back on. I could raise or lower the power and change the antenna's broadcasting direction.

Computers were also super-expensive then and took up an entire room, so I had to do everything by hand. And I



Jim McInnes

liked it!

And I had to know the music! When I got my first radio gig, the program director said, "Well, you're not that great an announcer, but you sure know your stuff." My first broadcasts were eight hours long, from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m., and I had to improvise the entire show! And I played records! I even had to cue them up myself!

Feh!

And if a train full of beer derailed anywhere within a 60 mile radius, I'd be all over the story, telling my listeners exactly where to go "help."

And I'd meet my listeners face to face because at that time they could just walk into the studio and ask, "What was that Stooges track you just played?"

I would invite anybody I wanted to come to the station for an interview. I talked with religious lunatics, drunken poets, fake concert promoters, and the occasional actual star. My first interview was with Frank Zappa, as a matter of fact. Nice guy ... shorter than I'd imag-

ined, though.

Computers? Deejays, thousands of miles away?

No thanks, pal, I'm in the *real* radio biz!

And I love it!

Hear Jim McInnes weekdays on *The Planet 103.7* 2-7pm and then again on *Sunday nights 6-8pm* for his show *The Vinyl Resting Place*®.



Radio back in the day ...

Alice Stuart, continued from page 12.

Fronting a new and very solid band, Stuart sounded wonderful. Blending folk with funk, her original ballads with the blues, and sounding stronger and better than ever, she treated the audience to her distinctive repertoire, wowing them with her playing, deftly maneuvering up and down the fingerboards of two different electric guitars, bending notes, and intermixing rock 'n' roll licks with tradition-based, acoustic-style finger picking.

Stuart presented lots of new material and also reprised some of her older songs, among them "Follow Me Honey, I'll Turn Your Money Green" (a Furry Lewis song I'd recalled from the Berkeley Festival) and "I'm a Woman" (her exuberant coming-of-age original from the *Full Time Woman* LP). It was clear that these older songs had stood the test of time, due in no small part to Stuart's additions of new musical tweaks and twists to each.

It was also clear that Stuart had lost none of her musical proficiency, none of her originality, and none of her gumption and stage energy. In fact, she seemed livelier and more animated than I remember her being back in the 1970s. With her guitar playing in top form, and her high clear voice a little deeper now (giving it a more resonant quality), Stuart is still musically kicking butt at age 62, announcing in so many words, just as she did back in 1964: *Here I Am*.

In between sets, I finally had the chance to tell Stuart a little about how much her music has meant to me. How her musician-

ship and no-nonsense approach to performing and managing her own career have influenced and inspired my own efforts. But, as it ended up, we didn't talk for long. It was late, and Stuart had to be back onstage. And I had to hit the road to drive back home. So I didn't get to say everything I wanted to.

I wasn't able to tell her how her gutsy approach and stretching of comfortable boundaries had given me the courage to go outside the box sometimes, even if it's scary. (It was she, after all, who inspired me to stand up rather than sit down when I performed and to feel comfortable singing funky, in-your-face blues, typically considered a man's territory.) I didn't have the chance to tell her that she continues to be an inspiration to me and other women performers who, regardless of age, work constantly to hone their craft and take their musicianship and performance seriously.

Brief though it was, my conversation with Stuart was large. I left thinking about ways to get her and her music back down to San Diego — not only for us aging folkies to enjoy, but also for the newer crop of women players just beginning to find themselves musically, to hear her first hand, witness the possibilities, and be amazed and inspired the way my friends and I were 40 years ago.

Maybe, if and when Stuart comes back down here, she and I will be able to finish the conversation we began at Patrick's II. In any event we'll be there to hear her, to listen and enjoy and marvel, and to stir it up a little.

In the meantime, you go, Alice!

For more on Alice Stuart, visit www.alicestuart.com.

ALICE STUART DISCOGRAPHY

All the Good Times

- LP, Arhoolie F4002/1964
- CD re-issue, Arhoolie CD9034/2002 (8 bonus tracks added)

Full Time Woman

- LP, Fantasy 8403/1970

Believing (with Snake)

- LP, Fantasy 9412/1972

Fritz the Cat Soundtrack Album

- LP, Fantasy F436/1972 (Stuart sings title track with Eddie Ottenstein, Lee Charlton, and Mel Graves)
- CD re-issue, Fantasy 24745/1996 (re-issued along with *Heavy Traffic* soundtrack)

Really Good (with Prune Rooney)

- CD, Country con Fusion/1996

Crazy with the Blues (with Prune Rooney)

- CD, Country con Fusion 102/1999, 2000

Can't Find No Heaven

- CD, Burnside 44/2002

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the highway's song

i'll have what she's having: the amazing alice stuart

by Patty Hall

It was the mid-1980s. Each time I'd come back to the Bay Area from Nashville (where I'd moved several years before) to visit family, the drill was always the same. I'd scrounge around for that week's *San Francisco Chronicle's* Sunday entertainment section, otherwise known as the Pink Section and, one by one, comb through all the music listings. First, the San Francisco clubs. Then, the ones in the East Bay and Marin County, searching for one name. But each time the outcome was the same. Nothing.

Years passed and I continued this homecoming ritual until finally, by the early 1990s, I gave up looking. Either, I reasoned, she had left the performing world for good. Or moved away from the Bay Area. Or gone underground. In this yet-to-be Googled world, she was as good as gone. And it saddened me to think I might never again catch another live performance of the one who had first inspired me to pick up a guitar and really play it: a gutsy, talented musician named Alice Stuart.



Alice Stuart in the 1960s

I first saw Stuart in 1964 at the Berkeley Folk Festival, a West Coast musical gathering founded and orchestrated by Barry Olivier, the affable Bay Area folk music impresario with the enormous laugh. Stuart was one of the up-and-coming folk artists Olivier liked to fea-

ture alongside the more established festival headliners. That meant that at this festival, Stuart's first, she would be sharing the bill with such folk royalty as the New Lost City Ramblers, Mississippi John Hurt, and the reigning queen herself, Joan Baez. In addition to several concerts, Stuart was slated to participate in a couple of festival workshops and round-robins, which took place in the U.C. Student Union. When she stepped up to the microphone, her slight frame dwarfed by an enormous acoustic guitar, and began working her way through an instrumental introduction, it was obvious that something unusual and unexpected was happening.

This young woman with the big guitar, was actually *playing* the thing. And not just playing it. Playing the hell out of it. Serious blues runs. Intricate finger picking. With an authenticity and forthrightness that made even the most distracted members of the audience snap to and take notice.

When Stuart began singing, her voice rang out resonant, clear, and strong — original and perfectly suited to the material she delivered that afternoon, which included a sampling of blues, ballads, and vaudeville-flavored novelty numbers. It was as if to say, "I may be young, my voice high, and my delivery simple, but — *Here-I-Am*. Before the workshop ended that afternoon, the 22-year-old Stuart had won over more than a few new fans at the Berkeley Folk Festival.

Stuart was born in Seattle on June 15, 1942 and raised by her aunt in the small Washington town of Lake Chelan. Her high school graduation gift was a baritone ukulele, which she used to back herself up with for a set of folksongs she debuted in 1961 at the Pamir House, a Seattle coffee joint.

It was there Stuart met some fellow musicians who eventually helped her enlarge her repertoire, and she soon retired her uke in favor of a guitar. She worked tirelessly to expand her song list, listening to some of the blues greats and mastering their guitar work. She teamed up, in a few configurations, with

other musicians, and by the summer of 1963, Stuart was a regular performer on the weekly KING-TV hootenanny variety show.

Later that same year, Stuart moved to Los Angeles where, among other things, she married and began performing around town. One evening following a performance, she was introduced to Barry Olivier, who was so impressed with her style and talent, he booked her for the 1964 Berkeley Folk Festival.

It's hard to put into words what it was, exactly, that impressed me so much about Stuart Stuart that first afternoon at the Berkeley Folk Festival. Here I was, a 15-year-old wannabe folkie from the East Bay suburbs, who had only recently retired her own ukulele in favor of a banjo, thinking it would be easier to play than a guitar because it had one less string. What did I know?



I was also fairly new to real folk music. The year before, I'd won a set of series tickets to the 1964 Berkeley Folk Festival from KPFA radio, and it was there that I'd experienced that chicken-skinned state of bliss, an emotional-visceral response to hearing Cajun and real blues and old-time music and real topical songs for the first time. This primal experience shook me to the core and so, with a hunger I couldn't seem to satisfy, much less name, I'd convinced my parents to spring for a set of series tickets to attend the festival. Whatever was on the bill that coming year — I wanted to be immersed in it again. If it was folk music, bring it on! Serve it up! I'll take it!

So, when I heard Stuart that sleepy summer afternoon in the Cal Student Union, my goose bumps on the rise once again, I decided right there, by hook or crook, I was going to learn to play guitar just like *her*.

And I wasn't alone. There were other high school girls at the festival that year, shy-but-aspiring musicians and singers, there to drink it all in just like me. I met and got to know some of them, and we all agreed that Stuart was the one to watch, the one whose style and musical expertise we all wanted to emulate.

To see a woman only a few years older than ourselves, singing with such confidence and playing with such proficiency, was transforming. We didn't realize it at the time (and, I daresay, the term was not in high use in 1964), but those of us who harbored dreams of moving beyond humming and strumming to more serious musicianship were adopting our first musical *role model*. As young and inexperienced as we all were, we somehow knew intuitively that there were things that set Stuart's music apart from the many other female folksingers of that era. Not only could she fingerpick and play the blues with flair,



Alice Stuart today

she wasn't afraid to sing out and present her material in a simple, unadorned, authentic style all her own.

Following the 1964 festival, Chris Strachwitz recorded Stuart on his Berkeley-based Arhoolie records label and later that year, her inaugural album, *All the Good Times* was issued. After only a few months, my music buddies and I had nearly worn the disc out, replaying it over and over again in order to master guitar parts and learn lyrics. We were avid learners, and Stuart had set the bar at a lofty level.

The next time I saw Stuart was the summer of 1967 in, of all places, Virginia City, Nevada. I was traveling with my family in the Tahoe area and, after spending the morning poking around the back streets, we'd wandered into a local watering hole called the Red Dog Saloon to whet our whistles. And there, on a flier, was Alice Stuart's name.

I couldn't believe it. My musical guru? In an old Nevada silver-mining town? And here I'd convinced myself that 18-year-old daughters shouldn't travel with their parents on boring family vacations. Mom! Dad! All is forgiven! Just bring me back to see Stuart's show.

And so, come back we did, my family and I. Still painfully bashful, I didn't speak up or but instead enjoyed Stuart's performance from a back table, pinching myself every so often to make sure I wasn't dreaming. I was getting to hear my role model, and she was every bit as good as I'd remembered.



Alice Stuart in the 1970s

By 1972, Stuart had two more albums to her name: *Full Time Woman* and *Believing*, both on Fantasy records. (see discography). Like her earlier Arhoolie album, I nearly wore these LPs out. During those years, I saw her perform a couple more times, witnessing her transformation musically and personally from a long-haired folksinger into to a rock-and-rolling, motorcycle-riding mama, with a serious 'fro hairdo, and her own kick-ass band called Snake.

Though my female music friends and I had remained for the most part in the folkie

fray, Stuart's gutsiness and attitude spoke to us. She was still rooted in tradition, and still sang with a high, clear, folk-inspired voice. And she still played guitar better than any other woman musician we knew.

So this is why, when the 1980s rolled around, I'd taken to scouring the *San Francisco Chronicle's* entertainment section on those visits home from Nashville because I still looked up to Stuart more than ever. Her albums became beacons of hope during some tough years spent in Music City, where it's easy for a folk player — even a devoted and proficient one — to get discouraged.

Fast forward to 2000 or thereabouts. I was back living in California, and my first real, Internet-ready computer had been delivered. Once I'd mustered the courage to merge onto the information highway, it didn't take long before I found my long-lost musical mentor.

Stuart, like many other musicians, had her own website (www.alicestuart.com). I read what she'd been up to and found to my delight that she was performing music and actually had been for some time. (Where had I been? Nashville may be Music City, but...)

I learned lots I hadn't known about Stuart. For instance, she'd been in on the formation of Frank Zappa's Mothers of Invention in 1966 (just before I'd seen her in Virginia City). I found out that she had toured abroad and that, through the years, she'd performed with the likes of Van Morrison, Michael Bloomfield, Elvin Bishop, Jerry Garcia, and John Prine. She had also appeared on the *Fritz the Cat* soundtrack album and had been a guest on the *George Carlin Show*.

I discovered that she'd recorded several more CDs — ones I didn't know about — with bass-player and singer-songwriter Prune Rooney, with a brand new solo CD soon due. I couldn't help but note that she was systematically amassing a sizable number of well-deserved music awards. And, based once again in her home town of Seattle, performed almost every night of the week when she wasn't on tour.

Stuart had, in fact, taken a break from the music scene in the 1980s and early 1990s, during which time I could find no trace of her. But suffice it to say — as her web site attests — Alice Stuart was back in a big way.

That brings us up to several months ago. I knew from talking with my old friend Lou Curtiss that Stuart had recently performed in San Diego at the Adams Avenue Roots Festival. But she hadn't been back since. So last September, when I heard she would be appearing in San Diego, I was thrilled.

Following a successful Sunday night concert at Humphrey's-by-the-Bay, opening for her old friend Huey Lewis, Stuart was slated to perform a couple nights later at Patrick's II, a downtown Irish pub. And so I ventured down to the Gaslamp and, finally — after many years — I got to see Stuart live again. It was an amazing evening.

Continued on page 11.

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Heloise Love



Acoustic Eidolon

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Saturday, December 11

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Simeon Flick Indigo Child

by Phil Harmonic

It seems to me that Simeon Flick combines elements from just about every musical style you can think of on his 10-song CD, *Indigo Child*. But he does it with subtlety and nuance to create music that is very pleasant to listen to, and the influences of rock 'n' roll, jazz, gospel, jug band, folk, ballads, and pop melt together to produce an original sound all his own. Like Cat Stevens' music of the early '70s, you really can't categorize it or pigeon hole it to one specific style. The entire CD has a rich, full sound that I credit to the producer and arranger — also Flick, besides writing and performing all the songs.

As with all *good music*, *Indigo Child* gets better with each listening. I love it when that happens, because there is nothing better than the excitement of discovering new music and the talent behind it.

Flick's vocals are exceptional — supported by lush arrangements that overlap the glistening background harmonies. An accomplished musician, he plays every instrument on the CD with only a few exceptions, including 6- and 12-string acoustic and electric guitars, fretless bass, drums, djembe, and an array of other assorted percussion instruments.

The production of these arrangements is also top notch. Flick captures the eclectic essence of his own performance, especially on "Surrender Song" and "Ingenua," which is not listed on the CD cover. "Indigo Child" and "Contemplation No. 3: River" are two tasty instrumentals that actually help accent the vocals on the songs that follow. A nice touch, which serves a purpose in addition to contributing to a well thought out song order. This CD, if you could visualize it with your ears, has one big aura. Listen, and I think you'll agree.

Indigo Child is available at www.simeonflick.com and www.cdbaby.com.



Chris Stuart & Backcountry Mojave River

by Phil Harmonic

When I see that Chris Stuart & Backcountry have come out with a new CD, I wonder how in the hell are they going to top the last one? Then I get it, put it on, and before the end of the first track, I find myself running to the kitchen to get some spoons to play, even though I've never, ever, played them before. That's the kind of effect that Chris Stuart (guitar, vocals), Janet Beazley (banjo, vocals), Mason Tuttle (bass, harmony vocals), and Ivan Rosenberg (resonator guitar) create with their music.

Mojave River is dynamic and full of energy and emotion, with depth that penetrates your inner being and may inspire you to do something new — just like I thought I could play the spoons. You'll get moving with "Dollar Bill Blues" or "Don't Throw Mama's Flowers Away," or slip into a melancholy feel and release a tear or two with "Rider on This Train" or "Mojave River," a song with three-part harmony that will melt away your emotional barricades to let out those pent-up feelings.

"Ullapool/The Sleeping Tide" is a soothing, soulful instrumental that is the eye of the storm in this hurricane of a CD. From that peaceful mood to "Buttermilk Pie," and you're right back in the storm. Played and sung to perfection, this is some of the purest roots music, that you'll ever hear, thanks to the fast-pickin' Beazley and Stuart's ability to produce and infuse their sound onto a CD. It's awe-inspiring and you never seem to tire of listening to it because of this group's ability to make new things sound familiar and familiar things sound new. Chris Stuart & Backcountry are just another example of the exceptional talent that permeates San Diego County. I remember reviewing Stuart's solo CD and when another article about him in this paper needed a byline, my throat easily resonated "From the Heart this Songwriter Comes."

Mojave River is available at www.backcountry.com and www.cdbaby.com.



Tom Boyer & Friends A New Day

by Phil Harmonic

When you're in the mood to buy a new CD, look no further than *A New Day* with Tom Boyer and Friends. There are 16 songs by 16 different artists, some of whom are San Diego's best guitarists and play mostly instrumental cuts. When Boyer, who is an incredibly accomplished guitarist, was diagnosed with throat cancer this year, friends wanted to help. And that they did. Studio time by Avoca Sound Studios; graphic design, production, and Cairney Hill Music representation by Christopher Dean; and CD manufacturing, printing and packaging by RJR Digital Media were all donated, making it possible to produce 1,000 copies of this limited edition. The proceeds will go to Children's Hospital Cancer Center, Tom's choice.

Boyer starts off with "Cop-Out" and quickly shows why he is one of the best players around. Marion Law sings "Relativity," one of the album's three vocal tracks — the other two are by Suzanne Reed and Patty Hall. Other contributors include Brian Baynes, D.R. Auten, Mike Nelson, Pat Kirtly, Christopher Dean, Jim Soldi, Sharon Whyte, Mark Twang, Andy Robinson, Edgar Cruz, Kev, Doyle Dykes, Greg Campbell, and Jim Earp.

You'll hear guitar virtuosity and talent that you may not have been aware of in the San Diego area. This is a listening treat any time of day. Each track, a selection donated by the artist, is genuine and played from the heart. It is just wonderful to see the music community rally behind someone so deserving as Tom Boyer.

The *San Diego Troubadour* wishes Tom comfort and love. We hope Tom can perform next year at the Adams Avenue Roots Festival in April.

This incredible CD is available through Cairney Hill Music. Phone Christopher Dean at 619/258-2699, email info@cairneyhill.com, or visit www.cairneyhill.com.



Jefferson Jay Great Story

by Tom Paine

I really love this CD cover. But if that's the best thing a critic has to say, we have problems.

Part jam band, part garage band, part hippie kitsch, Jefferson Jay throws music together like a neo-alchemist, hoping to turn lead into gold. But this record wasn't quite ready to leave the laboratory.

First let's talk about the strengths of *Great Story*. Jay recruited 14 brave souls to render his musical fantasies onto the hard drive. This yeoman's task is ably, even skillfully, met, with occasional flashes of instrumental brilliance. Aces like Simeon Flick (guitar) and Johnny Ciccolella (keyboard, flamenco guitar) stand out.

What's missing is the holy trinity of strong song writing, strong singing, and that ever-elusive gold known as chemistry. The songs mostly feel like jams worked up on the spot, with simple lyrics forced onto the flow. At times there are jarring prog-rock tempo changes. Then things drop back into their usual listless meander, like drunken crabs scuttling across the floor in all directions. No one seemed to be too interested in tightening things up, so maybe the loose, jangly feel is intentional. Or maybe they were just in a hurry to get out of there.

The first line of the title song promises to "tell you a great story." However, there are no stories in these lyrics, let alone great ones. Instead, Jay uses precious studio time to revisit the tired themes that have always inhabited hippie rock: Love is better than stuff, and we're all superficial, money-grubbing hypocrites. Jay reminds us in "Dragonbreath" that "You try to fill your needs with plastic tans and DVDs. You only get one life, it's up to you to do what's right. Is money everything, or simply paper green?" Later in "Simple Song" he hammers on the same theme: "All this plastic stuff must go away, love is the only way." Got that, kids?

But worst of all, behind the ersatz romanticism lies a condescending cynicism—that the transformation he pines for really isn't possible. People are just too stupid. Or maybe it's just me.

Great Story is available online at www.jeffersonjay.com



Rob Mehl Just Give Me the Keys

by Tom Paine

I tried to not like this record and failed miserably.

It's just that the whole package was a little off-putting—the carefully calculated beach chic; the whole Jimmy Buffet wannabe thing; that edgeless, non-threatening, gift-shop ready polish. Cute. And the pun in the title—as in Florida Keys. Get it?

But Rob Mehl is no poser. He doesn't want to be anyone but himself. And this album is no joke. This is the real thing. His genuine love of sailing, the sun, the sand, and the sea permeates every note of this beautifully produced album. If you're looking for dark, cynical, hip and ironic, this ain't it. Mehl seems incapable of guile. He loves what he loves and doesn't care who knows it.

Together with producer and arranger Allan Phillips, Mehl has assembled some of San Diego's finest musicians and recorded them beautifully. Marc Twang (guitar), Jaime Valle (guitar), Eve Selis (background vocals) and Dennis Caplinger (dobro, mandolin, and violin) contribute their usual brilliance. Producer Allan Phillips handles the bass, drums, percussion, accordion, and steel drums. Mattie Mills adds additional vocals, Tripp Sprague plays harmonica and shakuhachi, while John Rekevics plays saxophone and flute. In the center of the stream, Mehl's easy-going, warm voice and able acoustic guitar playing hold the ship on course like a keel.

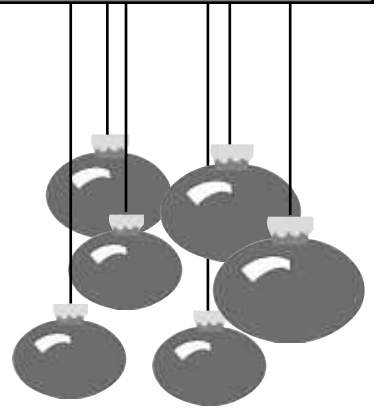
If it all seems a little safe and tame, well then, mission accomplished. Like his mentors Jimmy Buffet (obvious) and John Denver (not so obvious), Mehl doesn't want to challenge or push you. He wants to give you a safe place to fall. Life is hard enough. There has to be room for art that comforts.

Explicitly escapist, *Just Give Me the Keys* offers an exit strategy from the harsh realities of modern mainland life. Mehl's warm, simple, slow-paced vision of the good life, island style, is so real, it'll leave sand in your shoes. *Just Give Me the Keys* is a safe harbor when the hard winds blow.

This CD is available online at www.robmehl.com.

'round about

DECEMBER CALENDAR



WEEKLY

every sunday

7th Day Buskers/Gully on alt. Sundays, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.
Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Traditional Irish Music, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 3pm.
Irish Dance, Dublin Square, 554 Fifth Ave., 3pm.
Celtic Ensemble, Twiggs, 4pm.
Traditional Irish Music, R. O'Sullivan's, Grand Ave., Escondido, 4pm.
Traditional Irish Music & Dance w/ Cobblestone, 5-6:30pm/Boxty Band, 6:30-10pm., The Field, 544 Fifth Ave.
Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss, 8-10pm, KSDS (88.3 FM).
The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice, 10-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every monday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Open Mic Night, Lestat's, 7:30pm.

every tuesday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Traditional Irish Music, The Ould Sod, 7pm; Blarney Stone, Clairemont, 8:30pm.
Comedy Night, Lestat's, 9pm.

every wednesday

Joe Rathburn, The Galley, 550 Marina Pkwy, Chula Vista, 6:30-9:30pm.
Pride of Erin Ceili Dancers, Rm. 204, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, 7pm.
High Society Jazz Band, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 7pm.
Sue Palmer Supper Club w/ Deeja Marie & Sharon Shufelt, Caffe Calabria, 3933 30th St., 6-8pm.
Open Mic Night, The Packing House, 125 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 8pm.
Open Mic Night, Twiggs, 8:30pm.
Highland Way, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 8:30pm.
Pat Molley, Egyptian Tea Room, 4644 College Ave., 9:30pm.

every thursday

Irish Music Class, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 7-8pm.
Sue Palmer, Martini's, 3940 4th Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic Night, Just Java Cafe, 285 Third Ave., Chula Vista, 7-10pm.
Traditional Irish Music, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 8:15pm.
Joe Byrne, Blarney Stone, Clairemont, 8:30pm. (also Fri. & Sat.)
Swing Thursdays w/ Hot Rod Lincoln, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.
Brehon Law, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 9pm (also Fri. & Sat.).

every friday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
California Rangers, McCabe's, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.
Irish Folk Music, The Ould Sod, 9pm.
Open Mic Night, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.

every saturday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Talent Showcase w/ Larry Robinson & the Train Wreck Band, The Packing House, 125 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 8pm.
Christian/Gospel Open Mic, El Cajon. Info: J.D., 619/246-7060.



wednesday • 1

Mike Keneally/Steph Johnson/Kelly Rudick, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 2

Tom Russell, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. Info: 619/303-8176.
Kenny Loggins, Sycuan Casino, 8pm.
Danielle LoPresti, Twiggs, 8:30pm.
Eddie from Ohio/Jane Lui, Lestat's, 9pm.

friday • 3

Jazz Concert Benefit for S.D. Acad. Music Council w/ Peter Sprague/Kevyn Lettau/Mark Lessman/Tripp Sprague/John Leftwich/Kelly Jocoy, Encinitas Comm. Ctr., 1140 Oakcrest Park Dr., Encinitas, 7pm.
Sue Palmer Trio, Nordstrom's, Horton Plaza, 7pm.
Rookie Card Sidewalk Players/Marie Haddad, North Park Vaudeville & Candy Shop, 2031 El Cajon Blvd., 7:30pm & 10pm.
Int'l Silver Strings Submarine Band w/ Billy Watson, Bookworks/Pannikin, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Paul Viani Quartet CD Release, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Sarah McLachlan/Chris Isaak/Duran Duran/Alanis Morissette/John Mayer/Jamie Cullum, Cox Arena, SDSU.
Speechwriters LLC/Will Edwards/Curtis Peoples, Twiggs, 8:30pm.
Big Sandy & his Flyrite Boys/Golden Hill Ramblers/Todd Steadman, Casbah, 9pm.
Seth Horan/Aaron Bowen/Raining Jane, Lestat's, 9pm.

saturday • 4

Men of Worth/Heloise Love, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm. 858/566-4040.
Celtic Christmas w/ Jim Earp, Celticana, Carlsbad Village Theater, 2822 State St., Carlsbad, 8pm.
Industrial Jazz Group, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Hugh Gaskins/Renata Youngblood/Curtis Peoples/Rick Rutti/Speechwriters LLC, Twiggs, 8:30pm.
Baja Blues Boys, Patricks, 13314 Poway Rd., Poway, 9pm.
Alfred Howard & K23 Orchestra/J. Turtle, Lestat's, 9pm.
Pop Rocks, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 7pm.

sunday • 5

Sue Palmer Quartet w/ April West, Bookworks, Flower Hill, Del Mar, 3pm.
Sue Palmer Trio/Pieces/Deeja Marie, Dizzy's, 7pm.
Joe Rathburn, Dark Thirty Productions House Concert, Lakeside, 7:30pm.
Pete Thurston Night w/ Christmas Gala/Gregory Page, Lestat's, 9pm.

tuesday • 7

Lighthouse, NCBFC mtg., Roundtable Pizza, Ash & Washington, Escondido, 7:30pm.

wednesday • 8

Richard Smith/Aaron Till, Dizzy's, 8pm.
John Doe/Jill Sobule, Casbah, 9pm.
Bad Credit/Reeve Oliver, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 9

Richard Smith & Aaron Till/Jim Earp, Valley Music, 530 E. Main St., El Cajon, 7:30pm. Info: 619/444-3161.
Jack Williams, Meeting Grace House Concert, Normal Heights, 8pm. lizzie@meetinggrace.com
S.D. Songwriters Guild, Claire de Lune, 2906 University Ave., 9pm.
Dave Barnes/Renata Youngblood/Matt Wertz/Leah, Lestat's, 9pm.

friday • 10

Paul Seaforth/Peter Sprague/Bob Magnuson, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Earl Thomas, Bookworks/Pannikin, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Ashley Matte/Dave's Son, Twiggs, 8:30pm.
Coyote Problem/Shawn Rohlf/Victoria Robertson, Lestat's, 9pm.
Joey Show, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.

saturday • 11

Eidolon, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm. 858/566-4040.
Pacific Camerata, St. George's Serbian Orthodox Church, 3025 Denver St., 7:30pm. 619/527-4457.
Burrito Deluxe w/ Garth Hudson, Sneaky Pete, Carlton Moody, Stick Davis, Rick Lonow, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. Info: 619/303-8176.

The Hank Show, Pine Hills Lodge, 2960 La Posada Way, Julian, 8pm. 760/765-1100.
Mary Dolan/Kim McLean/Devon O'Day, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 8pm.

José Sinatra & the Troy Dante Inferno, Claire de Lune, 2906 University Ave., 9pm.
Charles McPherson Quintet, Dizzy's, 8 & 10pm.

Martin Storrow/Just John & the Dude/Brandon Mayer, Twiggs, 8:30pm.

Berkley Hart Holiday Party, Java Joe's Pub, 6344 El Cajon Blvd., 9pm.

Edie Carey/Saba/Tom Brosseau, Lestat's, 9pm.

The Freemonts, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.

sunday • 12

John Gorke, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. Info: 619/303-8176.
Asylum Street Spankers, Casbah, 9pm.
The Shellys/The Shrines, Lestat's, 9pm.

monday • 13

Red, White & Blues Concert/Food Drive/Fundraiser, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, Shelter Island, 7pm.

wednesday • 15

James Kersans/Just John/C.J. Hutchins/Butch Berry, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 16

Pacific Camerata, S.D. Museum of Art, Balboa Park, 7pm. 619/696-1966.
Benefit for Homeless Teens w/ Carol Ames, Christopher Dale, Cathryn Beeks, Blue, 21 Grams, HM75, the Fryday Band, Tapwater, Annie Bethancourt, Humphrey's, Shelter Island, 7pm.
Acoustic Underground, Lestat's, 9pm.

friday • 17

Sue Palmer Trio, Nordstrom's, Horton Plaza, 4pm.
Strangewoods, Valley Music, 530 E. Main St., El Cajon, 7:30pm. Info: 619/444-3161.
Primasi, Bookworks/Pannikin, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.
Jay Mathes/Lauren DeRose/Carlos Olmeda/Jack the Original, Twiggs, 8:30pm.
Jefferson Jay, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 5960 El Cajon Blvd., 9pm.
Robin Henkel, Lestat's, 9pm.
Big Daddy Orchestra, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.

saturday • 18

Rosie Flores, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. Info: 619/303-8176.
Deborah Liv Johnson, Bamboo Yoga Studio, Coronado, 8pm.
Gilbert Castellanos Sextet, Dizzy's, 8:30pm.
Randi Driscoll/Shining Thru/Terra Naomi, Twiggs, 8:30pm.
Allison Lonsdale, 6-8pm, **Jose Sinatra/Andrew Foshee**, 9-11pm, Lestat's.

sunday • 19

The Nervous/Chasing Paper, Lestat's, 9pm.

monday • 20

Rick Helzer/Gunnar Biggs, Dizzy's, 8pm.

wednesday • 22

Annie Bethancourt/The Natters, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 23

Drummer Brett Sanders & Good and the Plenty Project, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Gregory Page & Friends, Lestat's, 9pm.

sunday • 26

Emerson Band, Lestat's, 9pm.

wednesday • 29

David Negrette/Nate Souders/Joey Carano/Dave Pschaida/Doug Walker, Dizzy's, 8:30pm.
Dustin Shey/Greg Laswell/Molly Johnson, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 30

Mt. Egypt/Manic Swing, Lestat's, 9pm.
Band in Black (Johnny Cash tribute), The Firehouse, 7877 Herschel, La Jolla, 8pm.

saturday • 31

Baja Blues Boys, First Night Escondido, 7pm. www.firstnightescondido.com.
Blue Largo, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.



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ks & Matt Silvia



Berkley Hart w/ the Coyote Problem



C.J. Hutchins



Gregory Page



John Katchur



Page Drums Grand Opening



Jose Sinatra



Lisa Sanders



Kev at benefit for Tom Boyer

tom boyer



Tom Boyer



Terri Hendrix & Lloyd Maines



Jim Earp



Jim Soldi at benefit for Tom Boyer



Mississippi Allstars



Liz Abbott & Chuck Schiele on Joan Rubin's Locals Only radio show, KKSM

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HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

During the 1930s you could find an abundance of live music in San Diego. This tuba player, judging from the tux he's wearing, was a member of a dance band that played in ballrooms, theaters, and clubs around town. Look closely and you'll see the photographer's reflection in the mirror!

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For further information, call (619) 232-6203 or go to www.sandiegohistory.org.