

# T SAN DIEGO ROUBADOOR

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



June 2005

[www.sandiegotroubadour.com](http://www.sandiegotroubadour.com)

Vol. 4, No. 9

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## MUSIC FOR JUNE

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FRIDAY, JUNE 3  
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ben ingraham

SATURDAY, JUNE 4  
benchmark

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8  
radio free earth 8:30pm

FRIDAY, JUNE 10  
head first 7:30-11pm

SATURDAY, JUNE 11  
i witness 8:30-10:30pm

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15  
hot rod hooligans 8:30pm

FRIDAY, JUNE 17  
john bosley & leigh taylor 7:30-11pm

SATURDAY, JUNE 18  
mountains of europe impulse

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22  
benchmark 8:30pm

FRIDAY, JUNE 24  
north forty 8-10pm

SATURDAY, JUNE 25  
larry & Joann Sinclair & friends 7:30-11pm

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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 alternative country, Americana, roots, folk, blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass. To entertain, educate, and bring together players, writers, and lovers of these forms; to explore their foundations; and to expand the audience for these types of music.

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

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

**To Whom It May Concern:**

For some time I have played the electric organ. In the last three years, I have also taken up the banjo, guitar, harp, and have dabbled with the cello. Because I love music so much, I am constantly attempting to find musical performances and fellow musicians with which to connect. In joining the San Diego Bluegrass Society, I quickly was made aware of your publication. I am thrilled with all of the variety of resources that you list. I think that a newsletter covering the vast array of musical expressions in our area is a wonderful asset. However, since joining the San Diego Theatre Organ Society a couple of years ago, I have wondered why the information about all of the different venues is not available in a single publication. Musicians are always looking for variety and new means of expression. I, myself, have been on an eclectic quest for the last couple of years to put the right music on the right instrument. With the decrease in popularity of certain forms of musical entertainment, our musical community is losing various

**MAILBOX**

musical art forms as the computer age takes over. Numbers of participants in concerts and performances are diminishing. Therefore, it is becoming more and more apparent that the variety of musical venues need to pull together to share in their needs.

I recently learned from my harp instructor at Harp Haven that she spends an enormous amount each month to advertise in the local telephone book. I suggested to her that she possibly contact you as another form of advertising. Even though the slant is a bit different, I am also wondering if the Theatre Organ Society hasn't missed a bet by not forming some sort of alliance with your publication. I understand your emphasis on folk music; however, part of Americana is the old theater pipe organ that used to be present when our parents went to the silent films

as children. Most of those theater organs have been destroyed but there are a few individuals who still try to preserve that piece of American history for us all. I do not feel that the theater organ is all that far removed from the rest of our musical instruments that, had we not taken an active interest in, would have faded away a long time ago.

In all sincerity,  
Phyllis Weber



*Celebrate the Arts in June*

by Paul Hormick

June doesn't have the best of reputations here in San Diego. Winter and spring get a little chilly, with a fair amount of rain; and we have trouble with fires in the fall. But June in San Diego is the month of gloom. While much of the rest of the country is enjoying warmth and sunshine, we're under skies the color of stale Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup. Meteorology aside, June can still be a time for fun, art and music. Three arts and music events this month will help you forget about the weather.

**International Village Celebration**

Besides immigrants from other parts of the country, the rust belt, and other places "back East," San Diego has drawn folks from all over the globe. Whether you're talking about Micronesia, Vietnam, Russia, or Guatemala, it would be difficult to think of a country or area of the globe that does not have a representative living in our county. On June 4, the multiethnic-multicultural neighborhood of City Heights promotes San Diego's international heritage and customs with its International Village Celebration. Why spend thousands of dollars and weeks of vacation time flying from airport to airport when you can drop in on this festival and have a virtual whirlwind tour of the world?

Mariachi musicians will stroll the festival area that stretches from Fairmont to Menlo Avenue along University Avenue, and the three outdoor concert stages will showcase more than 30 bands performing gospel, R&B, jazz, and hip-hop. Dance performances will globetrot with the Ballet Folklorico as well as with native dances of Vietnam, Somalia, and other parts of the world.

Kids, along with some adults, can enjoy themselves at the Fun Zone with pony rides, face painting, slides, rock climbing, a petting zoo, and even a clown or two. The festival also features a job fair, with local employers accepting applications and resumes. The health fair portion of the celebration provides free health screenings and information on insurance and various health concerns.

Date: Saturday, June 4  
Time: 10am - 5pm

Where: University Ave. at Fairmont  
Admission: Free and open to the public.



**Sam Hinton Folk Heritage Festival**

If you're not in the mood that day to travel the world of art and culture, there is the Sam Hinton Folk Heritage Festival. Formerly called the San Diego Folk Heritage Festival, this event was renamed in 2002 to honor San Diego's veteran folk song master and icon and has been moved from its original La Jolla location to the Grossmont College campus.

The all-day event, which begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends with an evening concert that starts at 7 p.m., is packed with a wide variety of musical activities, including dancing. Some of San Diego's best to ever wield a guitar or sing a song will be on stage, among them Alan James who will sing his songs and tell a story or two, well-known children's entertainers Patty Hall and Adam Miller, and San Diego's classical guitar treasure Fred Benedetto.

Headliners this year are Pint and Dale, who are modern interpreters of traditional British and French folksongs - particularly shanties and other songs of the sea. With guitar, mandolin, and adding that extra touch of authenticity, a hurdy-gurdy. And if anyone has the bona fides to call himself a folksinger, it's Tom Paxton, the other headliner this year. Still going strong, Paxton goes back to the folk music revival period of the late 1950s and early 1960s in Greenwich Village where he hung out with David Van Ronk and Bob Dylan before fame and fortune were blowing in the wind for any of them. Other artists include Skelpin, Ken Graydon, the Chapin Sisters, Peggy Watson, the Baja Blues Boys, Judy Taylor, Randy Sterling, Joann Gilmartin, Virtual Strangers, and the Clachan Boys.

Besides the musical performances, the festival features the preinternet pretelevision art of storytelling. The varied schedule of storytelling includes folk tales from around the world; stories of wonder, magic, and merriment; Scottish tales, and a session when you never have to say you're sorry: a session of

love stories. There will be dance all day long, too, with sessions of Contra dancing, English country dancing, Balkan line dancing, and more.

Musical workshops throughout the day will teach attendees how to play the banjo, the autoharp, and even the spoons and the saw. Tom Paxton himself will show you how to get in touch with your inner Dylan and write songs. Participants can also learn the basics of using a microphone, making your own CD, the art of showmanship, and get a taste of folk music! For more casual encounters, the festival features an "Instrument Petting Zoo," in which children and adults can tinker with guitars, banjos, and hammered dulcimers. A string bass will be there for the truly adventurous.

Date: Saturday, June 4  
Time: 9:30am - 10pm  
Where: Grossmont College Campus, 8800 Grossmont College Dr., El Cajon  
Admission: Free and open to the public.

**La Jolla Festival of the Arts**

Since 1987 the Torrey Pines Kiwanis and the La Jolla Festival of the Arts Foundation has sponsored an annual celebration of art, music, and food. It is a little like a street fair, but instead of different vendors selling tee shirts, close to 200 artists will be selling a their versions of cubism, surrealism, and postmodernism.

The event, a fundraiser for the disabled, benefits more than 1,500 people each year in as many as 30 programs, including wheelchair road racing, camping, and snow skiing for the disabled.

Date: Saturday & Sunday, June 25-26  
Time: 9am - 5pm  
Where: east campus, UCSD, at the corner of Genesee & Regents Rd.  
Admission: \$10

**San Carlos Music Festival**  
Bring your friends and family for a day of acoustic music on the beautiful grounds of the San Carlos Recreation Center. Spend the day and bring a picnic lunch.

Date: Saturday, June 25  
Time: 10am - 5pm  
Where: San Carlos Recreation Center corner Lake Badin and Lake Adlon, San Diego  
Admission: Free and open to the public.  
Music all day.

**ERRATA**



Gene Bockey

**Life on the Road: Gene Bockey and San Diego's Big Band Era**

Last month's profile of Gene Bockey should have listed Steve Thorn as the author instead of Bart Mendoza. In addition, the photo accompanying the article was not Gene Bockey but Jimmy Dorsey. The correct photo of Gene Bockey is pictured on the left. The *San Diego Troubadour* regrets these errors.

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# The San Diego Folk Song Society Carries on with Tradition

by Allen Singer

In 1957, Sam Hinton and a group of his students got together and created the San Diego Folk Song Society. Now, 48 years later, the San Diego Folk Song Society is still alive and well and singing on with old and young voices. Each month, a ritual takes place all over San Diego and outside its borders. Folkies tune their stringed instruments, clear their throats, and practice a special song or two based on a theme for the next Society song circle. You'd figure that by this time most of the themes and topics would have been played out and exhausted. But each month brings musical surprises with new sources of song and musical styles.

The folk process continues to be fed and sustained through the Society's activities. All kinds of musical styles are strummed or plucked at the song circles. Where else could you find traditional, topical, bluegrass, blues, singer/song writer, folk, and commercial folk played and sung together? Whether it's a ballad, a 12-bar blues, a self-written tune, a song by Woody Guthrie, or an old Irish melody, the group plays along in the language of music, which is spoken in many different ways, on many different instruments, and in many different tongues. The varied ages of the members offer a wonderful learning experience both in music and skills. Some of the group's original members who still attend provide a lifeline of musical connec-

tions. You can see members' skills improve over the years as their musical tastes expand and change. By trying out new instruments and vocal styles, everybody experiences the satisfaction of playing with others. For new people who are always showing up, it sometimes takes a while to open up, but after a few attempts people sing out and strum their instruments. Everyone is welcomed.

Back in the 1960s, and even before then, there were many who learned to play folk music by watching, listening, and playing with others in hoots. From 1962 to 1965, I spent every Sunday playing in Washington Square Park in New York's Greenwich Village. Many of us who played there went out to participate in the "great folk scare of the 1960s" (a term coined by Dave Von Ronk). The San Diego Folk Song Society continues to be an evolving, creative forum that evokes that same folk process.

We Folk Song Society members all picked up folk instruments at one time or another because we wanted to play and sing. We all struggled with the first notes, blistered our fin-

gers, and sang off key while we hid in our rooms, playing quietly, and hoping that nobody was listening.

We also wondered whether we'd ever become good enough to play a whole song.

Sometimes we'd go to a folk music concert and return home, promising ourselves never to play again. We talked about giving up, since we would never play as well as Pete Seeger, Josh White, Bob Dylan,

Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Doc Watson, Joan Baez, or Bud and Travis. Just like us, these musicians also started out with blistered fingers, sore throats, and performance anxiety. Now that we're older and more experienced, we know that the best way to handle this fear is to play, increase our musical skills, and play with other musicians. The great folk musicians offered us styles and skills to build on, not roadblocks or an excuse to sell our instruments. We learned that playing shouldn't be a chore but rather a learning experience. Play the songs, listen to the content, feel the writer's theme and emotional message, play it slow and easy, build on your skill base, and listen to others. I learned by playing with a variety of talented people—even some who went on to be famous. Playing is for fun, and if it takes you down the road to a profes-



sional career, that's terrific. Your goal should be to become the best musician you can be.

The San Diego Folk Song Society offers a great opportunity to have fun, play music, and meet others who are interested in the folk process and its varied musical flavors. Age and background all meld and contribute to an exciting and different experience at each meeting. Guitars, dulcimers, fiddles, Dobros, harmonicas, banjos, mandolins, and ukes play together, creating that special sound that happens when folk musicians get together. Folk music needs a place to be played and as the music is passed down, each generation takes it in its own direction. Cross-fertilization, juke text, and life experiences feed the music.

Each month the San Diego Folk Song Society sends out a newsletter, written and edited by Tanya and Larry Rose, which serves as a guide to the folk community's varied activities, including concerts, coffee house performances, and jams throughout San Diego County. The Society exists because of you, the folk music community, as a place to learn and enjoy and meet others who play and love folk music. Folk music has always been a part of the evolving desire we all have to build a community by coming together to sing, to communicate, and to perpetuate the ongoing human story.

The San Diego Folk Song Society meets at 6 p.m. on the second Saturday of the month at Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Avenue at Utah Street, in San Diego's North Park. Membership is \$10 per year. Whether you play an instrument, write songs, sing, or like to just listen, the doors are always open. We also sponsor special events for members, including a trip to Mount Laguna each year in July for a weekend of singing and camping.

Those interested in participating are encouraged to bring their own creative song writing talents and test



Sam Hinton leading a song



Herb Roth with Lynn Slaughter and Caroling Blessing in the background



Betty King leading a song



Barney Gentry leading a song on the autoharp

the musical waters with us. Folk music will always be here because people need to sing, write about the times, pluck their instruments, and be a part of a community that is always changing but is always there for all to enjoy.

We hope you'll join us at the next San Diego Folk Song Society meeting. In the meantime, keep on picking and singing! For further information, go to [www.sdfss.org](http://www.sdfss.org).

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# Recordially, Lou Curtiss

Photo: Bill Richardson



Lou Curtiss

Well, another Roots Festival is behind us and we've already started the listening sessions for the Adams Avenue Street Fair. We've listened to about 100 of some 400 CDs that have been received so far. We're hoping to get the booking out of the way early this year in order to have a bit more time to get the word out and the crowds in. Steve Kader is coming aboard this year (He used to do booking at the late, lamented 4th & B) to help us hire the talent as well as for some wheeling and dealing. We also have a group of people with wide tastes in music who are willing to sit down and listen to all the CDs and decide, in a democratic format, whether they give the music a thumbs up or thumbs down. These are fine, talented people with fairly wide tastes in music. I'm not going to list them here because they don't need musicians pestering them about being hired. That's what I'm here for and, besides, if you drop off a CD and promo package to me at Folk Arts Rare Records and see all the fine discs I have, you might be tempted to buy one and help avert the major economic depression that we find ourselves in today.

The music committee folks don't own record shops but some of them are Adams Avenue business owners, and if you folks out there support these festivals like we do, you should do your browsing on Adams Avenue and tell the businesses there that you appreciate what they do. I have personally put together 32 Roots Festivals, 12 Street Fairs, and five other kinds of festivals, which means the one coming up in September will make it 49 festival events that date back to 1967. It always makes us feel

good to get a pat on the back, and when you tell local business community members that you like what we do, it makes us feel more apt to continue doing it. Now, about getting booked for the Street Fair: please note that if you submit a CD, it will be listened to and judged, but take into consideration that it's pretty much luck of the draw unless you are just so damned good that we're going to want to book you after the first intro. However, since our committee is going to sit down for an evening session and listen to approximately 100 CDs, no matter how good the CDs are, the first ones are going to sound better than the 98th one. That's because we're tired and many similar groups begin to sound alike by the end of the evening, especially for those of us working people who have given up an evening to sit around a table and listen to bands. So, if you don't get hired, you can tell folks it had nothing to do with how bad or good you are — well, almost nothing. An out-of-tune guitar is going to sound out of tune early or late in the evening, and lame is lame, but of course that doesn't apply to you. Like I said, it's just luck of the draw after that pizza and 7 Up causes the old heart burn to kick in and nobody's music sounds like anything but loud.

As this festival grows bigger and

better known, it also becomes more selective. We want to be the festival that is known for presenting good new bands for the first time. Telling us you played Pacific Beach or North Park or Ocean Beach or Chicano Park will let us know you have a following, it will also tell us that you're a familiar player in San Diego. To maintain our individuality, there's just so much familiar that we want. We want to be a scene where you can hear the good, the unusual, and the never heard before in San Diego as well as the familiar. I get a kick out of the fact that Elena Fremmerman played at our festival a few years back with Buck Wayne and the Buckshots and the Hot Club of Cowtown as an early morning act and is now playing fiddle on Bob Dylan's new album. Over the years, we've hired performers for our festivals who go on to become so popular that we can't afford them. And that's okay. We want to continue to be known as San Diego's Leaping Off Place.

Now, on to another commercial



(my column seems to be full of them this month). Friends and Neighbors: Do you suffer from bilious humors, the vicissitudes, noxious vapors, the miseries, or oscillations? Well, if you do — and, let's be perfectly honest, in this day and age, almost everyone does — then today is your day lucky day. We present to you our artfully administered WONDER CURE! We have outraged and fumigated the medical profession in bringing you this MIRACLE OF MODERN PHYSICS, the same exact principle that makes it possible to transmit the Lord's Prayer to our ASTRONAUTS on the MOON. SONIC WAVES are everywhere and it is through the artful orchestration of these ubiquitous oscillations that we are able to imbue even inanimate objects with vibrant life and new vitality. At the heart of the process is vintage OLD TIME ROOTS MUSIC. From the hills to the honky tonks, from the old front porch to the old barn dance, from the juke joints to Carnegie Hall,



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First in a series covering San Diego's best acoustic music venues

by Dwight Worden

Carey Driscoll has done a worthy thing for our city. He has established a quality acoustic music venue that brings top quality national acts to San Diego in a comfortable and effective listening environment. There are no noisy bar patrons or "number 12, your pizza is ready" background noise in the church, which serves as the concert hall. The venue seats about 250, with good listening from all seats. For many concerts, the seats in the front several rows can be purchased for a small price premium for those who want to be up close. And, if you are unhappy for any reason, Driscoll will refund your admission at the intermission, no questions asked.

Driscoll sets up and runs a quality sound system that presents well in the pleasant acoustic environment of this beautiful old church. The sanctuary, which doubles as a stage, is elevated and large enough to be visible from every seat, and contains a piano that is used by some performers. It is a wonderful space to hear and listen, and an enjoyable place to perform. Parking is catch as catch can in this Normal Heights neighborhood, but a free space on



Location of Acoustic Music San Diego

Facts and Figures	
<b>Where:</b>	4650 Mansfield Street (off Adams Avenue), Normal Heights
<b>When:</b>	Regular evening concerts
<b>Music:</b>	Acoustic, folk, Celtic, gypsy jazz, bluegrass, blues, singer-songwriter
<b>Capacity:</b>	Seats approximately 250
<b>Level:</b>	National touring acts
<b>Price:</b>	\$10-\$25 depending on the act; children under 12 admitted free; refunds are granted at intermission to those who are dissatisfied
<b>Information:</b>	www.acousticmusicsandiego.com or 619/303-8176
<b>Troubadour rating:</b>	Excellent venue for listening to fine performers

the street can usually be located within a block or two.

Having grown up in San Diego, Driscoll remembers listening to great acoustic music throughout the 1960s and 1970s. As he puts it, after that time period there were no San Diego venues presenting acoustic music above the coffee shop level and below the bigger time venues, such as Humphrey's by the Bay and the Belly Up Tavern. So, he decided to set up his own to fill the gap.

During the several years he has been in operation, he has brought many noteworthy acts to San Diego, including Chris Hillman of the Byrds, John McEwen, David Wilcox, Al Kooper, Geoff Muldaur, and other well-known acts. It is important to note that Driscoll books top quality, lesser-known talent as well, focusing on strong singer-songwriters such as Vienna Tang and many other first-rate writers and performers on their way up. What Driscoll has set out to do — with marked success — is offer the kind of concerts where

music lovers can attend with confidence and know they will hear great music even if they haven't heard of the particular performer. However, if you are looking to hear local bands, this may not suit your needs since Driscoll generally does not book local bands. Look for future articles in this *San Diego Troubadour* series to learn about local venues where you can hear local bands and acoustic music performers.

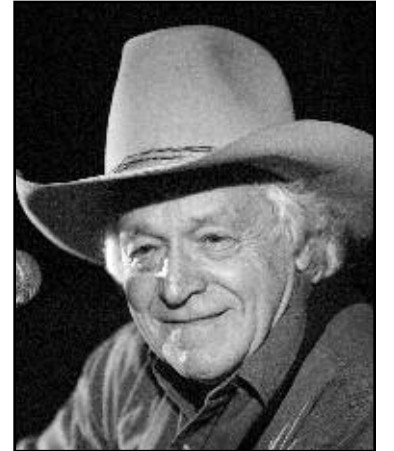
Concerts at Acoustic Music San Diego begin at 7:30 p.m. and include two sets and an intermission. During the intermission snacks, coffee, and soft drinks are available (no alcohol) in the church's social hall, and the audience has an opportunity to meet the performers who have set up a table from which to sell their CDs. The atmosphere is friendly, with those in attendance coming to listen.

This very active venue held 58 shows in 2004 (that's more than one per week on average) and is looking to host 50 to 75 events in 2005.



The church sanctuary doubles as a concert hall — a large space with excellent acoustics

Photo: Richard Dowdy/Acoustic Music San Diego



John McEwen (l.) and Ramblin' Jack Elliott are two of the most recent performers at Acoustic Music San Diego

Since Driscoll books nationally traveling acts when they are in town, performance days vary, with some occurring on weekends and some during the week.

In addition, there are lots of good places to eat within walking distance: Italian, Greek, and vegetarian, to name a few, so the venue location is perfect for an early dinner followed by a concert.

To stay informed, check the web page at [www.acousticmusic-sandiego.com](http://www.acousticmusic-sandiego.com) or call 619/303-8176. While on the website, or at any concert, sign up for email announcements of coming events. This month's roster includes Fairport Convention, a British folk rock band; Slaid Cleaves, Americana; and the Alison Brown quartet, acoustic

bluegrass/jazz along with other great acts scheduled for the remainder of the year.

The down sides of this venue are few: there is no reserved parking, no local bands, and limited advertising — you need to sign up on the email list to know who is coming.

Do yourself a favor and visit this great venue. You won't regret it!



Carey Driscoll

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by Simeon Flick

# A VAGABOND RETURNS

## The Adventures of Lee Tyler Post

The music industry isn't what it once was. Comely-yet-statuesque "heritage" artists like Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, and Van Morrison — who were allowed to be themselves and who were actively encouraged to develop long-term careers — have given way to marketable, disposable faces like Ryan Cabrera, John Mayer, and Ashlee Simpson. The resulting music has likewise gone from warts-and-all soulful to shiny and Ritalin-shallow, and most major label artists now seem as disposable as a toy's batteries. Pop culture's priorities — and our increasingly attention-deficient culture's needs — have undoubtedly changed. It would seem now as though contemporary artists whom embody those former standards of artistic authenticity and depth so abundant in the sixties and seventies would be hard-pressed to find a place in the modern scheme of things. Lee Tyler Post, however, is proof positive that one can still emulate the old school in one's own postmodern way, that it can be built upon for the future, and that it can be conducive to positive change.

The youngest of four children, Post grew up as a shy, laconic boy in a poor household in Poway. He listened to soulful music that struck an internal chord and that became an oasis during his difficult formative years. Led Zeppelin, Bob Marley, Van Morrison, The Doors, Bruce Springsteen, Prince, Otis Redding, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin, Tina Turner, Patti LaBelle, and Janis Joplin were just a few of the artists that became his spiritual guides through a tough but honest blue-collar life. It wasn't until his early twenties, however, that he would be motivated to learn how to make this kind of music by and for himself.

"I was on my way to work one day and Bob Dylan's 'Knocking on Heaven's Door' came on the radio," he recalls. "That moment literally changed my life. I went out the very next day and bought a 12-string acoustic guitar and began teaching myself how to play and sing. To this day I've never taken a lesson and I've never played a single cover tune."

The music this Poway's son makes is channeled from that austere spirit of the aforementioned "golden age" of music. It's rooted in the formative hardships of poverty and shaped by the way society tends to selectively reward or punish its loners. Post's sound is as much "the Boss" (Springsteen) and Van Morrison as it is Otis Redding and Al Green: blue-collar heartland grit mixed with Motor City soul.

Over time, and through unfulfilling seminal experiences singing his own words over other people's music, Post has slowly coalesced into his current, self-sufficient form.

"It didn't take long to figure out that I liked being solo as much as or more than fronting a band, so I decided to do both." Since that time he has progressively focused more energy on solo performing, booking and playing his own shows, and using the sheer power of his voice to deliver the stories and messages of his own songs.

Although he disparages his guitar playing, the clever harmonic choices he makes on his jumbo acoustic guitar are a crucial ingredient of the soulful whole.

Post had spent most of his life here in San Diego until about two years ago. After ten relatively invisible years on the San Diego scene he began to wonder whether he really had been born in the wrong place and time, since his old-school musical style — and even he as a person — seemed incongruous with the general proclivities of his fellow San Diego denizens. And so it happened that in the autumn of 2003 he put his life in storage, packed up the van, rounded up his long-suffering and supportive wife Jackie, and moved to Austin, Texas.

After less than a year in Austin he returned to Nashville, where he'd spent a previous year during the late nineties, in an attempt to hone his craft and learn what he could about himself and the music industry.

"During my first stint in Nashville I found out pretty quickly that there's a lot more to singing and playing than just singing and playing," says Post. "I met and played alongside people who lived the life of a songwriter — the kind of folks who came straight from work with pipe glue still on their jeans and lyrics written on crumpled-up paper. I was also shocked at how many really good songwriters there were who had come from all across the country for the exact same reason: to find out where they stand."

"It was during my time there that I decided my approach would not be to seek fame or accolades, but that the craft or art of it would be the reward. Finally, after roughly five years of live performing, I felt like I belonged. Playing late in smoke-filled rooms with soul sufferers at every table awaiting their chance to tell their tale, really formed a true, supportive blue-collar atmosphere for me."

Through his travels Post has learned that times are tough everywhere for solo artists who reflect the erstwhile paradigm that he lives, that the potential fans who are looking to connect with music from an artist on a deep and soulful level are now seemingly as rare as he is.

This self-professed vagabond will soon be returning to his native land for a short while to explore the heretofore uncharted regions of the West Coast, to be close to his parents, and to record a new album up at his self-constructed Poway studio, Miracle Somethings.

Post's goals are modest. He just wants to make a living with his art by touring and recording. He wouldn't mind — but isn't dead-set on — signing with a label that would give him the freedom of a long, loose tether to do things his way (no small feat!), and also to give something back to the community.

One of his main priorities is to continue funding his Marshall Saint Mission Foundation, which provides assistance for homeless, abused children and recovering addicts, and to establish a Rock the Soul Foundation, which will bring aid to cancer-stricken children and their families.

For Lee Tyler Post, not being philanthropic through his life and art is, he says, "kind of like seeing an accident on the highway and not stopping to help. You hear that voice inside saying 'Stop! See if

anyone's hurt,' but most of the time you keep on driving because you have your own agenda. You ease your conscience by calling on your cell phone and reporting it. I'm the kind of guy that listens to that voice saying, 'you have to stop.'"

Perhaps one of Post's favorite quotes from Rene Ricard's *The Radiant Child*, works best to sum up his approach to the intertwining of his life and art.

"What is it about art anyway, that we give it so much importance? Art is so respected by the poor because what they do is an honest way to get out of the slums. Using one's sheer self as the medium. The money earned is proof, pure and simple, of the value of that individual, the artist. The picture a mother's son does in jail that hangs on her wall is proof that beauty is possible even in the most wretched circumstances. And this is a much different idea than the fancier notion that art is a scam or a rip-off. But you could never explain to someone who uses God's gift to enslave, that you have used God's gift to be free."



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by Laura Preble

There's a '40s era tough-talk edge to jazz singer Peggy Claire's whiskey voice. If you listen to her long enough as she recounts her adventures in decades of music, and you check out a glamour photo of her in her red slinky dress with a Rita Hayworth bob draped seductively over one eye, you might think you're looking at a character from a Hollywood musical.

But this mainstay of San Diego jazz is no fictional heroine. In fact, her life has become perhaps more real that she'd like. After learning in October that she has inoperable lung cancer, this diva has chosen to do what she's always done: look the challenge straight in the eye and stare it down, even if the odds aren't in her favor.

"I was a social smoker, smoked a couple when I had a couple of drinks," she says. "Even my doctor, who is one of the best doctors at UCSD, wasn't worried about it. It seems logical that if you only smoke a few you won't get cancer. But there is no safe dose of cigarettes."

Jazz clubs used to be synonymous with smoky bars; until California prohibited smoking in public places, all musicians endured a pack-a-day habit without even lighting up. "I used to work in clubs so smoky you couldn't see," Claire remembers. "I used to think you could smoke a few cigarettes a day, but in November researchers were shocked by the results of a 20-year study of cigarette smokers, and they could not ignore the results. It doesn't matter if you smoke one or several packs a day. Chances of getting lung cancer are exactly the same."

Claire is passionate about warning people of the dangers of smoking. She's attacked her small-cell lung cancer with the same ferocious enthusiasm that she has always had.

But her cancer is a relatively new component in her life, something she's grudgingly made room for like an unwelcome relative who refuses to leave. Music weaves through the fabric of her life; music has been her constant companion.

Peggy Claire Nelson was born in New Mexico in a town called Truth or Consequences, best known as the spot for an annual party in honor of the popular game show. Her mother saw her talent, and in 1952 Claire began her classical music training at the age of five. Raised on Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole, Claire knew music was in her blood. "My musical origins were in my living room or sitting under a cottonwood tree singing 'I'm so Lonesome I Could Cry,'" she notes.



# Peggy Claire

A Classic Torch Singer Keeps the Fire Burning

When her family moved to New Orleans when she was in junior high school, her exposure to the sometimes overly traditional Dixieland in the Crescent City turned her off; when her voice "broke" at 13, she gave up singing for a time. Eventually, though, jazz caught up with Peggy Claire.

She didn't begin her own musical journey as a jazz chanteuse, however. In the early '70s she couldn't wait to get out of the South and head to the West Coast to be a self-described "traveling minstrel." She wanted to roam, playing her original folk rock tunes with a rockabilly musical twist.

In 1973 Claire had planned to simply winter in San Diego before heading to the

hip capital of culture, San Francisco, but she never left. During a stop in Ocean Beach she hooked up with two excellent musicians and agreed to sing harmony with their original music if they allowed her to improvise, a practice that she thinks eventually led her to jazz. Primarily based in Ocean Beach, Claire spent three years with the trio, traveling up and down the California coast with guitars and backpacks. "I have a lot of rich experience from that," she says, "improvising, doing my own music, doing lead, which served me well for jazz."

After three or four years, Claire quit the minstrel life and settled in Ocean Beach for good. By that time she was playing guitar and putting her own lyrics to music. With her seven-piece band, Opaleye, she carved a niche for her-

self locally; she even frequented places like Winston's where, with a young Jennifer Batten on lead guitar, she played to packed houses full of rival biker gangs who left their conflicts at the door to listen to her original tunes supplemented by Jimmy Reed and Chuck Berry standards. "I became a favorite of the Hell's Angels," she laughs. "The president of Hell's Angels even built speaker cabinets for me that were so big I had to have Hell's Angels roadies to help me load them."

Until she met local drummer and KSDS radio personality Barry Farrar, Jr., Claire said she "never could find a drummer I liked. Joni Mitchell used to say that until she met Jaco Pastorius, every bass player she had met had built a stone wall right down the middle of her songs. I couldn't find a drummer who didn't go Bam! Bam! Bam! I was at wit's end." Claire was writing music that was complicated rhythmically, which she jokingly describes as white blues, punk folk, and progressive Dixieland. "In 1980 I finally found a drummer I liked. It was Barry Farrar."

"When I first met her, she was kind of an OB hippie chick," Farrar says. "We played in OB and around and we recorded a little bit." But by the late '80s, gigs for guitar-strumming female singer-songwriters were all but nonexistent; it just wasn't the flavor of the day. It was then that Farrar introduced Claire to the classic jazz style by which she has come to be associated.

Since Farrar's early influence had been jazz (his father, Barry Farrar, Sr., hosts a weekly big band rehearsal where some of San Diego's premiere jazz players meet to jam), it was a natural progression that he would mention it to Claire

eventually. "I remember him saying how much he hated the R&B stuff that we were doing," she recalls. "I thought I was going to lose him. He said he liked jazz and that 'Bye, Bye Blackbird' was one of his favorite songs. I didn't realize that was jazz."

Up to that point Claire's opinion of jazz had been rather low. She remembers hearing some all white, less-than-stellar musicians in New Orleans and hearing old songs played badly. The fact was that no black musicians were allowed to play Dixieland on Bourbon Street in the famous rooms where all the tourists (and local whites) went. The only place in the heart of the French Quarter where black Dixieland players were allowed was at Preservation Hall, but no alcohol was sold there. Black musicians could play in R&B bands on Bourbon Street or in jazz bands in their own

neighborhoods where white people were told it was "too dangerous" for them to go.

When Farrar shared his Miles Davis records with Claire and a tape of Billie Holiday at Carnegie Hall, she

says, "I heard Lester Young, Harry Sweet Edison, and I said, 'These are the kind of musicians I want.' Barry said, 'Well, if that's the kind you want, you better stop singing R&B and start

learning jazz standards.' I thought about it all night, and the next day I decided to put down my guitar, stop playing my own music, and fired the entire band. I found a jazz pianist, got

charts, and started buying records and listening."

Thus far, music had been a natural thing to Claire, something she had never really had to work at. "I'd never spent more than a few hours learning a melody. I was singing 'Body and



Claire in the late 1970s when she played with Barry Farrar







Soul' a capella, which for me was easy to do. I decided I was ready to try it with a jazz band. I knew Joe Marillo was an important jazz musician in town, so I went to a club one Sunday afternoon. I took a pianist I had been working with and asked to sit in."

When the band started playing, Claire realized that singing jazz standards with a band could be much more challenging than she had anticipated. "The bass player played one wrong note and it threw me off, and I never found my way back. This was the first time this had happened to me in my life. I got off that stage and realized I had found a type of music that I couldn't just do off the top of my head. I realized it was going to take study and practice. I don't think I had a handle on 'Body and Soul' for years."

One of the best stories Claire tells (and she tells a lot of great tales) is about a visit to New Orleans after she had made the decision to study jazz. "I stopped at a little jazz joint called Tyler's," she recalls. "The band playing there was made up of what I now know were the top four avant garde jazz players in New Orleans. There were only a few people in the room, so I asked if I could sit in."

She called Farrar's favorite tune, "Bye, Bye Blackbird," and waited for the band to start the traditional intro. "These guys started playing something I couldn't make heads or tails out of. I couldn't find the first note, I couldn't figure out where one was. I stood there for what seemed like an eternity. They were not going to give me one break, not one clue, and all of a sudden a really thin young black man with an afro stood up so fast he nearly turned the table over. He took out a flugelhorn and played an absolutely gorgeous introduction. You'd have to be deaf, dumb, and blind not to know when to come in. He brought me back into the tune and didn't even give the other guys a solo. He guided me out so that everything was perfect." That was 16-year-old Wynton Marsalis, and he wasn't the only famous jazz musician Claire encountered over her tenure as a torch singer.

Part of her informal jazz education took place in part at a club called the Blue Parrot, where world-renowned alto saxophonist Charles McPherson played every week in those days. "I knew he was famous,"



Claire's Dreamland band, with Preston Coleman on bass and Bobby Gordon on clarinet

she remembers. "I had no idea what he was doing, but I figured if I went to hear him every week, that was a way to learn. One week he came up and asked, 'Who are you? What are you doing here?' I told him, 'I want to sing jazz, and I'm here listening to you trying to understand the music that you're playing.' He asked if I'd understood anything. I told him it sounded like a form of the blues, even though it didn't sound like blues. 'That's pretty good,' he

said. 'Very few people can hear the blues in bebop. That's a good start. If you hear the blues in bebop, then you can learn jazz.'"

That encounter led to a friendship, and McPherson is still involved in Peggy Claire's life, even though his work usually takes him outside San Diego now. When he learned about Claire's illness, he offered to organize a benefit for her. At first she refused. But with mounting costs and alternative therapies, it became clear that, like many Americans with health problems, Claire would need a little help from her friends.

McPherson called in some favors, Humphrey's by the Bay donated the space, and in April, a slew of musicians gathered to jam and help raise money for a fellow player. "I think it lifted her spirits," McPherson says. "It was nice to see so many people there. It's one thing for people to give well wishes, but to see them physically in one spot, in one congregation, that is pretty much demonstrating they care."

The benefit was well-attended, and it was also an amazing musical event, although Claire herself did not perform that night. "Peggy had a better time than anyone in that room," McPherson laughs. "And for a person dealing with something that heavy, you'd never know it from her demeanor. She looks great."

Most recently, Claire took the stage herself at Humphrey's with Pat Danna on guitar and L.A. bassist Ben May. She had been playing with them in September of last year when she was first diagnosed with small-cell lung cancer. "It was after this very intense gig, one of the most wonderful I'd had in years."

But it certainly hasn't been the only dream gig she's had. She met clarinetist Bobby Gordon at the now-defunct Mikisan's and said, "He was the best clarinet player I'd ever heard. I sang a blues, and he got off the bandstand, he said, 'why don't you quit singing that damn bebop and come sing with me?'" As Claire tells it, they spent the evening poring over albums, listening to jazz, and her connection the old-style classic jazz of the torch singer was forged.

"The songs are mostly from the '20s and '30s, pre-bebop stuff," Claire explains. "There is no messing with the chords, no substitutions. I think the general idea is that somebody needs to play the song through once and then you're free to improvise, but the improvising is on the melody and the rhythm."

The last piece of her educational puzzle

was perhaps her stint as a deejay on KSDS Jazz 88. She spent 15 years doing the Vocal Spotlight program there doing overnights. She says, "I

learned those songs inside and out by being on the air for 15 years. I can sing a song I've never sung if I have players who can play it."

Her philosophy about her place as a torch singer in San Diego jazz history? "I filled a unique spot in San Diego, I did something nobody else really

did. The term torch comes from carrying a torch

for someone, I guess. Torch singer, fine. I don't care what you call me as long as you give me a gig."

And if Claire's life were that Hollywood movie, she'd come to the end of it singing and talking because, as she says, "The breath is the essence of life." And she's used her breath, her body, and her life to learn and carry on a tradition that brings with it the stuff of life: pain, sadness, sensuality, and joy. She's not ready to give that up just yet: when trombonist Dan Barrett returns from Europe, she has a recording project planned with Barrett and bassist Dave Stone. "And if I can't sing," she says. "I'll just sit there with a big smile on my face because I'll have had the best band ever."

*"I filled a unique spot in San Diego, I did something nobody else really did. . . . Torch singer, fine. I don't care what you call me as long as you give me a gig."*

## Benefit for Peggy Claire April 4, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge



Charles McPherson



Peggy Claire and friends



l. to r. Coral Thuet-McFarland, Holly Hoffman, and Tripp Sprague



Deeja Marie



Peggy Claire and Sue Palmer



Peggy Claire and Holly Hoffman



l. to r. Dave Milard, Frank LaMarca, April West

Benefit photos by John Baldi



# Bluegrass CORNER



by Dwight Worden

Jimmy Martin



Jimmy Martin, King of Bluegrass

Jimmy Martin, known as the King of Bluegrass, has departed this world. Jimmy left for the great

beyond in a Nashville hospice on Saturday, May 14. A true original, and one of the formative pioneers of bluegrass music, Martin leaves a legacy that few can match as well as a reputation for individuality and hard living that marks him as one of the most colorful characters in bluegrass history.

Martin was born on a hog farm in Hancock County near Sneedville, Tennessee, where he hunted possums and sold the skins to buy a guitar when he was 10. After being fired from a factory for singing on the job when he was 21 years old, Martin headed for the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville and talked his way backstage, where he persuaded Bill Monroe to sing a couple of songs with him. Impressed, Monroe hired him, which fulfilled Martin's life long dream of becoming a member of the Bluegrass Boys, with whom he was lead singer and guitarist. Martin stayed with Bill Monroe for five important years, helping with the writing of such classics as "Uncle Pen," "I'll Meet You in Church on Sunday Morning," and others.

In 1953 he teamed up with the Osborne Brothers, Bobby and Sonny, to record some of bluegrass' early classics like "She's a Cute Thing," "I Can Count on You," and "Save it, Save it." After his stint with the Osborne Brothers, Martin formed his own band called the Sunny Mountain Boys, appearing regularly on the *WRJ Barn Dance* show in Detroit.

In 1956 Martin and his Sunny Mountain Boys signed with Decca Records (now know as MCA) and cut some of his best classics, including "Sunny Side of the Mountain," "Hit Parade of Love," "20-20 Vision," and "Freeborn Man," hits that charted regularly on

*Billboard*, *Cash Box*, and *Record World* magazines.

As his reputation grew, Martin traveled to Louisiana and joined the *Louisiana Hayride* and then the *Wheeling Jamboree*. He moved to Nashville in 1963 and made many appearances on the Grand Ole Opry.

Martin collaborated with many artists throughout his career, including the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. His voice is the first heard on the 1972 album *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?* and his performances on later



Rhonda Vincent

albums brought his feisty spirit to audiences that might never have attended a bluegrass festival. He lived out his days at his home in Hermitage, Tennessee, performing up until near the end, drinking, watching boxing, hunting, and always loving blue-



117° West

grass music. In a time when so much music is middle-of-the-road pablum, we will indeed miss the creative originality of Jimmy Martin. May the King rest in peace!

## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

Rhonda Vincent and the Rage will be at the La Paloma Theatre in Encinitas on Sunday June 19, with an opening set by San Diego's 117° West. The show starts at 7 p.m., tickets are \$20 in advance, \$24 day of show, and are available at all SDBS events or at [www.lapalomatheatre.com](http://www.lapalomatheatre.com). You won't want to miss a chance to see the reigning Queen of Bluegrass and her oh, so hot band.

Mark your calendar for the SDBS Bluegrass Day at the Fair on Sunday June 26, noon to 10 p.m., where there will be bands, a band scramble, and lots of fun. To sign up or for more info, contact Lou Ann Preston at [lp Preston@remaxreconsultants.com](mailto:lp Preston@remaxreconsultants.com) or (619) 267-2020. If you sign up for the band scramble you get free admission to the fair. Keep pickin!

# The Zen of Recording

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

## PONG

Time. Of all the things we value most, it would appear that the saving of that precious commodity gets the lion's share of attention with regard to new innovations and technologies. Since the industrial revolution at the turn of the previous century (will I ever get used to saying that?), there has been an all out effort to wring every last drop from the working time we have in order to free up more of it for other concerns, like sunbathing, partying, watching Bravo's *West Wing* marathon, or seemingly getting more work done. Oh sure, the operative words used to be "faster and easier," which is how we came to love washing machines, spray paint, and Google.

As of late however, it's just about faster. Ever tried text-messaging? You type in a message on your cell phone, and the person you've addressed it to can get the whole gist just by looking at his or her phone. The only problem is, your suddenly gigantic thumbs are now stomping all over your sleek, petite keypad like a dyslexic rhinoceros at a country Western linedance. Scroll... select.. miss-hit.. delete.. go... back... scroll... select.. enter. By the time you get this all to work, you've feebly typed in "Call me" or some other truly clever epic. For those of you mystified by such "advancements" I offer this hint: The telephone is already in your freaking hand!

I blame you, Generations X and Y. You, with your multitasking, nanosecond attention spans. You, with your brief-synopsis-loving, Cliff's Notes-assisted educations. You, of the dexterous thumbs that can (through a dizzyingly mathematical array of button and joystick combinations that would make even Newton nauseous) render even the heartiest of animated villains powerless (although conscious long enough to show him his own spine, of course). I offer this question: What was wrong with Pac Man? It had a start button and a joystick. Left turn, right turn... bonus.. down... left.. hours of fun, dozens of quarters. And hey, the sounds were cool. I mean, how far a stretch is the sound design of that game to some of the "dance music" I'm attacked by at red lights like some kind of sub bass sine wave carjacking? What the hell do I know? I'm old. I remember Pong.

Digressions aside, the fact of the matter is that potentially, productivity in this brave (and sort of) new digital era of recording can be arrived at significantly faster. Anyone who remembers having to endlessly redo a vocal or solo because of one wrong note definitely appreciates the ability to cut and paste the offending areas in to

submission. Conversely "optionitis" wherein every possible choice is left in place for later decision making can make an album or demo project drag on endlessly. So, while having effective tools available is incredibly helpful, it's still about using these tools effectively. A couple of cool little projects presented themselves recently, and both sides of this slippery coin did as well.



Sven in his studio

The first was the opportunity to compile last November's NeilFest show on to DVD. I used Sony's Vegas + DVD Production Suite 6.0 (\$719) for this task. Having had some experience with Vegas (I still use version 2.0 as my main tracking environment), I was eager to start slicing and dicing the great performances from the event in to DVD format.

Lots of improvements to the program have been made with regard to editing, and I found that this made things quite a bit faster, particularly with regard to editing grouped clips. Video capture is well integrated, and the ability to import video to a variety of formats and resolutions helps greatly, especially when you know what your intended final medium is.

Documentation and support are appallingly low priorities for Sony, however, and all of my questions were posed (and sort of answered) by the company's online newsgroups. Having direct contact with customer support costs extra, which is a growing trend among software manufacturers and a terrible way to treat your customers in my opinion.

I eventually got things to where I was ready to render them and started the process. The counter said "Time remaining: 4:26," and they weren't talking minutes. I knew video took more time to process, so I let it run overnight. The next morning, I awoke to find that it was only 17% done! Apparently, the counter resets every midnight. Really long story short, it took a whopping 80 hours to render 90 minutes of video. I found (online) that it was partly because I had used the included Magic Bullet Movie Looks plug-in and was strongly discouraged from doing so, albeit after the fact. I also found that my video was too dark, so I would have to re-render it anyway. Imagine tweaking an audio mix this way! Until I find another



Sven-Erik Seaholm

80+ hours to burn, that project's on hold.

Another deadline-based project was handled much more effectively using a tool from the same company: Acid 5.0 (\$299). I had only a couple hours to compose and record a 30-second theme song to

Listen Local's new "Production Interruption" segment. I grabbed Smart Loops Pro Drum Works Volume One (\$179) and went to work. The Pro Drum Works ingenious labeling system made it very easy to find the styles, sounds, and tempo I was looking for, and their inclusion of counting hits and free form endings was so intuitive that I began to feel guilty that I wasn't working very hard! Bringing them all in to Acid was a breeze and when the tempo was changed, the new audio engine's increased quality was very apparent. Crash and ride cymbals were added at accent points to create a very realistic drum performance in far less time than it would have taken to set up and record it. Acid's seamless compatibility with Vegas made them an indispensable combo, and I was quickly able to track the additional bass, guitar, and vocal parts. At the end of the session, I was even able to burn a red book-compliant CD directly from Vegas. I didn't save 80 hours, but I did get in an extra game of Pac Man afterward.

Sven-Erik Seaholm owns and operates Kitch and Sync Production ([www.kaspro.com](http://www.kaspro.com)) and performs solo ([www.svensongs.com](http://www.svensongs.com)) as well as with *The Wild Truth* ([www.thewildtruth.com](http://www.thewildtruth.com))



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# Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

Not that it matters in life's most gargantuan scheme, but I've been a Guinness record holder for exactly three decades this month. It was at a lovely club called Barnaby's in Wheaton, Maryland, that I swallowed more ounces of Guinness ale than any other human being could within one minute. To this day I remain secure in that rather suspicious accomplishment, since records are not made to be broken but to be played on turntables.

At one point, shortly after my victory, I realized a sudden urgency to "powder my nose" in Barnaby's well-appointed *boutique de l'hygiène*, where I cheerfully tipped the blind attendant a dollar, telling him it was a five. Only the following morning did I receive the very just attack of guilt that my rotten lie had bared me to. And equally valiant I defended myself, naming alcohol as the true villain of the vicious deed.

Remembering this episode the other evening while dissecting a stray collie (*Lassie* had always been a favorite of mine as a kid), the modern Me became angry at the more historic model. It was clear that I had blamed drink on a sordid action that had emerged from the person I truly was at that moment; it took three decades to gain the truth and accept the fact that I was an evil jerk with that attendant that evening. Although I was a winner at the bar, I was a loser in the rest room.

Yesterday I looked up the address of Barnaby's, bought a postal money order in the amount of four dollars and fifty cents, placed it in a legal-size stamped envelope, and mailed it to Barnaby's. It was sent anonymously, marked "personal" and to the attention of "the visually impaired toilet jockey who deserves an apology." (The extra half dollar was a tip for his patience.)

Of course, I'm assuming that the attendant still works there after 30 years, but if by chance he's passed on

or become a tennis judge, I still feel like a winner all over again for having had such an unexpected, productive encounter with my own integrity.

I've always (well, at least since around 1969) had my very own definition of Maturity, too.

It's when you see some reckless jerk slip on the ice on a storm-surviving sidewalk, landing on his rear end, and rather than laugh, you race over to see if he's okay or needs help.

Back in 1995 a new love of mine (as usual, awesomely younger) asked me to define "maturity" while we were enjoying a candle-lit bubble bath. After thanking her for asking, and beginning the preface to my response, I leaned back a bit and one of the candles set the hair around the back of my neck on fire. A superbly reflexive dunk quelled the flame's infernal ambitions and all was saved, save the relationship; I emerged from the sooty water to the riotous, uncontrollable laughter from this tender maiden who would be forever forbidden to bear my child. It was as if the funniest scene from the funniest film from the funniest director ever had just been screened for the first time to a select audience that included people who would probably describe themselves as "fun-loving" on the dating questionnaire from a Nazi social club.

The fact that she exhibited no further interest in learning my aborted answer curtailed my interest in her person and expedited her exit from my orderly world. I remained tearless, my integrity intact. Besides, I mock-connosed myself, there are plenty of other girls out there who are mature enough to realize they need a bath. With me. And I wasn't wrong. Mature people of integrity seldom are. But the tender little lady that night... well, she'll always remember what it feels like to be a loser in the rest room, too.

Which leads me to the subject of integrity as it applies to the entertainment industry. Recently the *Los Angeles*

Photo: Brinke Stevens



The scintillating Mr. Sinatra

*Times* published a keen article on the major Hollywood studios and their franchising of video games based upon the more successful product of their greedy bowels. Sean Connery, for example, will actually provide the voice of Bond for one, *From Russia With Love*, and Al Pacino will do likewise for a *Godfather* game.

The stunning piece went on about how the studios were insistent on quality — to preserve and protect the integrity of the celluloid surrogates that spawned these playthings, which destroy so many lives. Only one studio, however (I believe it was 20th Century Fox), actually employs an outside agency to oversee quality control. If the agency reports to the studio that a particular game fails to match some qualitative standard of its inspirator...

Then what?

In a better world I would have read "the studio retains the right to cancel the contract..."

But, of course, I didn't read that. This is the Aughts, remember? And we are in the U.S. of A., are we not?

No, this is what the studio has the right to do, what artistic integrity itself in our world requires it to do: raise the franchise fee.

Now, that is so Twentieth Century, isn't it?



# RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

## WHEN PENGUINS ATTACK

In the late 1980s I hated to do remote broadcasts. I loved the comfort and anonymity of the studio, where I could create "Theater of the Mind" and where I could control all the show's elements. Mostly though, I hated to go outside of the studio because I was a friggin' TUNA! When I'd walk down the hallways at work, potted plants would topple over, the glass would rattle, and records would skip! My face was like two big red beachballs separated by a pair of eye slits and a mustache!

But when my boss suggested doing my show from a few of San Diego's great summer attractions to celebrate the first day of summer in 1989, I couldn't refuse.

I went out in the station's van with my co-worker and pal, "Dangerous" Dianna Eades, a woman who never shied away from a good time.

Even better, she drove. But best of all, I'll let Dianna write the next part by paraphrasing her email, because I am lazy and my memory is...Hello? What am I talking about?

"We went to the Del Mar Fairgrounds and met up with John Leslie and his girlfriend Karen (the super thin one with the lovely long black hair). You did a report from the beer garden. Next we visited the zoo for a few minutes. They didn't have any beer there for you. Then we went to Sea World."

Wait! Hold on just a second! I remember now! We got to go to the Penguin Encounter...with the penguins! You'd have thought we were



Jim McInnes

entering a nuclear facility. We had to put our feet through a chemical bath and put on booties to cover our sneakers, then dress in bright red jumpsuits. The workers there warned us that the cute flightless birds could



be mean little critters so we'd better be ready for trouble. As we entered the freezing Penguin Encounter, the first thing we noticed was the pungent fragrance of guano and urine, like the smell in your favorite dive bar. We walked around a bit and I uncradled

the "portable phone." (This was before cell phones. This thing weighed six pounds. The handset was cradled in a five-pound battery pack!) As I began my report to the station, the penguin capo, the big guy, waddled over and untied my shoelaces! I was stunned. The tourists and schoolchildren outside the glass were slapping each other on the shoulder, pointing at me, and laughing! I'm sure it was a sight that made their vacations worthwhile!

Since penguins eat fish, I felt my Gentoo penguin buddy was trying to tell me something.

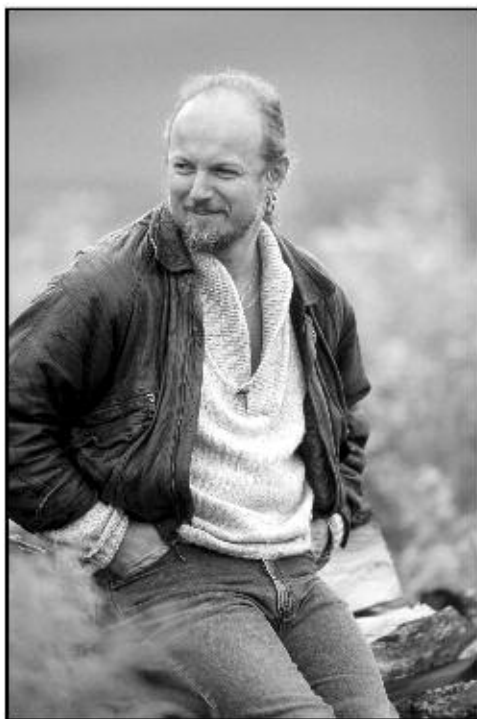
Dianna went on to marry a British Royal Marine and moved to Singapore. My wife Sandi became godmother to Dianna's first son, with whom Sandi shares a birthday, and I shed 60 pounds.

All because of a bird dressed like a nun!

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*®.

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# THE EARL BROTHERS HILLBILLY GOTH COMES TO THE ADAMS AVENUE ROOTS FESTIVAL

by Dwight Worden

**H**illbilly Goth. That's how the Earl Brothers describe themselves and their music. Coming from a background in Goth-style rock 'n' roll bands, Bobby Earl Davis (banjo), John McKelvy (guitar and lead vocals), Josh Sidman (bass), and Larry Hughes (mandolin) all dress in black as they present their unique style of old time music. With hints of early Stanley Brothers music (Ralph and Carter Stanley) the Earl Brothers do a foot tapping job of presenting an original show of "new" old time music, having definitely captured that classic sound but varnished with their own unique polish.

With tunes like "Rattlesnake Poisoning" and its deep modal sound, along with "Don't Drink from a Whiskey Bottle," "I've Been Sittin' here Drinkin,'" and "The Bender," the Earl Brothers sing their songs of liquor and hard living with the conviction of those who have "been there, done that." Asked about their reputation for partying and hell raising, the band says two things: first, that there is some truth in the rumor, which they like to cul-



The Earl Brothers: John McKelvy (front), Larry Hughes, Bobby Earl Davis, Josh Sidman

tivate, and second, that with their current heavy touring schedule the partying has slowed considerably. Still, the Earl Brothers, who are not brothers by the way, are all single and unencumbered by family and still know how to have fun on the road.

The Earl Brothers started when Bobby had, as he calls it, a "gothic idea." Bobby and John McKelvy do all the writing for the band, and the band rarely performs anything other than originals. At the Adams Avenue

Roots Festival last month the "Brothers" were very well received as they performed all original material, except for a clever version of "Cluck Old Hen." The band's ability to sense and transmit a classic old time sound with a new twist is, no doubt, partly due to the fact that Bobby, who grew up in Virginia, and John, who grew up in Florida, were both being steeped in mountain and bluegrass music as kids. Now Bobby reports that he tries not to listen to music, preferring to allow his original thoughts and melodies to "percolate" untainted by the influence of others. If he does listen to music, Bobby reports it is usually something very different in order to maintain that purity of separation.

The band members are having a great time, with a heavy travel and performance schedule to keep them busy and out of trouble, at least sometimes. With one CD already out and a second expected in November or December, look for this band to continue to carve its own creative niche in the venerable field of old time music. Hillbilly Goth. You gotta love it!



The Earl Brothers perform at the Roots Festival



## PHIL HARMONIC SEZ:

*Don't talk unless you can improve the silence.*

— Vermont Proverb

# Steve Denyes Finds Inspiration in a Gringo Bar

**S**teve Denyes wears many hats. He is a singer-songwriter who has six albums to show for his 11 years performing throughout the U.S. and abroad. He is author of *Gigging for a Living: Candid Conversations with Independent Working Musicians*, a book chronicling the ups and downs in the lives of musicians. He is a music educator who teaches music to children in kindergarten through sixth grade in the Escondido school district. And he is an arts advocate who currently serves as vice president of the 101 Artists' Colony in Encinitas, a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing art to the community. He is also an actor and a playwright with one musical play, *Waiting on Arleen*, to his credit and another — *In a Gringo Bar* — ready to make its debut at the North Park Vaudeville Theater on June 11. The play is the second in a series based on the lives of a coffeehouse barista, a hotel manager, and Arleen, the woman they love.

*In a Gringo Bar* is set in a bar in Zihuatenejo, Mexico, a place where Denyes, a life-long San Diego, recently came to know first-hand last year when he was invited to perform at the International Guitar Festival there. "When I arrived, my host took me to a little place in town called Rick's bar and I immediately fell in love with it," Denyes explains. "The place was filled with characters — a great mix of locals, expatriates, travelers, and misfits who all found their place at this little watering hole. I knew right away that I'd have to write about it."

That experience and a quote from the bartender on duty that night who

said, "It's a small world in a gringo bar!" proved to be inspiration enough for Denyes to change the direction of the play he'd been working on and set it in Zihuatenejo. He returned to perform at this year's Guitar Festival to share the results. "My old friends from Rick's came out to the show and got a big kick out of being included in some of the songs," says Denyes. "I had changed their names and a few details but they all knew exactly who I was talking about."

Two musicians will provide accompaniment during the play, but Denyes will carry the plot of the story himself using only the songs and short monologues.

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Steve Denyes

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## Marklyn Retzer Beach Days

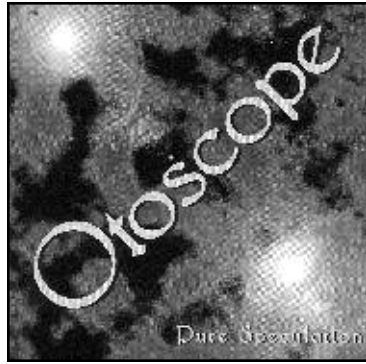
by Raul Sandelin

Contrary to the old adage stating not to — I do start judging an album by its cover. Even in this day of the bonsai album or CD, I still want the cover to visually point me in the right direction toward the musical themes and structures inside. *Beach Days'* CD cover promises something lush and far away. The exquisite photography captures a world beyond a simple sunset that happened to stand in the way of the camera lens. Likewise, the liner notes ring of a "bushy, bushy blond" surf safariphile scratching out some trite yet touching poetics into his tattered road journal.

I listened to "Coolgroove," the first track on this solo guitar outing, amply spritzed throughout with overdubs of ukulele and a second guitar. Good stuff! Great guitar work! But it also feels a bit lonely. Even with overdubbing, Retzer seems to be alone (in his room, not Brian Wilson's). I listened through several tracks and although I'm not expecting virtuoso guitar work of, say, a Joe Pass, I still want a little more.

Now, don't get me wrong: Retzer really knows his stuff. And if this were a guitarist's demo, I'd tell the band: "Hire him!" But this is an album comprising songs that, for the most part, are sketches. The first nine tracks meld together into a composite that could easily be renamed "Overture by a Guy Practicing Late at Night While Sitting on the Edge of his Bed." Track seven, "Ascending," which has superb rhythm flourishes, would work as the Shout Chorus. With "Shufflestep," things start to get interesting. Leave it to an old blues shuffle, this one with Latin ornamentation, to provide something new. With "Ritmo del Mar," I finally feel as if my VW van is crossing the border into Baja. And it strikes me: The B-side is better! "Squid Roe" is a gross pun but a nice rag of sorts that seems to take the first nine sketches and roll them into one successful song. (The way it should have been done in the first place.)

The guitar and uke pickers out there are certainly going to appreciate Retzer's chops. For the rest, perhaps this would work better as a sound track to a movie filled with awesome surf footage that intersplices with a group of beach buds banging out "Barbara Ann" around the campfire.



## Otoscope Pure Speculation

by Craig Yerkes

This disc bears an uncanny resemblance to a mid-eighties soundtrack accompanying one of those countless (teen male) coming of age movies that came out back then. Good looking rebel high school senior drives his convertible into the parking lot as all the girls stare, cue music ..... Said teen male is given the "stop being a bad boy" speech by his good-hearted girlfriend, cue music .... Same guy quits job at fast food joint and drives off in a blaze of glory to meet his posse for some underage drinking and meaning of life banter, cue music. *Pure Speculation* by Otoscope could have found a good home as one of these soundtracks. The drum sounds, the soaring background vocals, the guitar tones, the effects settings, and the lead vocals all sound like they were lifted from another place in time. If you're keen on eighties' power rock à la Survivor, Honeymoon Suite, Journey, etc., then this disc could be a pleasant addition to your collection.

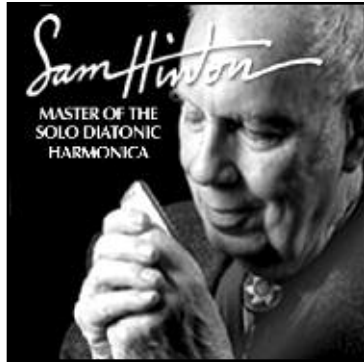
Track one, "Shallow," and the last track, "I Saw You," represent the most effective straight-up rock tracks while "Lover's Leap" stands out as the best overall effort with its clever and heartfelt lyrics. Otoscope clearly put a lot of heart and effort into this recording and it certainly is well executed, but it is a musical blast from the past to be sure.



## Various Artists Accordion Conjunto Champs

by Lou Curtiss

Thirteen of the 21 tracks on this CD are taken from various Arhoolie CDs, one is from an LP, and the rest from unissued tapes and singles that saw a local Texas issue only. This collection



## Sam Hinton Master of the Solo Diatonic Harmonica

by Lou Curtiss

On March 31, Sam Hinton celebrated his 88th birthday. The Sam Hinton Folk Heritage Festival will be celebrated at Grossmont College on June 4th (see page 3 for more information about the festival). In addition, Sam's latest recording, *Sam Hinton, Master of the Solo Diatonic Harmonica*, will be released on Eagle's Whistle Music. You can order it by writing to them at P.O. Box 620754, Woodside, CA 94062, calling 650/804-2049, or visiting [www.samhinton.org](http://www.samhinton.org).

Speaking as a harmonica player myself since the 1950s, Sam is perhaps the greatest and most innovative non-blues (first position) solo diatonic harmonica players of all time. I've never understood why more of his harmonica music hasn't been recorded. Yet of the 200 plus songs Sam has commercially recorded between 1947 and 1992, only two tracks contain any harmonica.

Well, that oversight is about to be corrected. The forthcoming issue is a double audio CD, featuring more than two and a half hours of tunes and stories, many of which were recorded live at the San Diego Folk and Adams Avenue Roots Festivals. The astounding harmonica solos on this album include Celtic, American, and European folk melodies, reels, jigs, double jigs, airs, fiddle tunes, yiddish melodies, hymns, hoedowns, and hornpipes. This should be required listening for all potential harmonica players. Even you cross harp guys ought to be made aware of the many potentials of this instrument, which you've probably overlooked. You need to have this one.

makes for some fine listening if you're a norteño accordion fan. Lively polkas, waltzes, and two-steps with a vocal here and there. Some of the names are familiar: Flaco Jimenez, Narcisco Martinez, Santiago Jimenez (Jr. and Sr.), and some lesser known artists like Fred Zimmerle and Leandro Guerrero. This CD is a fine introduction to several artists you might want to check into further if you find you like it. The notes by Chris Strachwitz are always informative, and the sound is good.



## Joe Rathburn Would You Please Welcome Joe Rathburn LIVE at Dark Thirty

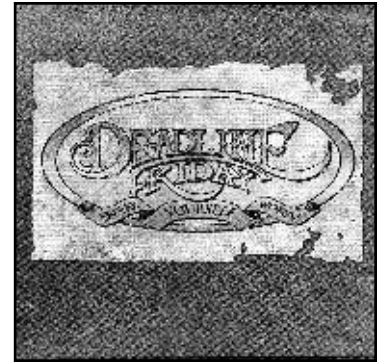
by Frederick Leonard

Listen up, acoustic music lovers. Here is a beautiful recording of acoustic rock tunes in a variety of styles laced together with a friendly pop-hook thing. All live. You'll find little crunchy nuggets of jazz and Memphis flat-picking the same way you dig through a pint of Ben & Jerry's if you've been 'jonesing' for chocolate almond cherry clusters. Budding musicians and aficionados should make note of what's going on here. There is a good measure (or two) representing what you're probably trying to accomplish somewhere in this double-length CD.

"Spaceship," one of my favorites, definitely takes off in this set. Dave Beldock's guitar is pristine where he and Joe play more than mere parts. Rather, they opt for a different route through changes that seem more like dialogue. A fantastic guitar-playing team. It doesn't stop there. There's Roger Friend on one funky-ass set of drums and Paul Beach on 5-string bass. A stellar rhythm section: super-tight, interesting, never overdone, and completely free. Together the foursome cuts, stops, dodges, and flows through time and changes in a way that deserves serious attention, and "contention."

This CD is the result of years of their high music ethic applied to diligence in the clubs and on the back porch. Whereas many artists spend hours retaking and punching in to get a tune to sound natural, Joe and company simply — after three rehearsals — blow doors open during one live take in a mere 22 songs.

You'll find vicious chops; thoughtful, heartfelt songs; and doses of Joe's charm as evidenced in his casually "telling" introductions. And while the world goes goofy with digital-processing "this" and sample-loops "that," this live documentation remains four dudes, good ideas, wood and steel. It is without a doubt, my favorite Joe CD, so far. The one complaint I have is that the CD cover doesn't contain the track list. I don't know the names of all the songs, but I'll write 'em down later for reference. For now, I'll get over it, grab my guitar, and try to learn something.



## Deadline Friday Wear Yourself Worn

by Frederick Leonard

Here's a great bunch of tunes that collectively straddles a fine line between the AOR rock moves and motifs (à la the '70s) and the baby steps of a new thing altogether — along the lines of the jam-band idea. The guitars kick ass the way guitar players like 'em. The vocals are also very strong; three of the members sing very capable leads, which in turn leads to some very tasty harmonies. And it boogies in a way that has 'deadheads' dancing with white-collar babes when you're out at the clubs. They're a serious band with a casual way of making it all sound like it's happening for the first time. And that's fun.

Bill Coomes plays drums and sings. Jim Diez plays guitar and sings. Mike Spurgat plays guitar and sings. Claudio Gutierrez plays percussion, while Earl Schreyer keeps things down on bass. There's a short list of sit-ins, most notably the keyboard contributions by Dave Yaden. Each is a fine player on his own responsibility, but the thing they do "right" on this record is play *together*, weaving their way through stops, runs, and lots of music details. Naturally, this is self-produced with the enlistment of engineer Jeff Forrest at Doubletime Studios.

"Jealousy" is a great classic rocker at heart, possessing one of the better lyrics and catchiest vocals along the way. Great sounding guitar solo! "Meet Me on the Road" also owns a great vocal line and lyric but expresses itself as an acoustic ballad and also has one very beautiful arrangement that includes mandolin. My favorite two tunes.

Deadline Friday has a big sound — great sounding guitars blending through classic gritty warm tones, big bold eagle-esque vocals, and a rhythm section that evokes the arena more than the bar down the street.

"Nogales" is a great example of a band enjoying a cold sweaty beer on a hot sweaty stage in a big sweaty jam. As an instrumental, my guess is that it was probably written 'round 4 a.m., right about the time everyone was a little too buzzed to sing, which is oftentimes when the best jams begin. There's some pretty cool magic in this tune. "Angel" wraps the CD up nicely in a three-part vocally driven lullaby supported by one pretty (but not at all wimpy or corny) finger-picked acoustic guitar. You'll find out all you need to know at [deadlinefriday.com](http://deadlinefriday.com)





Photo: Steve Covault

Mary McCaslin



Photo: Steve Covault

Balkan Cafe Orchestra



Photo: Steve Covault

Sourdough Slim



Photo: Cecé Canton

Golden Hill Ramblers



Photo: Steve Covault

Holdstock & MacLeod play in Church Sanctuary



Photo: Steve Covault

Janet McBride & John Ingram



Photo: Steve Covault

Little Pink Anderson



Photo: Steve Covault

Impromptu jam outside the church sanctuary



Photo: Steve Covault

Robin Henkel with Billy Watson



Photo: Liz Abbott

Honeyboy Edwards



Photo: Lynn Douglas

Everybody's favorite: High, Wide, and Handsome



Photo: Steve Covault

Larry Hanks & Mike Marker



Photo: Steve Covault

The legendary Odetta



Photo: Steve Covault

Roots Festival Marquee

# ART WALK

# ELSEWHERE



Photo: Liz Abbott

Gregory Page (l.) & Tom Brosseau (r.) with Lou Curtiss



Photo: Steve Covault

Bob Bovee & Gail Heil



Anna Troy



Photo: Steve Covault

Cathryn Beeks



Photo: Steve Covault

Chuck Schiele at OB Farmers Market

# CARLSBAD VILLAGE FAIR



Photo: B.J. Morgan

Patric Petrie



Photo: B.J. Morgan

Rowshan Dowlatbadi



Photo: Steve Covault

Matt Silvia



Photo: Steve Covault

Pete Thurston



Photo: Richard Dowdy/ Acoustic Music San Diego

Clare Muldaur at Acoustic Music S.D.



Photo: Steve Covault

Jeff Berkley at PB Block Party



Photo: B.J. Morgan

Hector & David Maldonado



Photo: B.J. Morgan

Tim Foley



Photo: Steve Covault

Simeon Flick



Photo: Steve Covault

Rookie Card



Photo: Richard Dowdy/ Acoustic Music San Diego

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## JUNE MUSIC CALENDAR

- WEDNESDAY • JUNE 1 HIP HOP: Open Mic, Reggae, Deejay Sinn, 8-11pm
- FRIDAY • JUNE 3 ROCK & REGGAE: Lights & Sirens, Social Green, High Tide, 8pm, \$4
- SATURDAY • JUNE 4 HIP HOP: Natural Selection, Foreign Eminence, 8pm, \$5 cover
- SUNDAY • JUNE 5 OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1-11pm
- MONDAY • JUNE 6 Bourbon Street Jazz Band
- TUESDAY • JUNE 7 Nice & Easy Swing Band
- WEDNESDAY • JUNE 8 HIP HOP: Tyger, Higher Mindz, 8pm
- THURSDAY • JUNE 9 Second Avenue Jazz Band
- FRIDAY • JUNE 10 TBA
- SATURDAY • JUNE 11 ROCK: Light the Night, 8pm
- SUNDAY • JUNE 12 OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1-11pm
- MONDAY • JUNE 13 Big Easy Jazz Band
- TUESDAY • JUNE 14 ROCK: Gone to Oblivion, Amnesty, 8pm
- WEDNESDAY • JUNE 15 HIP HOP NIGHT: Featuring special guests weekly, 8pm
- THURSDAY • JUNE 16 Old Town Jazz Band
- FRIDAY • JUNE 17 TBA
- SATURDAY • JUNE 18 ACOUSTIC: See Spot Run CD Release
- SUNDAY • JUNE 19 OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1-11pm
- MONDAY • JUNE 20 Bourbon Street Jazz Band
- TUESDAY • JUNE 21 Nice & Easy Swing Band
- WEDNESDAY • JUNE 22 HIP HOP NIGHT: Featuring special guests weekly, 8pm
- THURSDAY • JUNE 23 Second Avenue Jazz Band
- FRIDAY • JUNE 24 ROCK: Avocado Moon
- SATURDAY • JUNE 25 Innocent Noise, Heavy Rotation, Lift, 8pm, \$5 cover
- SUNDAY • JUNE 26 OPEN MIC SUNDAY, 1-11pm
- MONDAY • JUNE 27 Jazz TBA
- TUESDAY • JUNE 28 Jazz TBA
- WEDNESDAY • JUNE 29 HIP HOP: Foreign Eminence, Of One Mind, 8pm
- THURSDAY • JUNE 30 Jazz TBA

All shows begin at 6:30pm unless otherwise noted.

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## JUNE CONCERTS

June 3: Beyond the Pale (klezmer/Celtic), 8pm  
June 10: 3 Irish Divas: Mary Dolan, Kim McLean, Devon O'Day, 8 pm  
June 18: Andrew Hull, 8pm  
FREE AFTERNOON CONCERT JUNE 25, 2-4PM

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