

T

SAN DIEGO

ROUBADOOR

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



December 2006

www.sandiegotroubadour.com

Vol. 6, No. 3

what's inside

Welcome Mat.....3

Contributors
The Roches

Full Circle.....4

P.F. Sloan
Recordially, Lou Curtiss

Front Porch... ..6

Tim Day
Kelley Martin & Acoustic Pie

Parlor Showcase ...8

A.J. Croce

Ramblin'.....10

Bluegrass Corner
Zen of Recording
Hosing Down
Radio Daze

Highway's Song. ...12

Zoë Keating

Of Note.....13

Chuck Richards
Violin Shop Concert Series
Lee Coulter
The Hideaways
Larry Robinson

'Round About14

December Music Calendar

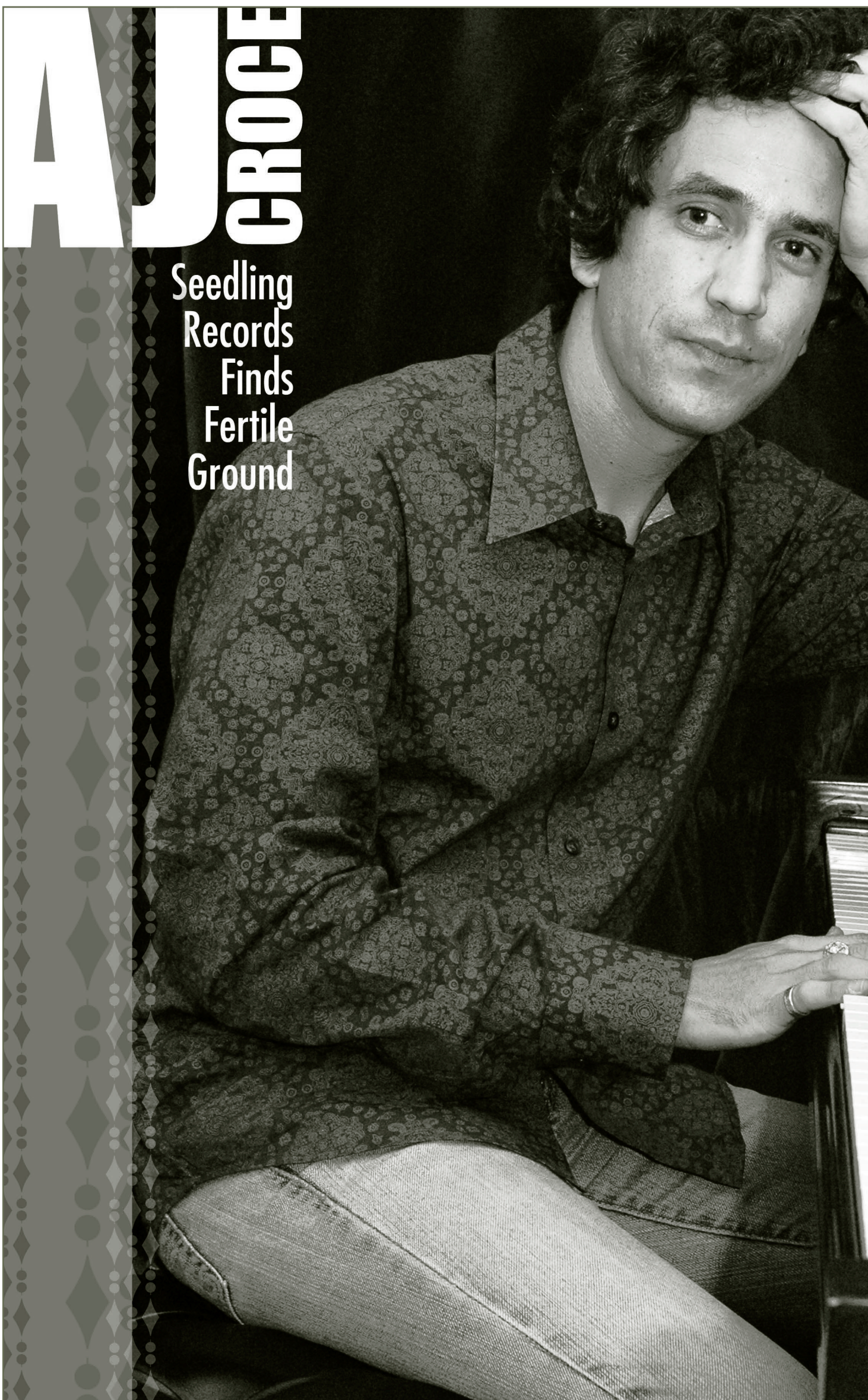
The Local Seen.....15

Photo Page



AJ CROCE

Seedling Records Finds Fertile Ground



HOUSE of BLUES® SAN DIEGO

1050 FIFTH AVE. 3RD FLOOR/SAN DIEGO
619.299.8202 (2682)

2006

FRANK DONAYON

Sunday DECEMBER 31

MY MORNING JACKET
OKONOKOS TOUR

Tuesday JANUARY 2

BLUES TRAVELER

Thursday JANUARY 4

KELLER WILLIAMS

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT www.kellerwilliams.com

Sunday JANUARY 13

G★ LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE

LIMITED ALL AGES
TICKETS AVAILABLE

Two Nights! JANUARY 30+31

BECOME AN HOBB.COM MEMBER SIGN UP TO RECEIVE UPDATED CONCERT INFO, INTERNET PRESALE NOTICE, SPECIAL OFFERS & MORE! MEMBERSHIP IS FREE...SIGN UP TODAY!

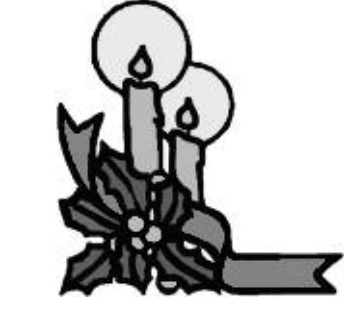
RESTAURANT OPEN MON-SAT 11:30AM - MIDNIGHT SUNDAY 4PM-MIDNIGHT - VALET & PUBLIC PARKING ON FIFTH AVE - TROLLEY STOPS RIGHT AT HOBB
ALL SHOWS ARE 21+ UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. *THOSE UNDER 10 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT IN THE MUSIC HALL.

MOZE Guitars
619 698 1185

• Lessons • Repairs
• Parts • Guitars • Basses
• Accessories • Books

MOZE GUITARS
8415 La Mesa Blvd.
La Mesa, CA 91941

Located in the La Mesa Villagel
mozeguitars.com



Celia Lawley
of High Energy Productions

presents
The Performance Academy
a workshop for fiddlers
of all ages and experience
...creating a purpose for practice
...building a community through music

2nd and 4th Wednesdays, 6-8pm

Registration now open
for new semester.

REGISTRATION AND DETAILS
www.fiddlegirl.com

High Energy PRODUCTIONS Hosted by Hammond/Ashley Molins

Villa Musica
San Diego's center for community music education

Weekend Workshops for Guitarists

The Romero Method
with Celino Romero
Feb. 10-11

Introduction to Flamenco
with John Moore
April 20-22

Acoustic Guitar Ensemble
with Jude Weirmeir
Jan 8-March 12

For more information and to register, visit
www.villamusica.org

DARK-THIRTY PRODUCTIONS
www.darkthirty.com

Robin Adler & Dave Blackburn

Sunday, December 3, 7:30pm

RESERVATIONS and INFO: (619) 443-9622

The Blue Guitar
Est. 1961

- Taylor Guitars
- Huss & Dalton Guitars
- Santa Cruz Guitar Company Guitars
- Avalon Guitars
- Larrivee Guitars
- Fine concert classical guitars from Spain
- Rick Turner and Renaissance guitars
- Seagull, Simon and Patrick, Art and Lutherie Guitars
- Hawaiian ukuleles, banjos, mandolins, and more
- Victoria, Fishman, Ashdown, THD, and Roland Amplifiers
- Repairs and restorations for all fretted instruments
- Lessons

5959 Mission Gorge Rd., Ste. 101 in Mission Valley (across from S.D. Toyota)
www.theblueguitar.com • 619.283.2700
New Hours: Mon. thru Fri. 11am-7pm • Sat. 11am-5pm • Closed Sun.



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

MISSION

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

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

All opinions expressed in SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR, unless otherwise stated, are solely the opinion of the writer and do not represent the opinions of the staff or management. All rights reserved.

ADVERTISING INFORMATION
For advertising rates, call 619/298-8488 or e-mail lizabbott@cox.net.

SUBSCRIPTIONS are available for \$30/yr. Send check payable to S.D. Troubadour to:

San Diego Troubadour
P.O. Box 164
La Jolla, CA 92038
E-mail: sdtroubadour@yahoo.com.

WHERE TO FIND US Can't find a copy of the San Diego Troubadour? Go to www.sandiegotroubadour.com and click on FIND AN ISSUE for a complete list of locations we deliver to.

SUBMITTING YOUR CD FOR REVIEW
If you have a CD you'd like to be considered for review, send to: San Diego Troubadour, P.O. Box 164, La Jolla, CA 92038.

©2006 San Diego Troubadour.

CONTRIBUTORS

FOUNDERS

Ellen and Lyle Duplessie
Liz Abbott
Kent Johnson

PUBLISHERS

Liz Abbott
Kent Johnson

EDITORIAL/GRAPHICS

Liz Abbott
Simeon Flick
Chuck Schiele

ADVERTISING

Kent Johnson
Joanna Schiele

BUSINESS MANAGER

Joanna Schiele

DISTRIBUTION

Kent Johnson
Dave Sawyer
Mark Jackson
Peter Bolland
Indian Joe Stewart

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Steve Covault

WEB MASTER

Will Edwards

WRITERS

Liz Abbott
Mike Alvarez
Lou Curtiss
Will Edwards
Simeon Flick
Jim McInnes
Sven-Erik Seaholm
José Sinatra
Allen Singer
Steve Thorn
Jody Wood
D. Dwight Worden
Craig Yerkes

Cover photo: Steve Covault
Cover design: Chuck Schiele

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

The Roche Sisters Bring Their Spirited Music to San Diego

by Liz Abbott

The Every Brothers had it. The Louvin Brothers had it. And so do Maggie, Terre, and Suzzy Roche, also known as the Roches who have been performing as since the 1970s. If there's such a thing as blood harmony, this trio of sisters might easily be the definitive example. The Roche sisters grew up in the 1950s and early 1960s singing together and, one could say, began their career by singing Christmas carols on the streets of New York City during the holiday season. With the help of their dad, they began writing their own songs, which they would sing at school talent shows and church coffeehouses. Even then, audiences would be amazed at their flawless harmonies. Eventually, Maggie and Terre, the two older sisters, would quit school to tour as a duo, with Maggie writing most of the songs and Terre contributing a few of her own. In 1970 they heard that Paul Simon was conducting a song-writing workshop at NYU and got permission to audit the class, since they weren't enrolled as students. Simon would eventually bring them in as backup singers on his album There Goes Rhym in' Sim on. By the mid-1970s, after graduating from college, youngest sister Suzzy had joined Maggie and Terre to form a trio.

During the mid to late 1970s the Roches became a staple of the Greenwich Village folk circuit and a favorite of local critics, earning praise for their lush, exquisite harmonies; witty songs; and music that blends influences from church choir music, traditional Irish folk, contemporary folk, rock, country, and pop to create their own quirky signature style.

Maggie, the oldest sister, sings also and plays acoustic guitar or electronic keyboard; Terre, the middle sister, plays rhythm and lead guitar, while singing the soprano parts; and Suzzy (rhymes with fuzzy) finds the perfect vocal spot between her two sisters, be it high or low. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the Roche sisters continued to record and perform, with ups and downs along the way. Although they never had major commercial success, they have appeared occasionally on television and in movies, collaborated with other musicians on a variety of projects, and have remained among contemporary folk music's most endearing artists.

Don't miss the Roches' San Diego performance on Tuesday, December



Maggie, Terre, and Suzzy Roche. Photo: Irene Young

5, 7:30pm at Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St. in Normal Heights. Go to www.acousticmusic-sandiego.com for reservations and further information,

JEFFERSON JAY.COM PRESENTS

HOT FUDGE SUNDAE

EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT OPEN MIC

9 PM

O'CONNELL'S

1310 Morena Blvd. (619) 276-5637

www.oconnellsbar-sd.com

BLUES JAM
(Pro-Invitational)

MONDAYS @ 7:30

HOSTED BY

Mystery Train

www.mysterytrainlive.com

O'Connell's
1310 MORENA BLVD
619-276-5637
MORENA BLVD & SEA WORLD DR

Poster Design by John Warner ©2005

Guitar Lessons with
Wayne Riker

now at
Page Drums Music Store
3855 Granada Avenue in North Park
Mondays thru Thursdays, 11am - 9pm

Acoustic and Electric Styles • All levels

- 34 years teaching experience
- 17 years teaching clinics for the National Guitar Workshop
- 37 years gig experience
- Instructional columnist for *Acoustic Guitar*, *Guitar Player*, and *Acoustic Musician* magazines
- Author of seven instructional books and two DVDs with Alfred Publishing's Workshop Arts Series

Phone: 619.546.9489
Email: wsriker@yahoo.com

THE SAN DIEGO FOLK HERITAGE PRESENTS

HIGHLAND WAY

Saturday, December 2, 7:30pm
San Dieguito United Methodist Church
170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas
\$15 (members: \$12)

To reserve a space and for further info:
www.sdfolkheritage.com • 858/566-4040

COUPON

Bring this coupon to any SDFH event and receive \$3 off the price of admission.

Expires: February 28, 2007

SDFH Musical Odyssey



Photo: Steve Cornwell

P.F. Sloan last month at Acoustic Music San Diego

by Steve Thorn

Three Southern California musical icons have staged dramatic comebacks over the last decade. In every case, it was the love and support of musicians championing their cause.

In the fall of 2000, L.A. power pop band the Wondermints backed reclusive Beach Boy Brian Wilson in a Hollywood Bowl concert performance of his monumental 1966 Beach Boys masterpiece *Pet Sounds*, complete with orchestration from the L.A. Philharmonic. Wilson eventually surpassed this accomplishment in 2004 by completing his abandoned *Smile* project and performing the avant garde concept album around the world.

Although, tragically, he passed away last August from leukemia, Arthur Lee, lead singer of the 1960s seminal folk-rock and psychedelic group Love, left behind audio and video evidence of the mesmerizing stage shows from his final years, which included Love's 1968 *Forever Changes* album being performed in its entirety. In retrospect, it was the dedication of Lee's backup group, Baby Lemonade, that was to be credited for having aided the volatile Lee back into the spotlight.

For P.F. Sloan, at one time a Los Angeles-based songwriting contemporary of Wilson and Lee, the comeback trail has been the longest in distance and fraught with unexpected detours. In 2006, the man who was once one half of the highly successful songwriting duo of P.F. Sloan and Steve Barri made a return to the studios with the critically praised CD *Sailover*. The catalyst behind the project was veteran journalist-musician Jon Tiven. Sloan has also returned to the concert stage with

gusto, including a date last month at the Acoustic Music San Diego concert series in Normal Heights. During his San Diego appearance, Sloan candidly shared tales of survival in the music industry. As he performed in earnest the remarkable repertoire of a well-spent youth—the vast majority of his work composed before his 22nd birthday—the body language and expressions of the San Diego audience seemed to echo a shared thought: He wrote that song too!

Brian Wilson notwithstanding, there probably wasn't a busier songwriter in Los Angeles than Sloan, who made his trek into the musical wilderness in the late 1960s (and for decades to follow) all the more baffling. Another West Coast songwriting talent, the transplanted Midwesterner Jimmy Webb ("By the Time I Get to Phoenix," "Wichita Lineman," "Galveston"), composed the song "PF Sloan" in 1970 as moving in its own way as Paul Simon's call-out to lost American innocence in the persona of Joe DiMaggio in "Mrs. Robinson." Webb's song is both a tribute to a disappeared colleague and the price one pays when devoting all waking hours to the songwriting craft:

*I have been seeking P.F. Sloan
But no one knows where he has gone
No one ever heard the song that good old boy
sent winging...*

Philip "Flip" Sloan was born in New York City in 1945 and relocated to the West Coast with his parents. While his peers were into the traditional childhood pursuits of baseball cards and comic books, Sloan took up the guitar. A trip to a Los Angeles music store in 1958 resulted in a chance encounter with Elvis Presley. Sloan told the San Diego audience that Elvis was "the most beautiful

P.F. Sloan: I Am What I Am and That's All I Ever Can Be



A few of the albums Sloan appears on — as songwriter, musician, or performer

man I had ever seen." Observing the youngster's interest in the guitars on display, Presley picked one up and said in his familiar Southern drawl, "Here, son, let me teach you one of my songs." It was "Love Me Tender," and the astonished Sloan returned home to master the gentle chords that surrounded Elvis' angelic vocal.

It was shortly after the Elvis encounter when 12-year-old Sloan recorded his first single, "All I Want Is Loving" b/w "Little Girl in the Cabin" for Aladdin Records, a legendary Los Angeles record label that was home to Nat King Cole, Louis Jordan, and Lightnin' Hopkins.

The disc never charted, thus securing its status as a collector's item to this day. At least it got his foot in the door; the record industry entrance would be wide open for Sloan by 1963. In that year, several factors worked in his favor. The Sloan and Barri songwriting team had taken off, a California counterpart to the New York Brill Building songwriting duos of Gerry Goffin and Carole King, Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil, and Ellie Greenwich and Jeff Barry. When Screen Gems music publishing company was launched by Jan and Dean producer Lou Adler, its business savvy founder provided Sloan and Barri with plenty of songwriting assignments. In 1963 the British Invasion sound had not yet exploded in America; it was still the era of catching a wave and burnin' rubber.

Sloan's name is now so closely associated with 1960s folk-rock that his and Barri's contributions to the surf/hot rod genre have been overlooked. In his book *The Nearest Faraway Place*, the late writer Timothy White wrote about the small but influential group of artists responsible for the surf/hot rod sound. Dick Dale, Brian Wilson, Jan Berry, Dean Torrence, Gary Usher, and Roger Christian were literally dashing from one recording studio to the next back in 1963-1964. Joining in the creative whirlwind was Sloan and Barri. The duo's "Summer Means Fun," (1964) an ode to West Coast hedonism that was as magical as any Beach Boy record, went up the charts as a hit for Bruce and Terry. Bruce was future Beach Boy Bruce Johnston and Terry was Terry Melcher, the son of Doris Day and the architect behind the creation of the Byrds' 12-string guitar sound. Sloan-Barri, recording under the amusing name of the Fantastic Baggy's, left their own imprint on the genre with their *Tell 'Em I'm Surfing* LP on the Imperial label.

The other first-name duo of the time, Jan and Dean, also utilized the services of Sloan-Barri. Jan and Dean were hosts of *The TAMI Show*, a 1964 filmed concert extravaganza held at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium. Included on the marquee were Chuck Berry, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, the Rolling Stones, the Beach Boys, and many other stars of the day. Sloan-Barri's "Here They Come (From All Over the World)" was the film's theme, an opening salute by Jan and Dean to the assembled artists at the concert. The film is now revered as one of the greatest rock movies of all time.

Bob Dylan was the antithesis of the surf/hot rod sound, and the impact of Dylan and the Byrds on the burgeoning folk-rock scene inspired Sloan and Barri to do likewise. The perfect outlet was Adler's recently launched Dunhill Records, and the early Sloan compositions that best represented the change in musical direction were "Sins of a Family" and "Eve of Destruction." "Sins of a Family" was a keenly observed commentary on parent-child dysfunction, years ahead of its time. "Eve of Destruction" (1965) became an anthem for a variety of causes, most of them derived from the entrenched camps of the civil rights and anti-war movements.

During the San Diego concert, Sloan revealed how the lyrics of "Sins" and "Destruction" were met with hostility from the publishing wings of the music industry as well as from radio station programming directors, the latter group besieged with angry phone calls from listeners.

What prompted Sloan to write "Eve of Destruction"?

"I was a 19-year-old kid reacting to John Kennedy's assassination," he explained.

Now 41 years later, one imagines what the public reaction would have been had the vast majority of radio listeners heard Sloan's original version of the song, stripped down to a haunting but simple acoustic arrangement, a far cry from the better known Barry McGuire version. McGuire (who, along with Byrds leader Jim McGuinn, "couldn't get higher" in the Mama and Papa's autobiographical song about the folk-rock scene, "Creeque Alley") was a former member of the New Christy Minstrels, whose Granite quarry of a voice was perhaps better suited to hootenanny fare like the New Christy Minstrels' "Green, Green." McGuire's version of "Eve of Destruction" was as subtle as a flying mallet. Sloan felt his ver-

sion was a "prayer to God," to save ourselves from ourselves.

The Dunhill years allowed Sloan to release albums under his own name. The LPs *Songs of Our Time* (1965) and *Twelve More Times* (1966) are chock full of great original tracks, including "Halloween Mary," "This Precious Time," "From a Distance," and "This Is What I Was Made For."

Sloan and Barri were the earliest version of California hitmakers the Grassroots, an imaginary folk-rock group that existed only in the studio and in the minds of Dunhill publicists. The 1966 debut Grassroots LP, *Where Were You When I Needed You?*, will come as a pleasant surprise to listeners who are only familiar with the brass-dominated singles ("Temptation Eyes," "Lovin' Things," "Sooner or Later") of a later, "real" Grassroots band. In addition to the title track, the album featured six other Sloan-Barri originals neatly juxtaposed in a folk-rock time line lying somewhere between the early Byrds releases and the arrival of the first Buffalo Springfield album.

Not all the material from Sloan-Barri carried the weight of the world in its lyrics in 1965-1966. After successful forays into surf/hot rod and folk-rock, the duo leaped on the newest trend: spy movies and TV shows. Sean Connery was in his prime as James Bond and NBC carried the weekly series *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* Mel Brooks brought laughs to the spy game with his spoof *Get Smart*. When CBS acquired the British Spy series *Danger Man*, the show was renamed *Secret Agent*. Sloan-Barri's "Secret Agent Man," the series' theme, rose to the U.S. Top Ten via Johnny Rivers' spirited rendition. The "good time music" of Greenwich Village's Lovin' Spoonful found a West Coast counterpart when the Turtles recorded Sloan-Barri's "You Baby." Driven by drummer Don Murray, "You Baby" is one of 1960s' euphoric rock moments, on a par with the Beatles' "She Loves You" and the Ronettes' "Be My Baby." While the Spoonful lauded the "magic in the music," the Turtles equated love as "the greatest thing since rock and roll!"

British groups also vied for Sloan and Barri's attention in 1965. The songwriters provided Manchester's Herman's Hermits with "A Must to Avoid" while Liverpool's Searchers recorded Sloan's "Take Me for What I'm Worth."

If Sloan appeared to be everywhere at once in the 1963-1966 years, the late 1960s and early 1970s were the opposite. Sloan recorded *Measure for Pleasure* in 1968 on the Atco label and prophetically titled *Raised on Records* for Mums Records in 1972. While Barri continued to work on many recording projects, Sloan disappeared from the industry. During the years he was away, Sloan studied the major faiths and made many visits to India. Sloan said in his San Diego show that a post 9-11 visit with an Indian spiritual leader revitalized his interest in songwriting.

With Tiven having the connections to make everything fall into place, the sessions of what eventually become the *Sailover* CD began to be arranged. Lucinda Williams, Frank Black, and Buddy Miller are a few of the contemporary artists who lent their talents to the project. The BBC filmed a short documentary about the *Sailover* sessions, which can now be viewed on YouTube.com at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RJQ7YS4QDaM>. In the feature, Sloan describes some of the conditions for his departure from the industry.

In "Let Me Be," the 1965 Sloan-Barri hit for the Turtles, the chorus cries out:

*Let me be, let me be, To think like I want to
Let me be, let me be That's all I ask of you
I am what I am and that's all I ever can be.*

Music fans from around the globe have been the beneficiaries of P.F. Sloan's independent spirit and talent. Welcome home, Phil!

THE REPAIR ZONE
PARTS & SERVICE

REPAIRS & MODIFICATIONS FOR ALL FRETTED INSTRUMENTS

FRED MAROTTA
GUITAR TECHNICIAN

8125 RONSON ROAD SUITE B
SAN DIEGO, CA 92111


858-565-7984

therepairzone@son.pp.com

Play Guitar Naked

Private Guitar Lessons

All levels. Old-timey and bluegrass flatpicking, acoustic country blues and ragtime, frading banyo, classical, and flamenco.



Phil Boroff
Former guitar instructor at the Ashgrove and McCabes Guitar Shop in Los Angeles.
48 years playing guitar with 40 years of teaching experience.
619.465.6515

Simeon Flick



**New CD--Reactive Soul--
Now Available Online @:
cdbaby.com/cd/flick3, iTunes,
And All Live Appearances**

Available for Freelance Music Instruction (Guitar), Weddings, etc. (Classical Guitar), Voiceover and Session Work, and Writing (Articles, CD Reviews, Bios, etc.)

(619) 857-6417
www.simeonflick.com
www.myspace.com/simeonflick

Wood-fired PIZZA & ENIGMAS
Private Dining
Meeting and Party Room
Local Arts

**Serving Breakfast,
Lunch, and Dinner**



760 765-1004

4355 Highway 78/79
(3 miles west of Julian)

Live Music
Saturday Night!



Recordially, Lou Curtiss

THE NEED FOR A SAN DIEGO FOLK AND CULTURAL CENTER

Last month, the *Union-Tribune* ran an article about how Americans are casting their votes in favor of the arts this year. It's too bad that in a year when things are leaning toward the arts that San Diego didn't have something on the ballot to designate money for a Folklife and Cultural Center (maybe in Balboa Park). This city has a musical history that includes stand-outs in most any era you care to name. From the early days of recorded jazz, blues, folk, country music, and opera, such artists as Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton, Mutt Poston, Curtis Mosby, Nina Mae McKinny, Amelita Galli-Curci, Tex Ivy, Kid Ory, and Jessie Rodgers made their home in San Diego. During the Prohibition era, hot West Coast bands like Les Hiite and even Louis Armstrong and King Oliver played in the area, and traveling bluesmen like Texas' Ramblin' Thomas and Little Hat Jones also came through, often to work in Tijuana, which was wide open during those blue nose years.

In the 20 plus years I've hosted the *Jazz Roots* radio shows, which also includes doing the research, a lot of musical tidbits I've never had the time to nail down have come my way. Following are a few. Maybe someone out there has the time and energy to poke through documents and old newspapers to find more.

Jelly Roll Morton was on the West Coast shortly after Storyville, New Orleans' red-light district, was shut down in 1912. He was either fired from the piano bar at the U.S. Grant Hotel or else quit because he demanded to be paid as much as a white musician. That was during the WWI era. He played in Tijuana at the Kansas City Bar and, in fact, wrote a tune called "Kansas City Stomp," which he named after the bar. For a long time that confused the hell out of jazz historians who wondered why a man who was never known to spend any time in Kansas City would write a song about



Jelly Roll Morton

it. There are a couple of concerts with Kid Ory, Mutt Poston, and Jelly Roll and their Creole Jazz Band listed in newspaper accounts (one in 1916 and one in 1919), but, for the most part, such gigs weren't announced in the predominantly white newspapers at that time. Things that happened in Mexico are even more difficult to find documentation for.

There was also a rule that black musicians had to return north of the border by a certain time each evening (or early morning) and there's talk of a tent city that sprang up for a time somewhere south of Otay Lake to house the black musicians who worked in Mexico off and on. I always thought that such a story would make one hell of a plot line for a book, play, or movie, particularly with such complex characters as Morton, Ory, and the rest (which would include Dink Johnson, Mutt Carey, Fred Washington, and Ed Garland). And especially nowadays, when you see Broadway plays about the Carter Family, Hank Williams, and so many others from the complex history of American entertainment. In 1922 Morton's

band, under the name Spike's Seven Pods of Pepper Orchestra, made what many have called the first black jazz band recording — right here in Southern California! The tune was "Ory's Creole Trombone" and although Kid Ory led the band, Reb Spikes owned the record company, so his name was on the record.



Morton's Red Hot Peppers in 1926

Now, wouldn't it be nice if visitors to San Diego could visit a museum in Balboa Park displaying those kinds of stories as part of San Diego's early music history, along with a couple hundred others, from Ella Mae Morse's local roots and Smokey Rogers' daily show *General Store* on Channel 8 (KFMB) to vintage rockabilly and rock 'n' rollers at the College Inn (at First Ave. and C St.), including Eddie Cochran, Jody Reynolds, Dorsey and Johnny Burnette, Johnny Hammer, and others. The Big Bands that visited and the regulars I liked included Johnny McLean at the Mississippi Room, Irving Aaronson, and Russ Plummer, who later became TV's Uncle Ross.

Joe and Jimmy Liggins, who both had long careers in R&B, spent time in San Diego, having graduated from Hoover High School and owned a club for awhile. The story of clubs in the San Diego area alone needs telling. A full-time Cultural Center with full-time curators who know how to document such things could put San Diego on the map as a place with a lot of heritage behind it.

Even my own set of festivals and concerts not only need documentation, my 90,000-hour collection of rare records and tapes also need a permanent home. From Jelly Roll to Roy Hogsed, from Merrill Moore to Tom Waits, and from Cactus Soldi to Kenny Wertz, San Diego music personalities need to be documented and put into place — not only the kinds of personalities I've mentioned here but also

those who have lived here and been involved in any kind of musical pursuit. Austin, Texas, came up with \$31 million for a new African-American Cultural and Heritage Facility, a Mexican-American Cultural Center, and an Asian-American Resource Center. If similar projects were approved in Cuyahoga County, Ohio; Portland, Oregon; and Marin and Santa Clara Counties in Northern California, it's time that folks in San Diego made the effort to get something going around here. My idea for a San Diego Cultural and Heritage Facility would include community outreach programs on both sides of the border, offering help to those whose cultural aspirations fall into their sphere. I only wish that in all the years I've been putting local folk festivals together, there had been a folklore resource person who could have hooked me up with out-of-town contacts to help me find musicians to bring to San Diego. I've had pretty good luck finding my own contacts but it would have been so much better if such assistance had been in place.



Smokey Rogers

As always, the San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture is leaning toward events that politicians can attend so they can dress up and be seen supporting opera and the symphony. Folk and traditional music always comes somewhere down the line, and that's why some sort of Folklife Center needs to be established as a meeting place, library, and museum, as well as a research facility for acquiring information



Lou Curtiss

about the cultural life of our region. I, myself, want to know more about Jelly Roll Morton's time in San Diego. I want to know which bands played at local hotels during the 1920s and 1930s. I want to learn the history of clubs like the Sportsman Club on Imperial Blvd., the Crossroads on Market Street, the Hollywood Burlesque Theatre, and the Little Harlem Chicken Shack and After Hours Joint (I understand there were two of them). I need to know more about the local ballrooms — the Mission Beach and Pacific Square Ballrooms, the San Diego Palladium (later Pacific), and the Bostonia Ballroom — when they were built, who owned them, and what happened to them.

All of the modern documentation of popular entertainment is about the rock era and not even the early part of that. If we don't document things while there are still people who remember them, the job just gets more difficult. So far, most of San Diego's music history is written down by someone doing a one-time story for a newspaper or someone like Ken Kramer who is often given but a few minutes to tell a story that could use a lot more time. Or else it's documented by collectors like me who care about old time music and its connection to this area.

For those of you who agree with me, I suggest writing to Victoria Hamilton, executive director of the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, and let her know that you support the idea of a San Diego Folklife Center. You might let the mayor, city council, and other powers that be hear from you, too. Let's prove to the city officials that "the arts are a nonpartisan issue and people who support the arts are engaged citizens." Let's be engaged.

Recordially,

Lou Curtiss

Folk Arts Rare Records
Est. 1967
Vintage Vinyl Recordings:
LPs, 45s, Rare 78s and ETs
Custom Tapes & CD's from the Lou Curtiss Sound Library
Over 90,000 hours and 90 years of vintage sound recordings
Jazz • R&B • Blues • Folk • Country • Vaudeville
Old Radio • Movie Tracks • Shows • Big Bands • Etc.
Now at 2881 Adams Avenue 282-7833 Open 7 Days

JAZZ ROOTS
KSDS-FM 88.3
Sunday 8-10 pm
JAZZ88ONLINE.org

Alternative folk-rock from
Michael James Moore

The Rapture
Michael James Moore

Three years in the making. Available now through cdbaby.com and mjmrecords.com.

Acoustic Expressions
San Diego's Old Time Music store

GUITARS New & Used
C.F. Martin & Co.
Ehlers
Larrivee
Breedlove
Froggy Bottom
Huss & Dalton
Tippin
Blueridge
Crafter
Sevillano
R. Kremer
Esteve
Goodall
Legend
Northwood

Come See the NEW! Enlarged Inventory and Display!

Still Featuring San Diego's Finest Teaching Staff-- Call: (619) 280-9035

MANDOLINS & BANJOS
Deering
Michael Kelly
Weber
Eastman
Vega
Wildwood
ALSO:
Autoharps
Fiddles
Basses
Resonator Guitars
Dulcimers
Hammered Dulcimers
Books
Videos
Portable Sound System

Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-7pm
Saturday 10am-5pm Closed Sundays

2852 University Ave.
North Park



Tim Day's Adventures in Booking

by Allen Singer

Tim Day sits surrounded by his enormous wraparound, paper-stuffed desk, its photo gallery-trimmed border of past performers looking down on him. He is encircled by his three guitars, a massive year-long performance scheduling calendar, thousands of would-be performers' CD offerings, and his trusty Mac computer at the center of his booking universe. The phone rings continuously and e-mails fly in constantly while he and I try to piece together what motivates him and how he books acts.

Since 1996 Day has been booking performers for the San Diego Folk Heritage, for which he also serves as vice chairfolk. Having learned the ways of a booker from Phee Sherline, who preceded him, Day credits her with helping him learn the ropes. "Phee trained me well and give me a great grounding in doing this job."

Day has always loved music, especially music that tells stories, speaks to our history, and contributes to the continuity of the human spirit.

When Day came down with rheumatic fever at the age of 10 and left him housebound, he started playing his father's mandolin, graduated to playing banjo, and went on to discover the 12-string guitar. He found melody and progressions easy to grasp and enjoyed the sounds and emotions in the music. During the 1950s Day was touched by the music of the Weavers, Burl Ives, Harry Belafonte, and the jazz phrasings of Ella Fitzgerald and Frank Sinatra. He discovered the importance of the words in songs, the emotional expression of the music, and the connections it made with the listeners. Day's musical taste was further fed by border radio stations out of Tijuana, where he discovered Bob Wills' Texas swing and traditional country music. During the early days of the Kingston Trio, Day traveled to San Francisco and wrote songs for the Limelighters. In the late 1950s he ventured to New York City and experienced the



Tim Day



Photo: Steve Covatt



Photo: Steve Covatt

beginnings of the folk revival aka the Great Folk Scare.

Day found honesty in the music he listened to back then and still seeks this out when booking an act, no matter what its style and track record. When hiring talent, his choices aren't based solely on what he likes or prefers. Rather, he finds music that fits into SDFH's new format, which is styled as a "musical odyssey." Day surfs the Net, listening and seeking out musicians, groups, and websites that spike his interest. He listens to hundreds of CDs that arrive every year unbidden in his mailbox. Agents call him, the word gets out, and Day's appetite for local talent all help him fill the schedule a year in advance.

Day makes it clear that it is the audience, SDFH's reason for existing as a folk arts organization, that drives his music choices. It is also important that the performers have something unique to offer and are able to reach an audience. He explains that no booking choice is perfect or can satisfy everyone. He also realizes that performers grow over time and that SDFH offers them a valuable professional experience for developing their skills in actual concert settings.

Day hires groups that respect traditional

music and contribute to the music's future. He believes that musicians are today's troubadours, keepers of the tale and the song, and artists that hold the mirror to the current events and political shenanigans of the day. His role as booker is to bring in a cross section of different music geared to satisfy a curious audience and not just the the guy who hires the talent.

Day's job doesn't end until each concert is over. He stays in touch with the agent or the artist and handles the concert hall arrangements and promotional chores. He also creates concert flyers and helps prepare performers for their concerts at SDFH. Day's experience as a performing folk musician since the 1950s has enabled him to understand the personal and professional needs of each performing artist.

San Diego Folk Heritage's 2006 schedule featured such diverse acts as Peter Sprague and Fred Benedetti; John McCutcheon; a Latin Harp night; California groups Banshee in the Kitchen, High Hills, and 117° West; performer Patty Hall; a traditional storyteller night; and a performance/lecture on the secret life of the banjo with Bill Evans and Jody Stecher. The concerts covered everything from folk, jazz, and Hispanic music to Celtic, bluegrass, and the

blues. SDFH tested out a new musical format called a Wing-Ding, which will serve as a framework for the Sam Hinton Festival next year.

A quick look at SDFH's 2007 schedule reveals the return of John McCutcheon, Diana Jones, and a host of new and returning acts, including John Stewart, Jaime Laval, Robin Adler, Laurie Lewis, Jaime Valle, and local favorite Judy Taylor. After a year-long hiatus, the Sam Hinton Festival will be returning on June 7, 2007, and SDFH will again be providing the music for next year's Highland Games and Old Poway Park's Train Song festival. Averaging two concerts a month, the best place to view the complete 2007 schedule is on the SDFH website: <http://sdfolkheritage.org>.

When Day and I met to talk about his booking stories, he shared his hopes and dreams as well as what he likes best about being a booker. His greatest pleasure is putting new acts on the stage, helping them to develop, and moving them along from opening acts to full concert performers. He helps them improve their performing skills by providing them with a stage to grow on

and a positive environment in which they can test and rework their material and talents. He reports that such local acts as Highland Way and Heloise Love have progressed from openers to concert performers.

Day goes out of his way to find new performers for the Folk Heritage. He recently brought back the Chapin Sisters and Carmen EF Doane. In presenting both known and unknown acts, Day brings in new performers as a way of offering audiences a glance into the future music scene. He wants SDFH audiences to trust his musical offerings and to experience both the old and newer acts. He also believes that singer-songwriters are an important addition to the music scene. Day wants to keep the music going, but he's afraid it might get lost in the current corporate-driven atmosphere, created by "on the spot" invented groups, canned lyrics, and generic music styles.

Next year's Musical Odyssey will offer a broad selection of artists playing traditional folk music, Celtic, jazz, cowboy, and Latin harp music, with a few surprises along the way. Day's dream is to bring back such major acts as Tom Paxton, Buffy Saint-Marie, U. Utah Phillips, and Peggy and Mike Seeger to remind people about the great artists from the past who helped build the foundation that now feeds the current folk process and creates new performers.

San Diego Folk Heritage is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting folk arts in Southern California. Established in 1987, it is supported entirely by its members with a \$25 annual individual sponsorship, but "there is no maximum." Members enjoy the benefits of receiving *Folk Notes*, a quarterly newsletter and concert schedule; SDFH concert discounts; opportunities to volunteer at concerts; and a way to play a role in preserving the music we all love. Concerts are held in Encinitas and in Poway.

Day wakes up every day ready for musical surprises and new journeys. To him, booking concerts isn't a job. Rather, he sees it as part of his life's journey, a trip inspired by the traditional music that he hopes will always touch both audiences and the musicians who entertain them.

DEDICATED TO TEACHING PEOPLE TO PLAY MUSIC WITH...PEOPLE

THE MUSIC PLAYCE

TheMusicPlayce.com

DEDICATED TO TEACHING PEOPLE TO PLAY MUSIC...WITH PEOPLE

348 East Grand Ave, downtown Escondido

760-741-5773

Various specialized 4 week classes from local performing professionals
On going instructional ensembles in folk, blues, jazz, blue grass, mariachi and rock

Retail guitars, drums, keys, amps, and accessories
Repairs: guitars, keys, amps and all electronics
Private instruction on guitar, bass, keys, all horns

Check us out, we're a music school. Not your typical instructional studio
Striving to be the hub of the local music industry ...starting with education

Events • Pro Sound • Lighting • Guitars • Keyboards • Drums

Apex Music

Since 1952

Steven H. Olsher
President

6210 El Cajon Blvd.
San Diego, CA 92115
Phone: 619.583.1431
Facsimile: 619.583.3906
Toll Free: 1-866-Apex4Me
Email: SOlsher@apex4me.com

www.Apex4me.com

HOT MONKEY LOVE

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

SUN. SALSA
MON. TANGO
TUES. HIP-HOP
WED. SWING
THUR. JAZZ JAM

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS
LOCAL BANDS

ALWAYS ALL AGES!

the **gregory page** show
DEC. 2ND

6875 EL CAJON BLVD
619 469-4113

VIDEO PRODUCTIONS ON-SITE
WEB-BROADCASTING LIVE!
CALL FOR INFO
WWW.HOTMONKEYLOVECAFE.COM
MYSFACE.COM/HOTMONKEYLOVESD



Kelley Martin Takes Back the Airwaves with Acoustic Pie

by Simeon Flick

It's hard to describe exactly how or why, but the music industry has changed and continues to change at a rapid pace. The music itself has evolved in some ways, devolved in others. . . . some would say it died long ago, while a few see it as having merely gone underground to reclaim its relevance. The album as an art form, like the recording industry that produced them, is also becoming obsolete in the new commerce of the post-payola iPod era. Developing technology has shifted the balance of power away from struggling major labels and into the hands of the common man; music fans can now download or trade exactly the songs they like from any particular album (often for free, to the further detriment of the artists), while others, exasperated with modern radio's subsequent inability to meet their listening needs, are stepping up on a local level and starting their own Internet radio shows and podcasts. Riding the cresting wave of a grassroots movement here in San Diego, leading an increasingly visible one-woman revolution that is successfully touting local acoustic singer/songwriters alongside well-known national favorites, is Kelley Martin and her streaming online radio station, Acoustic Pie.

"It all started out selfishly enough when I couldn't find the acoustic music I like on the radio," Martin related recently via email. "My favorite broadcast stations kept getting bought out by corporations and converted to Top 40 formats, so I started listening to Internet radio at Live365.com. Then

came the digital copyright scare of 2002 and my three favorite Internet stations all stopped streaming in fear of increased licensing fees. So I did a little research, decided the situation wasn't so dire, and jumped in myself as a rookie broadcaster."

Acoustic Pie Radio launched as three repeating hours of music on July 17, 2002. The name Acoustic Pie is a hat-tip to Don McLean's *American Pie*, the first album she bought with her own allowance money. Martin's inaugural act of defiance was to put the nine-minute all-acoustic solo version of "American Pie" into daily rotation.

"I was so excited when I realized that other people were listening and enjoying the music as much as I was," Martin continues. "Almost immediately I started getting fan mail, requests from listeners, and promotional CDs from artists and small record labels. Now the station has a 20-hour playlist, logs 8,000 listener hours per month, and is on track to double its listener hours within the next year. It is also the number one rated singer/songwriter station on Live365.com, which is the world's largest Internet radio network with over 6,000 independent broadcasters and a slew of professional stations covering every imaginable genre."

Martin was also feeling concurrently dissatisfied with the lack of intimacy in the majority of mainstream live milieus, so she decided to dig deeper and find out what San Diego had to offer in the way of low-key acoustic venues.

"My first house concert was a real revelation; I went to see Berkley Hart at

Meeting Grace House Concerts on June 21, 2001. They played and sang completely unplugged, with no mics or speakers, and it was pure magic. There is no better way for me to listen to live music and I was addicted. I started going to every acoustic show I could find."

She subsequently discovered other singer/songwriters and realized that San Diego had a plethora of fine solo artists, bands, and venues whose apparent dearth of logistical consolidation was something she could, for her part, attempt to remedy. The acoustic-pie.com website was constructed to serve this end.

"In January of 2004, I finally started the online show calendar, which has become the most popular part of the site. I started it with the intention of supporting the station's listeners in conjunction with the local scene. It was hard work digging through all of the different newspapers and email lists and websites, so I decided that as long as I was doing all the work to identify the best singer/songwriter shows in town I might as well share the results with other fans.

"Acoustic Pie is a fan site really, an online resource for people who love the genre and who want to find high-quality shows," Martin explains. "On the site you can find a calendar of recommended concerts, links to all of the artists ever played on Acoustic Pie Radio, a featured artist, lists of Top 20 songs, links to acoustic venues with descriptions and reviews, a photo gallery of local performances, and a blog."

Over time, Martin has become aware of many others who were and are acting independently toward the same end, adding her voice to a steadily intensifying chorus of other benefactors whose aim is to attract global



Acoustic Pie's Kelley Martin

attention to San Diego's local acoustic scene.

As far as Martin can tell, and regardless of her own selfless efforts, the San Diego singer/songwriter scene "just keeps getting better and better." Dozens of local fans have caught the house concert bug and are hosting their favorite artists in their own living rooms. Carey Driscoll's AcousticMusic-SanDiego.com series is attracting national touring artists who never used to put San Diego on their itineraries. ListenLocalSD.com's Cathryn Beeks is providing regular, well-run, citywide showcases and benefits for neophytes and veterans alike, as well as regular monthly podcasts (hosted by Idynomite.com) and online radio shows featuring local artists. Coffeehouse emcees like Hot Rod Harris of Hot Java Café are inspiring a steadily growing gaggle of returning fans with A-list treatment and early-running, top-notch, professional shows.

Martin is proud of the growth and consolidation that has transpired on the local music scene over the past six years, and although she is hesitant to take any credit for her contribution it is doubtful that it would be as vibrant

ly visible or cohesive without her steadfast efforts. Her impetus to continue running the online radio station is now less about the initial act of rebellion against an unaccommodating industry and more of a selfless return of the favor that local artists paid to her frustrated ears.

"What I really want more than anything is for San Diego to continue to grow its fan base for singer/songwriters and to see more San Diego artists getting national attention," she concludes. "Every penny and every minute of time that I invest into Acoustic Pie is directed toward that goal of generating more fans for the genre. I can't believe how lucky I am to live in a town that boasts a Carlos Olmeda and a Gregory Page. I want other people to know and love their music as much as I do and to discover the scores of other talented singer/songwriters in San Diego."

There's a revolution happening in San Diego, and thanks to people like Kelley Martin taking back the airwaves, the revolution is being podcast, broadcast, and experienced live by music fans everywhere.

Lou's Records
www.lousrecords.com

434 North Coast Highway 101
Encinitas, CA 92024
Toll free from anywhere 888-LOUS REC
760-753-1382

Classic Bows Violin Shop
OLD WORLD STYLE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



- Violins, violas, cellos, bows
- Strings at discounted prices
- We purchase violins at competitive prices
- Appraisals (written and verbal)
- Quality repair work
- Visit classicbows.com for more details


SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S ONLY MUSICAL GIFT BOUTIQUE
t-shirts, ties, greeting cards, tote bags, hats, jewelry, decorative items, scarves, rubber stamps, sunglasses, beach towels, magnets, picture frames, stationery items, and much more!

2721 Adams Ave., San Diego, CA 92116
(619) 282-2010 • www.classicbows.com
Centrally located in the historic Antique Row, just south of Mission Valley

buffalobrosguitars.com

Your dream guitar...
is closer than you think!

Call and ask about our
100% Upgrade Policy!
(760) 434-4567



Buffalo Bros. Guitars

Hours: Mon-Fri 9-6
Sat 10-5, Sun 12-4

4901 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008



Story by Will Edwards
Photos by Steve Covault

A.J. Croce's Story

A.J. Croce is a survivor of an unusual trauma. He's spent the past three years facing the challenges inherent in succeeding as an independent recording artist and running an independent record label. In 2003 he founded Seedling Records and since that time he has been working everyday to create a space for music in the collective consciousness based on an all-new paradigm: one that allows artists to express themselves authentically. His efforts, and those of his labelmates Gregory Page and Gilbert Castellanos, have paid off. All three artists won San Diego Music Awards in 2006.

The story behind these recent accomplishments is compelling because it illuminates a growing trend in the entertainment industry. If musicians can learn to successfully manage their artistic and business responsibilities, their careers can be extremely fulfilling and lucrative. There is more potential than ever before because record production and distribution have been made accessible to the population at large through the Internet.

However, Croce's personal story and the events that have transpired to help him get to where he is today is perhaps the most compelling tale of all. Coincidence, fortune, and tragedy have all played a hand. "I have had quite an unusual life. It has been filled with such extreme experiences." Croce has had the unique opportunity to interact and perform with many of his own musical heroes, from Václav Havel and Ry Cooder to Ray Charles and B.B. King. His own music career, which has been very successful, has taken him around the world and back. His records have consistently made an impact on an impressive cross-section of radio stations and formats.

Croce's unique history and experiences have prepared him well for his responsibilities at Seedling Records. However, managing one's art as both the artist and as the CEO will short-circuit the left brain of most musicians in short order. For Croce, the journey started with re-assessing his major label career, with BMG, several years ago. "My catalog was given to Windham Hill [by BMG], and I was worried that it was the wrong place. I spoke to the president of Windham Hill and asked if they were going to promote my music, and he said they had no plans to do anything with it." Croce realized that he could raise awareness of his music in ways that his major label supporters wouldn't. "If they weren't going to work the music after I left, then it wasn't really worth them having it."

He tried something that was (and still is) totally unheard of—acquiring the rights to his master recordings from the major labels that had produced them. This idea alone goes against one of the fundamental tenets of the major label business model—the back catalog. Coincidence and fortune were in Croce's corner. BMG was going through a difficult transition. "At the time, BMG was in a state of upheaval. Everyone was either losing their jobs or taking cover." Because Croce dealt with Windham Hill and not BMG, he slipped

through the cracks and succeeded in being, reportedly, the first artist to ever acquire his masters through such negotiations. "When BMG found out that Windham Hill had sold me my masters, the president of BMG freaked out. I think it was the general chaos going on at the time that made it possible."

Sprouting Seedling Records

Croce has always loved music and his experience with creating art within the constructs of the major label paradigm gave him a unique sense of how business is done. Combined with his compassion for artists in the independent realm, his approach strikes an important balance between these two worlds. Croce's desire is to enable artists when they need it most—as they are developing their audience and their art—without binding them to long-term relationships that may not support them in the future.

This model is based on lessons about the music industry that Croce has personally learned, a concept that gave rise to the label's name: Seedling Records. "[Seedling] defines the goal of the company. It's to help artists outside of the mainstream to be heard, to be a launching pad for them to grow and get bigger and have greater opportunities"

Croce reflects on the reasoning that separates Seedling and other independent labels from the old-school music industry.

"Greed is a huge factor. There are thousands of indie labels and they use all their resources to promote music that they love and hope they can break even. They're in love with the music they are putting out." Seedling clearly doesn't try to mimic the major labels. Artists always own their own publishing rights and master recordings.

While Seedling is not genre specific, Croce prefers the label's recordings to be organic, self-produced, and comprised of acoustic instrumentation. This approach made Gregory Page and Gilbert Castellanos both very appealing to Croce. "I was looking for music that was raw. In every genre you have stuff that's raw and that's more interesting to me. You hear the truth and that's been more inspiring than perfection."

Daily Grind: Running an Independent Record Label

Independent artists know all too well that they must wear many hats if they want to succeed. Croce faces the same challenge, but on a different level, because he is responsible for supporting other artists beside himself. At BMG, Croce had established distribution agreements with Polygram and Virgin. "I had really solid distribution domestically and strong international distribution." Seedling also manages online distribution for Amazon, iTunes, emusic, and Rhapsody. "The online music is going to greatly replace the brick and mortar. It's easy to go online and find anything you want. You go into a record store and if they don't have what you're looking for, they say we can get it for you in two weeks."

The success of the digital distribution platform is undeniable, measured by the sale of iPods, mp3 cell phones, and the prolifera-



tion of online distributors. Croce laments the changing of the guard. "I'm sad in a way because I really like the physical part of it. I like to hold the album because that always connects it. You get to know the artist better through the physical manifestation."

Croce knows that the major labels rely very heavily on very expensive promotional outlets like radio. "Majors have spent money on a lot of useless ideas. It's the nature of being multi-national. No one gives them a break and radio is a major expense." Seedling can't compete financially with the likes of BMG, but Croce does use independent marketing and PR firms in the U.S. and Europe on occasion to help bolster specific promotional campaigns. Developing grassroots campaigns is also largely the domain of independent labels and artists. "Word of mouth is more powerful than a full page ad in *Rolling Stone*." Adding to the complexity of managing his relationships is the fact that each of the artists on Seedling appeal to different demographics, which means different publications and media outlets.

In many ways, Seedling has a business edge over the majors. "The indies have an advantage in a respect. The majors spend so much money in the recording and the acquisition of the group [or artist]." Major labels routinely spend a quarter of a million dollars on recording a priority release. That kind of investment requires an enormous return in order to justify continuing. These days an independent artist could produce a top-notch record for \$10,000-\$15,000. The smaller

investment translates into a quicker rate of return as the sale of a single CD can often represent several dollars profit per CD. First-time major label releases often pay artists as little as 60 cents per sold disc. "Indies offer flexibility and freedom from market trends," Croce says. Beyond the math, there is also a thrill in supporting music at the independent level. "[Music fans] want to feel that they've discovered something that no one else has heard." Trying to sell a product with built-in integrity and authenticity is also a business advantage. "Image is 90 percent of what the majors are selling. A good looking group is a priority over the substance."

Seedling Branches Out to the Internet

Croce would like to see the community of artists at Seedling grow and develop. "The roster will definitely grow. It's a launching pad for rising and talented artists." Croce encourages Seedling artists to grow in every direction available to them and to participate in their own career development. "I consider it, truly, just a launching pad for the unsigned artist. By working it, we all benefit. I'm doing it for the music."

Seedling Records and many other independent labels are facing interesting opportunities as a result of the impact the Internet has had on record distribution. Label websites, artist websites, distribution websites, and retail websites all come into the mix at some point and it isn't always clear which online promotional channel will get the desired results.



AJ CROCE

Seedling Records Finds Fertile Ground

Croce recalls one particularly productive promotional campaign. "With [my recent release] Cantos, I gave one song away for free for one day on Napster and emusic. Because of that it became the album of the week on both websites." Sometimes the Internet is an amazing way to reach a huge number of people, a game of numbers. "We had a ton of downloads because of that," Croce recalls. Of course, online promotion still gains from being incorporated with more established advertising methods. Sometimes simpler is better. "Print has a more captive audience than email. Every label wishes they knew the exact thing to do. You pursue your idea and sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't."

Online distribution through iTunes or Amazon.com is fast becoming the channel of choice for major and independent releases alike. Distribution has traditionally been expensive in terms of capital and time. But receiving orders over the Internet is cheaper, faster, and requires less overhead in terms of inventory maintenance. Croce sees the future of distribution going more or less completely digital. "My feeling is that there will be specialty stores that cater to having music on both vinyl and CDs. They will always exist as a niche market. But more and more, everything will go to the Internet—purely digital releases."

Cultivating Authenticity

As a child Croce remembers being sung to sleep by Rod Stewart. His up-close experiences seem to have shown him that beyond an individual's celebrity is a real human being with an authentic and heart-felt message that needs to be expressed. Croce is still an artist at heart. His affection toward his instruments and his music remains very strong. He composes in his digital ProTools home studio. He prefers to remain organic with his instrumentation. To this end, Croce sports an impressive collection of keyboards designed to enable his different creative moods, including a 1973 Fender Rhodes, a 1916 upright piano, a 1938 grand piano, the classic b3, and even a 350-pound Yamaha CP70 electric piano.

As an aside, Croce lamented the memory of lugging the CP70 from gig to gig back in the day. But, as many piano players know, you can't get a real "piano" sound without a real piano. Having received an \$80,000 sponsored Steinway grand piano for one of his tours, Croce recalls the trafficking of said piano by the venue staff — typically "two drunks and a bartender." Watching that beautiful instrument being hauled up and down stairs and on and off of tractor-trailers did a number on Croce's nerves. "I was scared watching them move it!"

Seedling Records is focused on revealing the artist's most authentic sound, which can be quite an effort, as it was on Gilbert Castellanos' latest release, *Underground*. Castellanos had very specific expectations regarding the quality and character of his record. The approach relied entirely on analogue equipment for tone. Vintage hardware

and choice microphones imparted the sound that Castellanos was looking for. Castellanos and Croce parted with convention by deciding not to have the record mastered. Mastering is a finalizing procedure applied to nearly every professional release, which increases the final volume and adds a finishing touch. Mastering typically reduces the dynamic range (soft to loud) of a recording and Castellanos didn't want that impact to overshadow the intimacy of the original recordings. But the CDs came back from the manufacturer with errors, so Croce sent it to an engineer friend in search of a solution. They transferred the master recordings onto two-inch tape and then back to digital format. That simple process ended up making all the difference and fixed all the errors without needing further mastering techniques.

The Next Generation

Croce's career has already spanned many phases of development. He seems at home in his changing role at Seedling Records. He also has learned important lessons about the consequences of fame and fortune. "When you are related to anyone famous, it's hard for anyone around you to not think about that relationship. There's an obsession with renown and celebrity in our world. Anyone who is near to someone who is a celebrity has to really make a point of finding their own individuality. You have no control over your destiny in that way. Those opportunities happen once. After that it doesn't matter who you are."

Croce's unique challenges matched with his unique opportunities and abilities have brought with them both illuminating and painful experiences. "You either accept it and

take all the positive things that come with it and all the negative things that come with it or you go to therapy or both." These experiences have influenced his music and his diligent approach to Seedling Records as well as the artists with whom he works. "When I was younger I had to practice harder, work harder. I had to do it as well as I possibly could, because everyone around me was just going to assume that I'd get opportunities because of my name."

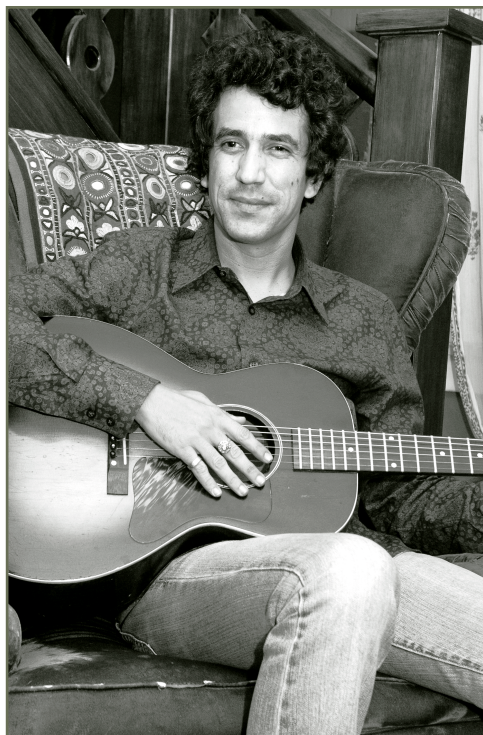
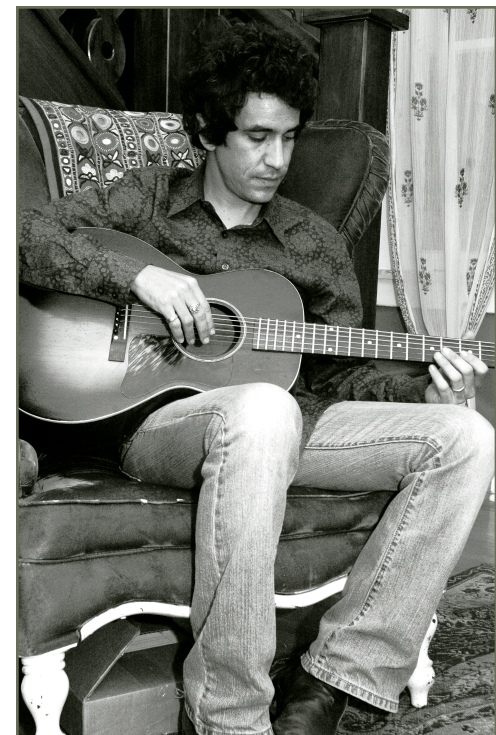
All the hard work paid off last September when A.J. Croce, Gregory Page, and Gilbert

Castellanos won San Diego Music Awards in their respective categories. Naturally, the recognition pleases Croce and his labelmates. Their success is helping to illuminate the potential of independent success. They're also demonstrating how authenticity and creativity can be more economical in the long run. Simply allowing artists to create their art their way is both wise and poetic. "As I've gotten older I've wanted simplicity. I want to say as much as I can with as little as possible. I want to be clear. It's the nature of poetry."

You can learn more about A.J. Croce at <http://www.ajcroce.com> and about Seedling Records and other recording artists at <http://www.seedlingrecords.com>.

"When I was younger, I had to practice harder, work harder. I had to do it as well as I possibly could, because everyone around me was just going to assume that I'd get opportunities because of my name."

— A.J. Croce





Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



UNCLE JOSH GRAVES



Bluegrass lost another of its pioneering greats when "Uncle Josh" Graves passed away on September 30 at the age of 81. Born Burkett "Buck" Graves, he was born in Tellico Plains, Tennessee. Just nine years old when he first heard Cliff Carlisle play dobro with the Carlisle Brothers, Graves was immediately smitten and formed a lasting friendship with Carlisle and an insatiable love for the dobro.

As a result of this disease he had first one leg and then the other amputated. At a special tribute to him at the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America (SPBMA) shortly after his first leg was amputated, he opened his keynote speech from his wheelchair in typical fashion with, "Boy, I'd always heard that doctors cost an arm and a leg!" The bluegrass world will miss Uncle Josh Graves, but we'll have his music to enjoy forever.



Graves (center, front) with Flatt & Scruggs

By 1942 Graves was playing with the Pierce Brothers in Gatlinburg. Stints with Esco Hansen and Mac Weisman followed before he moved on to become a part of the Wheeling Jamboree with Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper, with whom he remained throughout the mid-1950s. During one performance at the Grand Ole Opry with the Coopers, Graves' dobro playing made a big impression on Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs, who invited him to play with their group Flatt and Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys — as a bass player no less!

After a few months, however, Graves took off on the dobro and never looked back, having worked out how to adapt Earl Scruggs innovative three-finger banjo roll technique to the dobro. The dobro world would never be the same, and every serious dobro player since has given praise to Uncle Josh as their inspiration. It was with Flatt and Scruggs that Graves' great sense of humor became recognized when he created the stage persona of Uncle Josh. He soon became an integral part of the Flatt and Scruggs and the Foggy Mountain Boys' performances.

Largely due to Graves' electrifying three-finger style dobro playing and his innovative slow blues licks, the dobro was kept alive through the late 1950s when rock and roll and electrified instruments were all the rage. Graves, who played with Flatt and Scruggs until they disbanded in 1969, is generally con-

sidered to be the most important early pioneer of modern bluegrass dobro music. As Jerry Douglas, today's master dobro player with Alison Krauss and Union Station, expressed to the *Nashville Tennessean*, "He's like Bill Monroe to the mandolin or Earl Scruggs to the banjo. If you want to learn the instrument, you listen to Josh."

Graves leaves behind a large collection of timeless recordings, having recorded not only with Flatt and Scruggs but also with J.J. Cale, Steve Young, and Kris Kristofferson among others.

Graves was plagued by diabetes and attendant poor circulation during his later years but still remained active and full of life and humor. As a result of this disease he had first one leg and then the other amputated. At a special tribute to him at the Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music in America (SPBMA) shortly after his first leg was amputated, he opened his keynote speech from his wheelchair in typical fashion with, "Boy, I'd always heard that doctors cost an arm and a leg!" The bluegrass world will miss Uncle Josh Graves, but we'll have his music to enjoy forever.

LOCAL CONCERTS

On the local scene, November saw a great all-gospel bluegrass show presented by the San Diego Bluegrass Society at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Clairemont. Six bands performed a variety of gospel and religious music from the bluegrass repertoire, ranging from classic four-part harmony a cappella gospel numbers and traditional classics like "I'll Fly Away" to lesser known numbers. The bands included the Full Deck, the Virtual Strangers, the Soledad Mountain Band, the Grateful Hooligans, the Gospel According to John, and the Bluegrass Ramblers. Attendance was great and a good time was had by all.

Harvey Reid is coming to the Carlsbad Village Theatre for a performance on Friday, January 12. Look for more information in next month's column, or check out www.woodpecker.com. You'll also want to mark your calendar for the SDBS presentation of **Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper, featuring Audie Blaylock** in concert at the Carlsbad Theatre on Sunday, January 28. For tickets and information, contact Mike Tatar at staghorn2@cox.net or stop by the information table at any SDBS event. Look for an article in the January *Troubadour* about this special San Diego appearance by the reigning "fiddle player of the year" and his great band.

In the meantime, have a great holiday season and keep on pickin'.

The Zen of Recording

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

NICE GUYS FINISH ... AGAIN

Last month, we took a look at how life and other unforeseen circumstances can conspire to unravel even the best laid of plans. Careful planning and realistic expectations can certainly help to minimize the negative impact of these little "time bandits," as well as a familiarity with potential land mines and the best way to step around them. Let's consider, then, a few of the biggest offenders.

1. The Click. It seems almost funny to say it, but I've probably seen this factor into more late or failed projects than just about any other single factor. Why? With some people, they can no do ze click. Modern producers really, really like metronomes. It increases the odds that everyone will be "locked into the tempo," because any variation in time keeping (speeding up or slowing down) will be quickly apparent to the musicians and producer. It also aids in editing, as entire sections can be cut from one part of a song and moved to an entirely different place without the need to worry about matching the tempos. The ability to choose from different takes is an invaluable tool as well. Those proficient in playing to a click can make subtle adjustments to their timing and feel, making whatever imperfections virtually unnoticeable. Others may find it almost impossible, especially if they've never done it before.

Tempo is one of the big things I listen for when attending a performance by an artist I'll be recording in the future. If I notice quite a bit of variation, I will ask the artist if they have played to a click. If they can and have one, I suggest that they practice with one so that they can get used to the process. Oftentimes, they don't have access to a metronome, but they do have a drum machine. This can work just as well, and for many it's even easier to play to. Just set up a simple repeating pattern (a factory preset with a complementary feel is all you need) and adjust the tempo until it feels right. When you can play the song through without too much timing variation, you're in the proverbial ballpark.

Many sessions are ruined by an inex-

perienced producer's insistence that the musicians adhere strictly to the click. Why? I've seen great artists who were unable to play to a click for an hour, only to lay down an amazing performance as soon as the click was turned off. I personally know drummers who are amazingly gifted time keepers, human metronomes if you will, that no habla click. If you can measure your edits from bass drum hit to bass drum hit then, buddy, these guys are



your click. The bottom line is that we are recording music, not math. Many of the greatest recordings were done without a metronome, so don't get caught up in the "grid wars."

2. Editing. Nothing consumes time like sifting through myriad takes like a prospector panning for gold (records). Depending on the type of recording you're doing, this can be a very intensive (and, yes, boring) process.

In all humility, I will tell you that this is something at which I have become very, very fast. Complex edits like compiling together eight vocal takes into one performance can take about an hour. Three takes of a simple bass line, 15 to 20 minutes. Crazy bass lines with lots of movement, 45 minutes. Correcting timing on an acoustic guitar track, 25 minutes. Backing vocals are sometimes done by the time they come in from the booth. That said, it is not uncommon to require a full day for a single vocal and up to a week or even two to accomplish the editing for just the basic tracks.

Some projects just need to be left alone, letting the imperfections stand as beauty marks (sometimes referred to as Stones-ing). Other types of music may need a blinding sheen, à la Steely Dan or Timbaland. Whatever your stylistic situation, your editing skills are something



Sven-Erik Seaholm

you'll want to have a very good sense of when it comes to managing your time within any given project.

3. Tuning. One thing that can sneak up on you is tuning issues. Many times the perfect guitar part for a song is arrived at toward the end of a long day. Upon hearing it back at a later session, it may sound out of tune or "chorusy" (gotta love that studio lingo). Sometimes you leave it as it is. Other times, you just have to record it all over again. Taking several short breaks during the day can actually help you to keep a fresher perspective with regard to variables in performance like pitch, timing, feel, and tuning. I keep my session lengths to six hours for this very reason.

In a band situation you'll run into far fewer problems if everyone uses the same tuner. This is because although they say they're calibrated to A=440Hz, there is quite often a variance among different tuner brands or even tuners of the same brand. Periodically checking one's tuning should be an integral part of the recording process for every musician involved.

4. Trust. At the risk of putting too fine a point on it, nothing is more important to any relationship than trust. In an album recording project, there are potentially hundreds of decisions that need to be made quickly and decisively. I spoke earlier about my editing speed. If every single edit I made had to be run through a committee or some other involved process, time and progress would slow to a crawl. It is imperative to have your client's complete trust to get things done in a timely manner, and nothing wins trust like a good result. After doing a comp edit of a vocal or other part, play it for the artist to make sure they are comfortable with all your decisions, change whatever they ask so they can at least hear the difference, and you'll keep moving forward.

Hopefully, paying attention to these little things will lead you toward a more streamlined working method, making you a more productive producer!

Sven-Erik Seaholm writes songs, sings them, and records them. He also records others doing so, and provides art, mastering, and duplication services through his company, Kitsch & Sync Production (www.kaspro.com).

David N. Jones Violins

4134 Adams Avenue, Loft 2
San Diego, CA 92116
Press #02 to ring the shop



We buy, sell, restore, and repair
VIOLINS, VIOLAS, CELLI,
BASSES & BOWS

619-280-8997

www.davidnjonesviolins.com

A Natural Alternative to Current Funeral Practices

Thresholds is a socially responsible, non-institutional funeral establishment. We provide full-service natural deathcare (no embalming), specializing in in-home funerals and church and graveside services. Direct cremation and burial options are available for those preferring minimal services.



Thresholds Home and Family-Directed Funerals
SERVING THE SAN DIEGO MUSIC COMMUNITY

Phone: 619/390-1411 • Fax: 619/334-2783
homefunerals@cox.net • www.thresholds.us
Barbara Kernan, R.N., BSN, FDR 2330
Eric Putt, MBA, FDR 2173

THRESHOLDS IS A 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION. FD-788

Empowering families and friends to reclaim the sanctity of death.

Valley Music

Guitars • Lessons • Sheet Music
Amplifiers • Sound Systems
Stringed Instruments
Band Instruments



Sales • Service • Rentals
530 E. Main Street
El Cajon, CA 92020
(619) 444-3161



Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

ON (RE)ASSIGNMENT IN HOLLYWOOD

"I thought you were dead."
Now, that's a haunting phrase, a greeting to melt the marrow of moron and monarch when expressed with no more emotion than one might feel when discovering an old, forgotten, useless set of keys. I'll thank Oliver Stone and Richard Boyle for including it so often in their screenplay of *Salvador* back in '86, when the phrase first laid its tragic egg in my rutting mind. (By the way, I've never seen a finer screen performance in my life than that of James Woods in *Salvador*, finer than even Dustin Hoffman in *Midnight Cowboy* and Richard Thomas in *Red Sky at Morning*, I swear.)

A couple of weeks ago I was at the L.A. Music Awards. Trini Lopez's wife misunderstood me when I was conversing with her husband. I was telling Trini about my disappointment that his character had been killed off so early in the film *The Dirty Dozen* when his wife approached and told me, "You know, it happens so often when we walk down the street and somebody recognizes him. They always say, 'I thought you were dead,' just like you did."

While a miracle held my homicidal rage in check, we explained that what she'd heard wasn't actually what I'd said. Then, from the indignant looks on both their faces after I shared my fond memories of Trini's appearances as Jose Jimenez on the old *Ed Sullivan Show*, I decided they both probably needed hearing aids as I scurried on to mingle and mangle with others.

"I thought you were dead." Sheesh. Then there was Chuck Negron, the unjustly exiled heart of Three Dog Night (if Corey Wells is the soul) who appreciated it when I greeted him with, "I'm glad you're alive." I've treasured his autobiography *Three Dog Nightmare*, since its first publication. There are probably many people, Chuck and I agreed (okay, maybe I called him Mr. Negron), who likely think he's dead, while Three Dog Night continues to perform (think Two Dog Night: Garfield and Rin Tin Tin but no Lassie).

Dinner was served. At \$250 a plate, one expected more than a limp salad, a handful of peas, and a cell phone-sized gob of chicken, but as my ticket had been paid for by a gracious host, I saved my complaints for the final good-byes. All in all, though, as a celebratory feast, it was clinically dead.

The most memorable part of the evening, to me, occurred right before the meal as our tables' ten illustrious guests were introducing ourselves to each other.

There was something delightfully familiar about the tall blonde with the dramatic, husky voice who was sitting directly across from me. No sooner had she proclaimed loudly that she knew who I was, than she began singing my signature tune, *Knowing Me, Touching Me*, to the amusement of the others, who insisted I give them my card so they could soon immerse themselves in my and the Troy Dante Inferno's moist *oeuvre*. Then, to my astonishment, the blonde reached into her purse and



The gently twisted Mr. Sinatra

pulled out a fistful of CDs: *Moonlight Sinatra* (an album I haven't even finished yet), happily passing them around to everyone at our table. She explained that her brother was my biggest fan. Her brother, she proudly declared, was Goober Snott.

Holy safety pins, Batman! Goober Snott, founder and lead singer of the first, greatest folk-punk group of the early '80s, the Travelling Pincushions! Their first album, *Folk You!*, had exhilarated me and killed all my plants every time I put it on!

Oh, how time flies. I silently recalled the tragic story about Goober Snott dying from blood poisoning after self-tattooing the word "Goober" across his own stomach or somewhere below his navel back in '85 or '86.

"He still raves about you, Hose," said this statuesque diva, who introduced herself as Lacticia Snott, the silver studs in her tongue and through her left eyeball gleaming as she reached forward to stroke my palm lasciviously.

"Your brother's a fan?" I asked. "I thought he was dead."

I could have kicked myself.

"Oh, he is. Been dead for 20 years," Lacticia explained. "But I talk to him every day." No need for earphones here, I surmised. I could relate.

"I've got all the Pincushions albums," I confessed. "You know my favorite?"

"The last one, probably," she smiled.

"Right! *The History of Roots Music*.

Their versions of Quincy Jones and Gerald Fried's music for the TV miniseries *Roots*. Brilliant!"

"I did the liner notes for that one, too," said Lacticia, excusing herself to powder the piercings in her nose.

It was then, as she got up and I saw on her skin the word "Goober" peeking out of the top of her hip-huggers, that my fantasies for my own life before the next sunrise quickly shrivelled up and died.

See you next year, God willing.



RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

TV YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

I was going to devote this month's column to new jazz recordings until I watched the worst TV show ever!

It's called *PlayMania*, and I think it's on at midnight every night on GSN, the Game Show Network.

I stumbled upon *PlayMania* last month while flipping through the channels looking for a Mexican League baseball game on ESPN Desponibles (or something like that). I stopped changing the channels when I saw a stunning young blonde woman smiling into the camera. Like any normal married man, I decided to stop there, at Channel 342, and take in all that this vision had to impart!

Her name was Shandy, like the British drink made from lemonade and beer, and, as a host, she was not very bright. Her elevator stopped a few floors from the top; she was playing 18 holes with just a putter; the tip of her iceberg was the iceberg; I've met hammers that were smarter than Shandy. For example, she had never heard, nor could she pronounce, the names of the three Hawaiian islands Oahu, Molokai, and Maui.

The object of *PlayMania* is either to fill in the blanks, unscramble a name, or to find the common thread among several words, as in the above Hawaiian reference.

When Shandy starts a game, it seems to take ten minutes, while she waltzes around the tiny studio waiting until someone finally gets through to participate. Most of the callers I heard seemed



Jim McInnes


to mumble their answers. And what answers they were! To the question "Who are the top five celebrities that wear eyeglasses?" came answers like Kevin Costner, Julia Roberts, Howard Stern, and Ray Charles! After about an hour of this nonsense, a few viewers managed to come up with the "winning" names: Drew Carey, Elton John, Woody Allen, David Letterman, and Stephen Colbert (whom Shandy called Stephen Coal-Burt!)

I have no idea when this broadcast competition occurs because both times I've seen this show, there's been a disclaimer in the corner of the screen that reads, "Don't text message. This is an encore presentation." No problem, I don't even know how to text message! These guys hype the text message thing (at 99 cents per message) so often that I'm thinking that the real money makers here are the producers and cellular providers, especially in light of the weak prize money, which ranges from \$5 to \$250. Hmmm. . . .

Even more unbelievable, between the contest segments viewers can email the show with questions asking how to deal with life's harsh realities! Just what I'd do — ask a 22-year-old babe for advice!

You should watch *PlayMania* some night when you have insomnia. You'll be amazed that a show like this ever got on TV, and you'll probably watch in stunned disbelief, as I did, for three or four hours!

They must be doing something right!



Ponce's Mexican Restaurant
Monday thru Saturday: 10am-9:30pm
Closed Sunday

4050 Adams Avenue
San Diego CA 92116
P- 619. 282-4413
F- 619. 640-1750

CHRIS RICHARDS & SIX PALMS PRESENT

Greg Laswell & Anya Marina



Saturday, December 9, 8pm (doors open @ 7pm)
Concert/Potluck/BYOB in Rancho Santa Fe
Tickets: \$20 @ the door
Info/Reservations/Directions: chris@nethere.com
760/331-8373 • www.myspace.com/sixpalmspresents

All Makes All Sizes

TIRE DEPOT INC.

280-0331

New & Used

3189 Adams Ave.
San Diego, CA 92116



GARY TILLERY



THIRD ANNUAL

2006 OCEAN BEACH HOLIDAY MUSIC FESTIVAL

OCEAN BEACH HOLIDAY PARADE & LIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL!
DECEMBER 2, 1PM-9PM
Newport Ave in the pier parking lot. PARADE @ 5PM. Look for the Beach Music Mafia Band & rock out with 'The Xmas'!

OCEAN BEACH HOLIDAY MUSIC FESTIVAL FOOD & TOY DRIVE
over 30 San Diego artists singing the praises of holiday cheer at the site of the Ocean Beach Farmer's Market. Our mission is collecting "toys" and "non-perishable" foods for needy families in the area - while continuing the tradition of bringing stellar music to the community.

*** DECEMBER 6, 3:30 8pm ***
Scott Wilson, Chuck Schiela, Barbara Nesbitt, Sirens Lure, The Grams, Israel Maldonado, Marie Haddad, Chelsea & the Dreamwalkers, Phil Harmonic, Harpo, Peter Hall, Jeff Berkley, Bart Mendez, and more...

*** DECEMBER 13, 3:30 8pm ***
Podunk Nowhere, Chuck Schiela, Jstra Kelly, Jefferson Jay, Barbara Nesbitt, Chad Ferrai, Julie Mack, Sara Petite, Greg Vaughan & more...

TOYS 4 TOTS HOLIDAY CHEER / O'CONNELLS
*** DECEMBER 13, 9pm ***
Citizen Band, Sara Petite, Christopher Cash, Marie Haddad
1310 Morena Blvd. Special Buffet, Full Bar, Billiards...
ADMISSION: Any child under 10.

WINSTON'S THE OFFICIAL OCEAN BEACH HOLIDAY CHEER
*** DECEMBER 21, 9pm ***
The Grams, Call Down Fire, Podunk Nowhere and friends...

BEACH MUSIC MAFIA

fostering peace on earth
and san diego music
one note at a time.

<http://myspace.com/beachmusicmafia>



Zoë Keating Journeys with Her Cello to Solo Success

by Mike Alvarez

Consider, if you will, the noble cello. Along with the viola, it is a middle child in the family of string instruments. Its range is sometimes likened to that of the human voice, and its timbre has been described as "haunting" so often that it's almost a cliché. Long a staple of classical chamber groups and symphony orchestras, the cello is making remarkable inroads into an astonishing variety of musical genres and Zoë Keating is one extraordinary artist who is leading the charge.

Having played since childhood, her musical education is firmly grounded in

the classics, with studies that have taken her from her native Canada to England, New York, and Italy. Yet these were only the first of the musical journeys she would undertake with her cello. Just this year alone, she has been to Italy, France, England, Canada, and all across the United States. She is a highly sought-after accompanist whose association with high-profile artists is increasing her visibility in the world of popular music. Always keeping her ears and mind open, she states that she naturally transitioned from classical music to other genres.

As a soloist, she is pioneering the art of looped arrangements created live on stage. With an impressive array of pedals

and looping gear, she is able to single-handedly perform concerts that sound as if an entire ensemble of cellists were onstage. By adding and subtracting parts on the fly, she creates music that ebbs, flows, and evolves. Yet as high-tech as this sounds, she steadfastly insists that the raw material for her music will always be the natural sound of an acoustic cello with no effects. She is a master at drawing the most from her instrument, a cello she has played since the age of 12. With her extensive knowledge of bowing and plucking techniques, Keating produces an amazing variety of tonal colorations. Long silky notes as well as strident percussive beats can be heard in her songs. Bowed passages can be bright and shiny one minute, deep and foreboding the next. At times, bell-like tones ring from her cello. At others, the deeply layered notes resemble the sound of a church's pipe organ.

To date she has recorded two solo CDs, the first of which, the five-song EP *One Cello X 16*, whetted fans' appetites for the full-length follow up, *One Cello X 16: Natoma*, an instrumental ode to a San Francisco warehouse that she and a number of other artists had converted into a performance and living space. Sadly, it is no longer in operation, and the music reflects the turmoil that marked its existence. When asked about artists or composers who have influenced her, she is hard-pressed to name any, although she does allow that some of her favorites inform her work. She counts ambient pop groups Sigur Ros and the Cocteau Twins among them, and one can certainly sense something of their vibe, if not their sound, in her music.

One can appreciate Keating's music on numerous levels. First, one is struck by her clever use of technology and instrumental prowess as both require a high degree of expertise, especially during live performances. The compositional sophistication of her songs is next. While the individual parts can be deceptively sim-



Zoë Keating in the Nevada desert

ple, she makes intelligent choices and arranges them in surprising ways. Each piece is a journey in and of itself. Which brings us to the final level: an emotional one. After all is said and done, is it music that is pleasing to hear? The answer is a resounding "yes!" It's smart music for sophisticated ears, but it also works on a more visceral level. It has a cinematic quality that lends itself well to film, and she has, in fact, composed music for independent films as well as the documentary *Frozen Angels*.

Last year she started the Amplified Cello Society online (www.tribe.net) with the intent to create a place for cellists to share information about instruments, equipment, recording techniques, and a host of other issues that were formerly the exclusive domain of guitarists. This growing Internet community is proving to be a valuable resource for cellists who now have to compete with rock instrumentation on stage and in the studio. Recent topics have included questions about MIDI, composite materials as a substitute for wooden instruments, electronic effects units, and methods of amplification. As the society's founder as well as the most prominent practitioner of the art, she regularly contributes comments and advice.

Keating recently parted company with Rasputina, the anachronistically wacky cello goth-rock outfit headed by Melora Creager. Her four-year tenure as the group's second cellist and vocalist yielded two albums: the studio effort *Frustration Plantation* and the live *A Radical Recital*. With its calendar firmly set a century in the past, Rasputina toured the club and theater circuit relentlessly, always performing in period costume. Many of their devoted fans came to shows similarly attired. Keating speaks fondly of her time in the group, declaring her days as a touring rock musician to be "a blast," but creative and business considerations led her to take a different path.

She started the year in the midst of a tour with British songstress Imogen Heap, opening shows with her solo cello loops and then later playing as an accompanist to the headliner. The cello provided a warm acoustic tone that contrasted well with the electronic beats and synthesizers that are such a prominent part of Heap's sound. Their San Diego appearance took place at the downtown House of Blues. Keating had such a good experience on that tour that she feels confident they will work together again in the future.

More recently she has joined the

California Guitar Trio at a number of their tour dates, one of which brought her to an Acoustic Music San Diego gig last month. She began her hour-long solo set with the pensive "Sun Will Set" from *Natoma*. Starting with a simple riff, she meticulously crafted layers of cello loops until the concert hall reverberated with swirling sounds. Her expression while playing is one of deep and intense concentration, so it's a little surprising to find her so soft-spoken, almost to the point of shyness. Yet when she is seated at the cello, her confidence is undeniable.

Along with other songs from the same album, she treated the audience to some new material that will be included on a forthcoming CD. "Don't Worry" is an upbeat song she composed onstage during her performance when her electronic equipment malfunctioned. She also played something that was written especially for a very unusual gig that took place the middle of the Nevada desert. On July 16, 2005, the Trinity nuclear detonation was recreated in a somber observation of the 60th anniversary of that world-changing event, and she played after the blast. A series of startling photographs from that day, dubbed "SimNuke," is posted in the images gallery of her website www.zoekeating.com. Keating ended her set with a song called "Tetrishead" that may very well become her signature piece. Its chugging rhythm is the perfect energetic backdrop for the interweaving textures and melodies that follow.

When the California Guitar Trio took the stage, they revealed that they had been using Keating's CD as introductory music at their concerts, so they were very thrilled to have her join them on the tour. In the middle of their spirited set, they invited her up to play with them on a new song called "Andromeda," adding that she will record it with them in the studio. With a new album in progress and growing numbers of artists lining up to work with her, it is clear that Zoë Keating is making a name for herself on the strength of her own artistry and drive.



Tiger Mountain the debut CD from Sara Petite

"Petite soaks her music with passion and emotion and is able to touch us with this wonderful debut."

- Freddy Cells, Roots Time, Belgium

"Her sound is distilled and refined like a smooth whiskey."

- John Phillip Wylie, SD Troubadour

★ 2005 Semi-finalist - International Songwriting Contest, Nashville, TN

★ 2006 Finalist/Performer - Great Waters Folk Festival, NH

Order Tiger Mountain at:
sarapetite.com

Rebecca's coffeehouse

— voted best scones in town

open 24 hours
Thursday • Friday • Saturday

open mic/family jam
Every Thursday @ 8pm

free wireless internet

3015 Juniper St. (at Fern)

619 284-FOOD • 619 459-3239 (special orders)

www.rebeccascoffeehouse.com

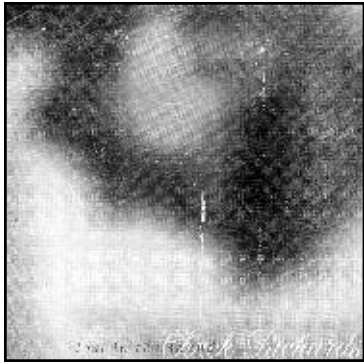
Steve Covault

Professional Music Photography

sgc@san.rr.com

(619) 723-9565

<http://SteveCovault.com>



Chuck Richards Lost in the Sound

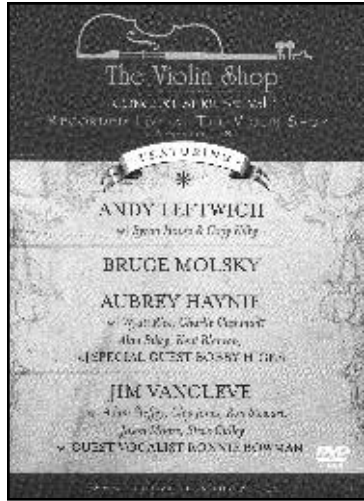
by Jody Wood

Mixing blues, country, and pop influences, Chuck Richards has created seven songs that grow bigger and prettier with each listen. Subtle nuances softly fill the spaces between thoughtful, sweetly sung, heart-felt lyrics. *Lost in the Sound* is uplifting without being corny and sad without being sappy. Richards molds simplicity with intricacy to form catchy hooks and melodies that seem to reveal more each time you hear them.

Lyrical, Richards comes across as open and honest about his life, his troubles, and sitting on the porch petting his dog. His voice is warm and soft, and he sounds hopeful, even when singing, "... I'm nowhere if not with you," on the album's second track. Sounding down and out and disappointed in the world around him, Richards sells himself and the listener on being lost without this recently lost love. "After That" is a song about being broke with nowhere to go, but the music moves along quickly and is anything but bleak. By far the fastest track of the collection, "After That" is over almost as quickly as it gets you rambling. "Anyway" follows with a sense of comfort and well-being that comes from being in love without a care in the world. Falsetto harmonies bring life to the chorus, while piano warms up the verses. Richards doesn't over play the songs, but almost senses what is completely appropriate for each mood. "Becoming Myself" lays out a well-played instrumental break that digs down to the roots of Richards' influences. "Heart Attack Song" wraps up the album with banjo, slide guitar, and sparse percussion holding down a steady chug.

Handling the vocals, guitar, bass, banjo, ukulele, percussion, and foot stomping (according to the liner notes) himself, Richards has some help from Cady Truckee on the Wurlitzer, pump organ, and banjo, as well as Atom Orr on guitar, vocals, percussion, and synthesizer. Drums were provided by Matt Lynott.

Richards' lyrics make it clear that he's a thoughtful, introspective writer with a sense of where he's been and where he's going. He is also a man who cares about the world around him as the liner notes include links to several websites geared toward ending hunger, rape, and abuse. Thoughtful music from a thoughtful man.



Various Artists The Violin Shop Concert Series, Vol. 1

by Mike Alvarez

Bluegrass picking and fiddling are alive and well in the 21st century, and this DVD is all the proof you need. Recorded in Nashville, this disc documents special performances by a group of incredibly accomplished musicians who immediately show they mean business by trading hot licks on the opening number, a piece called "Ride the Wild Turkey," written by Darol Anger, a frequent faculty member at Mark O'Connor's Strings Conference, held here in San Diego every summer. Led by 26-year-old fiddler Jim VanCleve, the ensemble burns through this song from beginning to end. During the course of the concert we are treated to the talents of a number of fiddlers, including Aubrey Haynie, Andy Leftwich, Bobby Hicks, and Bruce Molsky, who performs as a soloist, singing and accompanying himself on fiddle and guitar.

Old standards stand side-by-side with original material penned by the likes of Stephane Grappelli, Bill Monroe, and, most important, by the musicians themselves. Particularly noteworthy are Leftwich's "Over Cincinnati" and VanCleve's "Faultline." Both pay respect to tradition, yet deliver a freshness and originality in their approach. Interestingly enough, both gentlemen put down the fiddles to play mandolin on these songs.

Lest it be thought that this DVD is centered solely around the fiddlers, a good part of the credit must be given to the fantastic players in the group. All of them are highly skilled musicians who are well-versed in their instruments as well as in the music they play. Their enthusiasm and love are quite evident as one watches them. Each has a moment of glory, and they obviously relish it.

The stage set is simple. A curtain is the backdrop and it appears that there is only one microphone for the whole group. Nevertheless, the sound is very clear and well-balanced. The use of multiple cameras allows for different angles so that the show remains visually interesting throughout. This manner of presentation is very appropriate and effective for the purely acoustic nature of the performance.

If one criticism can be leveled, it might be that we're not shown much stage banter between songs. In fact, nobody speaks until a few songs have been played. These guys are obviously having a great time, but since we don't get to see much of their personalities, the show comes across as a little clinical, and you know that couldn't have been the case. In the end, however, it's the music that really matters, and on that score this DVD delivers!

Available at www.theviolinshop.net.



Lee Coulter Stereo Stills

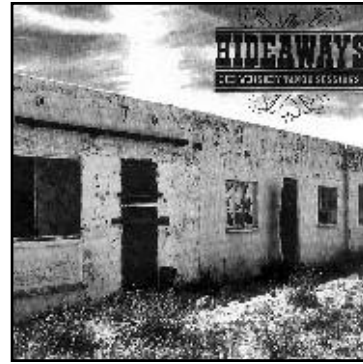
by Craig Yerkes

Ever since Jack Johnson hit it big, a steady stream of laid back surfer dudes with acoustic guitars have all been trying to be the first to make *Bubble Toes, Part Two*. A careless, casual listen to some of Lee Coulter's new CD, *Stereo Stills*, might push you into lumping this artist into that currently ubiquitous musical mold. Listen more closely and you'll find a hell of a lot more going on here than that. Don't judge this book by its cover.

Speaking of covers, the CD's cover photo says quite a bit about what you'll find inside. Coulter appears to be almost unable to contain his enthusiasm for music (like someone turned a Tasmanian Devil into a man and put a guitar in his hands!) and that vibe oozes out of the speakers from the get go. You certainly will find giddy, youthful, light-hearted, acoustic guitar-driven grooves that bring instant smiles and go down easy ("Love in a Bottle," "Kim Kimmy and the Peace Protesters"), but you'll also find that this music has amazing lyrical depth and soul. On the sneaky fourth track, "Uncle Sam," the Aussie transplant muses equal parts delighted, curious, and cautious about this strange new land he finds himself living in ("how the innocent lose when a criminal sues and they're meant to trust us with this justice overseas").

"Nonetheless" packs a serious punch with an insightful sermon against the quiet tragedies associated with the objectification of women by careless boys. The touching and beautiful ballad "Titanium" sneaks deeper lyrical water into a tune that the artist could just as easily have settled for something light and airy ("they don't ever show what happens after the credits roll...the hurt...the work that we do"). "Outside" completely sidesteps any chance of sounding preachy by mixing cautionary lyrics (warning us of the dangers involved in neglecting our inner outdoorsman) with a ridiculously good-time musical backdrop. "Dance of the Traveling Lovers" brings in new instruments (mandolin and violin), plus a wonderful guest vocal by Evan Bethany to create a contagious, knee slapping, Paul Simon-esque romp. As for hit singles, my money is on "Photograph" and/or "I Would Love" since that these tunes seem to mix the lighter side of the artist with his "old soul" side to the fullest effect.

By this point, I would usually have mentioned specific things about the vocal and/or instrumental performances, but to dwell on the finer details regarding performance seems a bit silly in this case. The writing, playing, and singing are all certainly top-notch, but more than any specific bright spots I could point out, the overall impression you're left with is that the music just falls off of this guy and you can't help but be swept into it. This is good time music that makes you dance and feeds your soul... must be an Aussie thing!

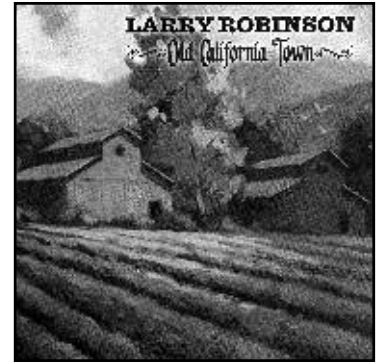


The Hideaways The Whiskey Tango Sessions

by Craig Yerkes

You know those kinds of quirky, somewhat obtuse albums that have to grow on you over time, their appeal sneaking up on you only after quite a few listens? Okay, so this is not one of those albums. If you don't like this music *immediately*, you never will. This music aims squarely at our inner Peter Fonda and hits a serious bulls eye. Most of us, from time to time, like to picture ourselves driving alone on a desert highway, tobacco and alcoholic products of choice near at hand (maybe even an open container), wind in our hair (or what's left of our hair), no responsibilities (no Blackberry or cell phone), lookin' for love on the run (maybe even unprotected), and every day is a wild adventure. *The Whiskey Tango Sessions* from the Hideaways is ready to take you headlong into that territory.

If what I've said so far hasn't given you enough of a hint as to the musical style of this disc, think the Jayhawks meet Tom Petty. The crew consists of the Whiskey Tango boys, plus an all-star cast of supporting players, including "Cactus" Jim Soldi (is there *anyone* who can turn every guitar solo into an *event* like this guy can?!), Sharon Whyte, Doug Meyer, and Tyler Macy (who produces the project and slings a *mean* baritone guitar). Lead vocal duties are shared among the Whiskey Tango guys, nicely mixing things up. I loved the light-hearted, tongue-in-cheek approach that the Hideaways employ on this recording. For instance, "El Centro County Line" throws in just about every musical and lyrical cliché associated with this genre (ridiculously twangy lead vocals and lines about Chevy trucks, whiskey, cigarettes...even a dog and a shotgun) and somehow spits out a perfect mix of respect for the musical roots represented and a playful wink at the listener. Good times... good times. In the midst of the sly fun, the boys manage to sneak in some serious subject matter ("Society of Fear") plus some downright touching, lovey-dovey stuff ("No One in the World"). Music like this is best served up with a good dose of gritty, raw, "live" energy, and this disc doesn't disappoint on that score (you can almost hear the beer bottles clinking). The downright "purty" opening track, "Don't Try and Love Me"; the groovin', country shuffle, "Since You Said Goodbye"; and the moody, Wallflowers-esque "Picture of Lonely" stand out as the most solid tracks overall, but there ain't any stinkers to be found here. This is a raucous, alt country party for your ears. BYOB and the Hideaways will supply the rest.



Larry Robinson Old California Town

by Allen Singer

The song "Old California Town" is the first tune on Larry Robinson's new CD, which opens the door and lets the listener into his musical state of mind. A musician who performs the songs he writes, each of Robinson's songs showcases the fine talents of a guitarist who knows what he likes. Furthermore, he isn't afraid to step outside his comfort range of country-tinged folk music. On such songs as "Let Me Down Easy" and "Steinbeck's Ghost," Robinson uses more complex arrangements, which extend the vocal and musical value of the material. Because his writing is clear and to the point, he helps the listener experience the moods and scenery of each song.

Joining Robinson on the CD are Jeff Bowen, his long-time musical partner; Paul Beach, his co-producer; fellow musician Tony Dean; and instrumentalist extraordinaire Dennis Caplinger. The production is understated yet multilayered, with a fine mix of instruments and vocal harmonies. Robinson's songs carry you along with him. You feel that you're actually traveling with him on his musical wanderings, as in "High Sierra Hideaway," where you can almost smell the pines, revel in the solitary escape, and enjoy fishing.

Performer/songwriter Harlan Howard once said the best songs are those with "three chords and the truth." Robinson's CD is that and more. The music takes the listener on a meandering journey through a California state of mind. After listening to the songs, you're left with a comforting sense of having taken a musical trip down a well-traveled road, as the singer whistles off and disappears into the silence of the CD's concluding notes.

"Old California Town," the title song, summarizes this feeling succinctly: "I've been around the world, but I'll die here some day, right here in this old California town."





BENEFIT FOR BECKY'S HOUSE @ THE OULD SOD



Annie Dru



Chris Hoffee & Steph Johnson



Molly Meekin



Saba



Christiane Lucas



D.J. White



Sara Petite



Joanie Mendenhall



Regina Dawn



Dee Ray



Derek Duplessie



Greg Friedman



Bart Mendoza



Molly Jenson & Evan Bethany



Chelsea Flor & her band

NeilFest at Dizzy's

ISAAC CHEONG'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY AS OPEN MIC HOST/LESTAT'S



C.J. Hutchins



Joe Rathburn



Lisa Sanders



Rob Deez



Isaac Cheong



John Katchur



Kornflower



J Turtle



Billy Fritz



Peggy Watson



Host Peter Bolland



Mark Jackson



Pete Thurston



Alex Depew



Jan Lui

ELSEWHERE AROUND TOWN

WOOD, N, LIPS OPEN MIC @ BORDERS



Cathryn Beeks & Matt Silvia



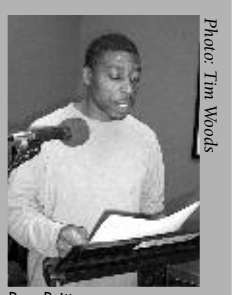
John Wilcox & Pamela Haan



Greg Campbell, Patty Hall, Risa Goldberg



Bob Setzer



Ron Britton



Derren Raser @ ListenLocal Cooks



Rusty Jones @ Lestat's



Renata Youngblood @ ListenLocal Cooks



Pat Rendon



Greg Gross



Tom Boyer



Chris Clarke



Cindy Lee Berryhill & Big Oil



Paul Williams @ Dizzy's



Robin Adler & Dave Blackburn @ Dizzy's



Brooklyn Mack @ Brass Rail



P.F. Sloan @ Acoustic Music SD



Sweet Joyce Ann @ Brass Rail



Janis Ian at Acoustic Music SD



Little Big Men @ 101 Artists Colony



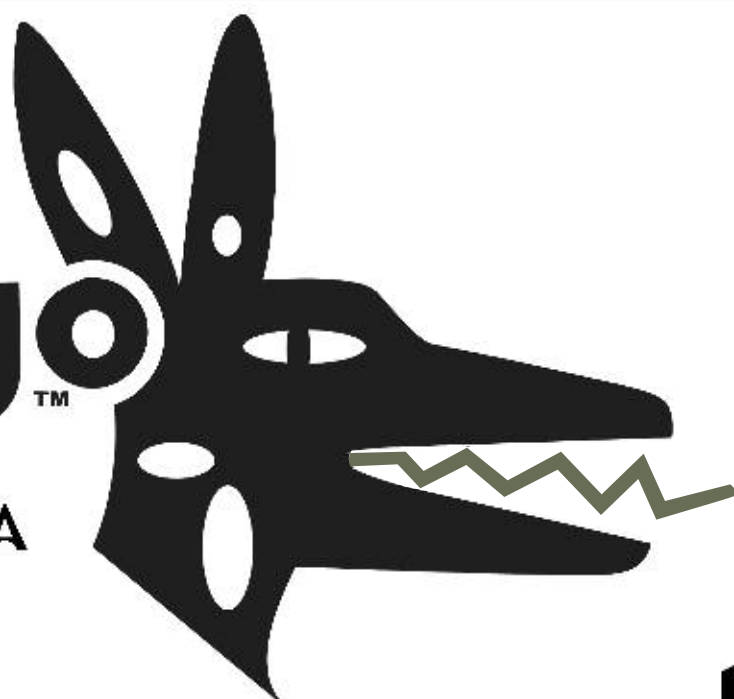
Jeffrey Berringer @ Brass Rail

elRayo Guitarworks would like to welcome all of you down to the store this holiday for all of your guitar needs. Great deals on Strings, Pickups, parts.

Adams Avenue — Across the street from the Adams Ave Clock. We buy, sell and trade quality instruments • Custom electronics and building, modifications and instrument maintenance • "Don't follow leaders, watch your parking meters" BD ERGW122068P

elRayo™ Guitarworks

San Diego, CA



A Hot-Rod Shop For Guitar

**GUITARS, PICKGUARDS,
PICKUPS, PICKUP REWINDING,
BRIDGES, TAIL-PIECES, STRINGS,
KNOBS, STRAPS, CASES, BODIES,
NECKS, CORDS, LESSONS,
BOOKS and more!**

Full Service Stringed Instrument Repair Shop

Monday - Friday 10:00AM to 7:00PM

Saturday - 11:00AM to 5:00PM

Closed Sunday

Happy Holidays!

619-280-1937

3043 Adams Avenue

www.elrayoguitarworks.com



Custom Pinstriping available

HUNDREDS OF GIFT IDEAS!

accessories from: Fender • Dimarzio • Seymour Duncan • EMG • Lindy Fralin • Joe Barden • Bartolini • Tom Anderson • Fishman • Rio Grande • L.R. Baggs • Schellen Design • Norstrand • Fernandes • Mighty Mire • Bill Lawrence • Shaller • Wilkinson

Johnson • G&L • Grover • Gotoh • Hipshot • G-parts • Spertzel • Tone Pros • WD products • Bigsby • elRayo Guitarworks is located at the corner of Ohio and