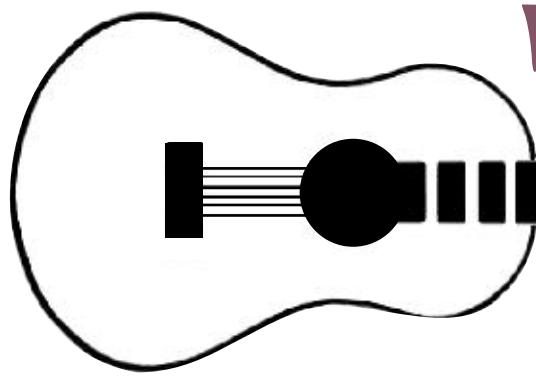


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SAN DIEGO ROUBADOUR

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



January 2007

www.sandiegotroubadour.com

Vol. 6, No. 4

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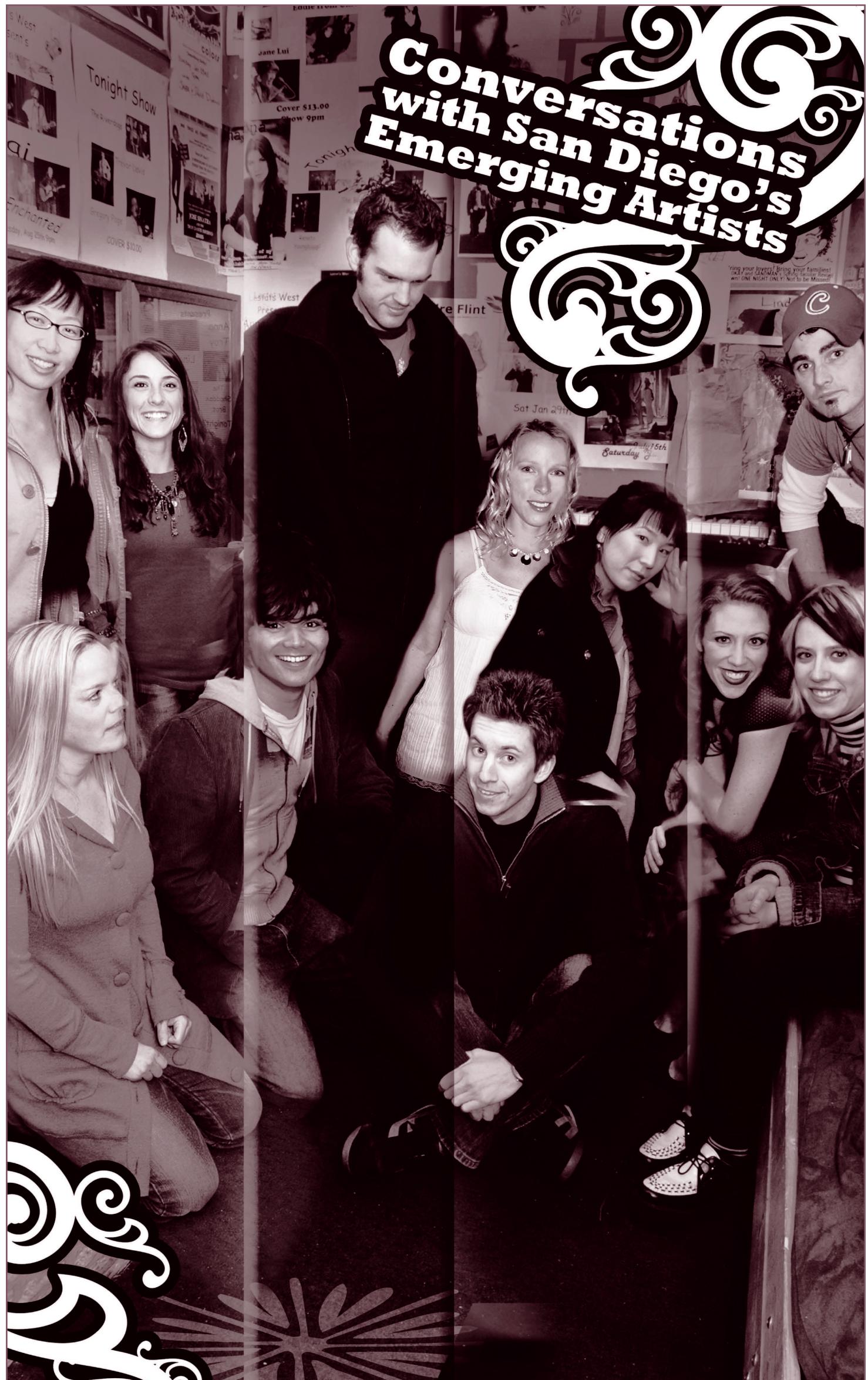
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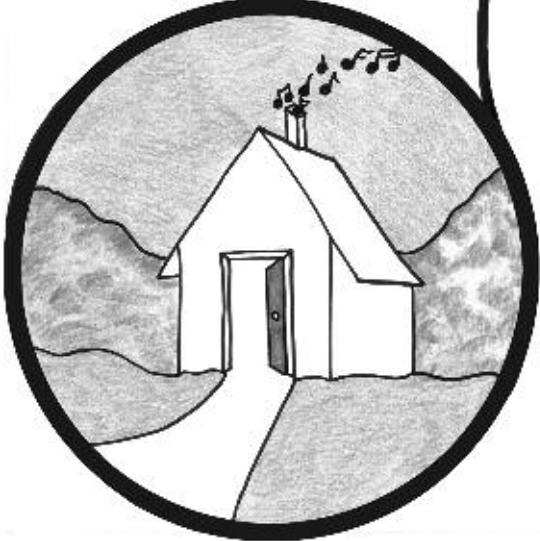
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To promote, encourage, and provide an alternative voice for the great local music that is generally overlooked by the mass media; namely the genres of alternative country, Americana, roots, folk, blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass. To entertain, educate,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

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

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

Michael Cleveland Brings Flaming Hot Bluegrass to San Diego

by Dwight Worden

What do you get when you put a blow torch to the bow of a fiddle? Red hot bluegrass, which is what Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper, featuring Audie Blaylock is all about. With a name that is longer than the careers of some bands, Flamekeeper is a band that can match anyone – instrument for instrument – in skill, but what sets them apart is the fact that they do it all with such unadulterated drive and excitement that you simply can't sit still when you listen.

Michael Cleveland, now 26 years old, has been blind all of his life. He picked up the fiddle at age four and started Suzuki classical lessons but soon migrated to his first musical love – bluegrass. His talent was apparent immediately, and, while only 13 years old, he performed as part of the Bluegrass Youth All Stars at the International Bluegrass Music Awards Show in Kentucky, the bluegrass equivalent of the Grammy Awards. In that same year, 1993, he made his debut on the Grand Ole Opry as a guest player with Alison Krauss.

From there it has been all up and forward. Cleveland has played with a virtual who's who of stars, including

Bill Monroe, Jim and Jesse McReynolds, Ralph Stanley, Mac Weisman, Doc Watson, Larry Sparks, Doyle Lawson, Dale Ann Bradley, Rhonda Vincent, and JD Crowe among others. In addition, he has toured with Dale Ann Bradley's Coon Creek band and spent several years with the highly acclaimed Rhonda Vincent and the Rage during which time he took his first Fiddle Player of the Year award, in 2001, and Entertainer of the Year award, bluegrass music's highest honor, along with Vincent and the rest of her band. Cleveland left the band in 2002 to return to Dale Ann Bradley and Coon Creek, where he continued to create quite a stir with his red hot fiddle playing.

One should note that Cleveland does everything on the fiddle the "wrong" way. He holds the bow like it was a meat axe, he chops at the fiddle like he was chopping firewood, and his fingers fly when he plays. It's all "wrong" except that the music is so stunning, it challenges your imagination. Maybe it's because, being blind, he has never seen another violin or fiddle player to know how it is supposed to be played. Cleveland explains, "Obviously, I've never seen other players, so I just messed around and found what works for me."

Watching Cleveland play and listening to the music he produces is enough to make you think eyes are a handicap for musicians, or perhaps that we should all learn and practice in the dark!

With a wry grin Cleveland shares, "My classical teacher when I was a kid told me, 'You have to hold the bow like this and use your wrist or you will never be able to play fast.' Well, I know my technique is not orthodox, but it works for me."

Cleveland reports that he loves to play and jam and that he learns a lot during informal sessions with other players. His fiddle heroes include Benny Martin, Paul Warren, Tatar Tate, Bobby Hicks, and Kenny Baker, among other greats, while he reserves the highest praise for Stuart Duncan as his favorite. Cleveland is too modest to say it, but I'll bet many of these greats would include him on their lists too. The year 2002 saw Cleveland win the Fiddle Player of the Year award for the

Photo: Jim McGuire



Michael Cleveland

second time, which he also won in 2004 and again in 2006. Not bad for a blind kid doing it all wrong and who is still only 26 years old. You simply have to see and hear him play to appreciate what a talent he is and what an impact he is having on the world of bluegrass fiddling.

Audie Blaylock is the other featured player in the band, although all the band members are notables in their own right. Blaylock, however, has the credentials and experience to warrant the "featuring" billing, which makes the band name so long. Born in El Paso, Texas, and raised in Lansing, Michigan, Blaylock picked up the guitar at the age of eight and hasn't put it down since. After spending 25 years as a traveling musician and a stand-out sideman he stepped to the front with his own band, Audie Blaylock and Redline, in 2005. In 1982, at age 19, Blaylock joined Jimmy Martin and the Sunny Mountain Boys, spending nine years on the road to learn the craft of bluegrass from one of the music's first-generation legends.

Throughout the 1990s Blaylock played with Red Allen, the Lynn Morris Band, and Red's son Harley Allen. In 2000 he joined Rhonda Vincent's band, and in 2001, with award-winning instrumentalists Tom Adams and Michael Cleveland, he helped that band win the IBMA Entertainer of the Year award. That year also brought the first of Blaylock's four nominations for Guitar Player of the Year. Blaylock's session work has been honored with a Grammy nomination for Best Bluegrass Album. He recently teamed up with Cleveland to create Flamekeeper, a collaboration Blaylock finds very exciting and that he considers his number one priority. He says, "The music is all about rhythm. It's not just the bass player's job to keep time, it's everyone in the bands job. After a player finishes a solo I like to say, 'Then they go back to work' playing rhythm. Everyone in the Flamekeeper band plays in the

Continued on page 12.



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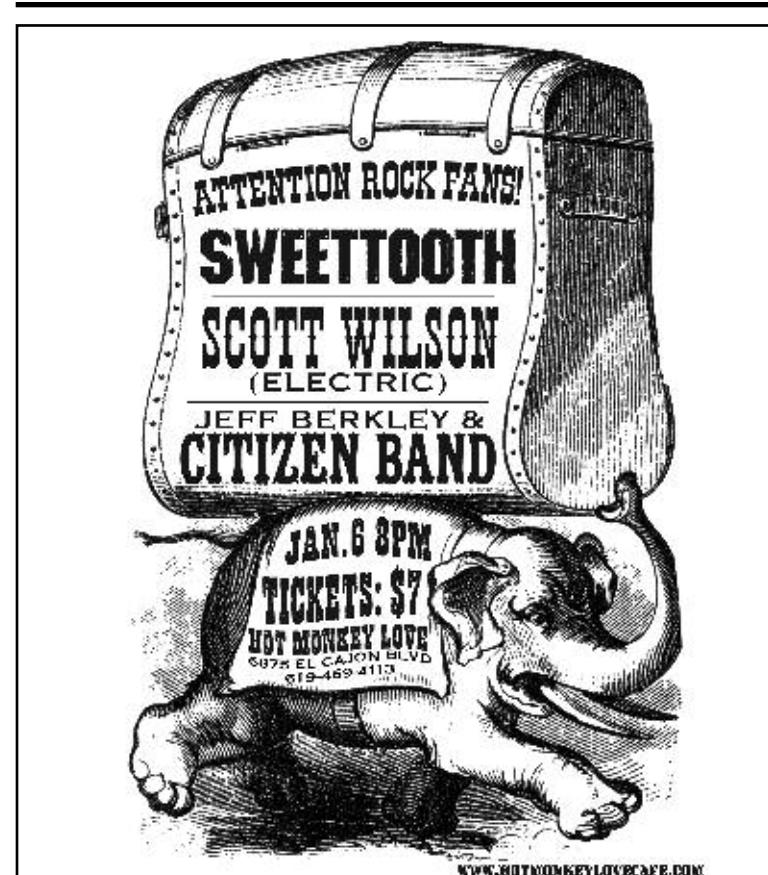
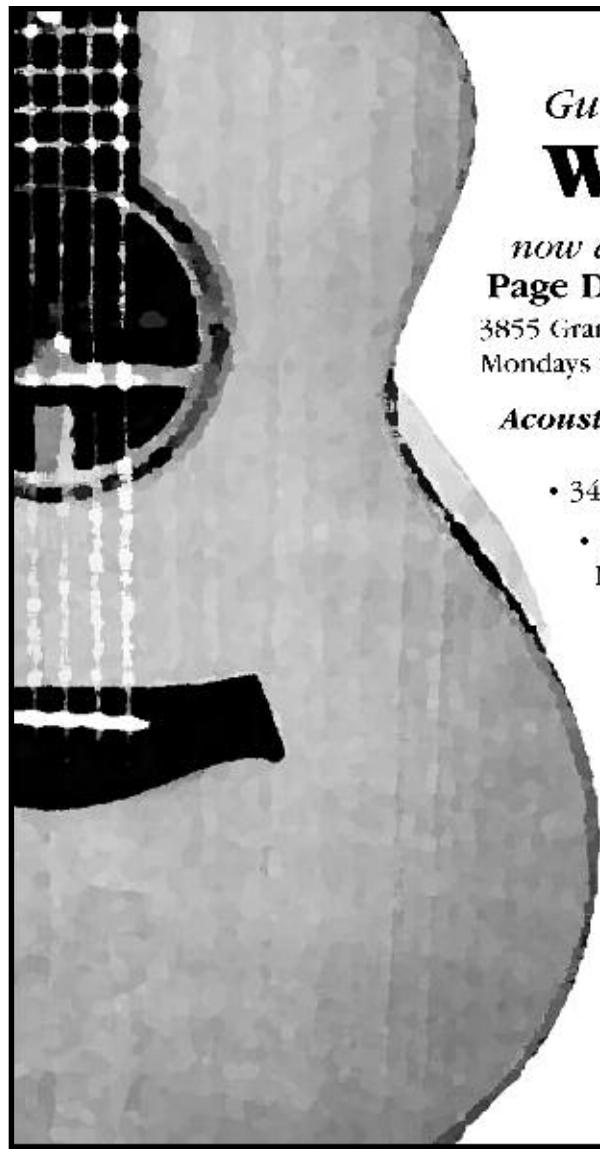
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The Guys with the Backstage Pass: Three Generations of Sound at Apex Music

by Raul Sandelin

The phone rings again. Actually, it never stops ringing. "That's part number 8945729 of a Thing-A-Ma-Jigger Super 7829105, manufactured around 1982," Steve Olsher spouts from memory, reminding his counter guy not to confuse it with part number 8945728, which is the left-handed version.

The third generation progeny of the Apex Music dynasty is a numbers guy. Actually, if it weren't for his courteous smile, helpful banter, and eternally young rock biz spirit, he'd remind me of Dustin Hoffman stuck in a phone booth with Tom Cruise as dead-accurate, nine-digit numbers spew from his cerebellum.

Need the basket for your vintage Peavey Black Widow bass woofer? Steve's got it. How about an original amp cover for the Vox AC-30 your dad bought because he wanted a rig just like George Harrison back in the day? Apex Music's got that too.

And, every one of those parts has to have a part number. Plus, a number of ohms, watts, volts, wiring diagrams, and, oh yes, a fair price. So, it's a place like Apex that needs a numbers guy like Steve. In fact, the entire Olsher family seems to know the numbers side of the music business quite well. After all, they've been doing it in San Diego for 54 years.

The first store opened downtown in 1952. And, for 20 years, it was one of the main fixtures not only of the San Diego music business but also of the downtown retail district. Occupying locations at Fifth and Broadway and then Seventh and Broadway, Apex became an anchor of downtown shopping culture long before various suburban malls began to draw shoppers away from their weekend sojourns to the big city.

Apex also was the pioneer dealer in the area for many of the top name brands that became fixtures of the music industry.

try. They were the first in San Diego to carry Gibson, Fender, Yamaha, and Shure, among others, under one roof. At the same time, Steve's father began retailing for a maverick in the industry — Peavey. Apex has been a Peavey dealer since 1965, the same year that Peavey was founded. So, when Hartley Peavey says that he and Apex have been together "since dirt," he isn't exaggerating.

From the downtown store, Steve's father, George, an M.I.T. grad and electronics wiz, built up the small retail outlet that his father originally founded into music department stores — the type of store with full lines of products catering to all levels and interests, from beginners books and trinkets like kazooos and tambourines to high school band equipment and pro gear for the local names that were breaking into the burgeoning 1960s' rock scene — names like the Cascades who had a hit with "Rhythm of the Rain" and Gary Puckett and the Union Gap.

While providing back line and front-line sound for such national acts as Eric Burden and the Animals and Paul Revere and the Raiders, George Olsher realized the potential in this industry niche. And, soon, Apex became the local specialists in providing sound support for both local and traveling bands at the many-sized venues, from the Fox and California Theaters to the newly built Sports Arena and San Diego Stadium, which were sprouting up here in the late-1960s.

Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, Apex's reputation for top-notch service and expert sound support led to their expansion to five stores at one point. The Olsher family businesses also came to include another famous local store: Albert's Music, which at one point directly competed with Apex as brothers George and Albert developed a friendly rivalry in San Diego's growing music market. Later, Olsher's brother Jerry would go on to open the Music Mart in Solana Beach.

It was in the 1980s, then, after George finally retired and, as mentioned before, various other Olshers moved into their own retail ventures, that Steve took over the store. As the business condensed to the one store on El Cajon Boulevard, Steve began focusing as much on sound as on the retail side. Over the past 20 years, Steve has provided local back and frontline support for John Mellencamp, Chicago, Jean Luc Ponty, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Bobby and the Midnights, George Michael, and Harry Connick Jr. He has fulfilled quirky requests, such as finding a drum set for Max Roach when the famed bop drummer came to town sans skins for a gig at the Contemporary Museum of Art. Steve has also installed in-house sound systems for many local establishments including churches and synagogues, Tijuana nightclubs, gentlemen's retreats like Lil' Darlings and Dirty Dan's, and even high school auditoriums. And, through it all, Steve has had his fill of rock star encounters — from getting stuck in a Chinese restaurant with Billy Cobham to playing ping-pong backstage with Jaco Pastorius.

Steve is currently splitting his time between continuing to provide custom sound and rig setups while keeping the El Cajon Boulevard store stocked, department-store style, with anything and everything a musician might need. The starter tambourines are still there, but there's still also the pro-level gear.

The phone doesn't stop ringing. Nor do the thank-you cards and holiday phone calls.

Through it all, Steve seems just as comfortable helping a little girl and her dad pick out the right beginner's keyboard as he does making sure that some rock star's bass amps are ready to hit the road for yet another world tour.

And, somewhere between servicing both the beginners and the veterans, Steve has managed to collect quite an

Photo: Liz Abbott



Steve Olsher, owner of Apex Music

impressive array of vintage gear and knickknacks. On one hand, he has such gems as a '58 Gibson Korina V along with a whole room of vintage guitars that haven't been played in years. On the other hand, he has the eight-track that malfunctioned on Milli Vanilli, thus exposing the vocal chicanery that led to their downfall.

"But, I didn't own it when it malfunctioned," Steve laughs. "That wouldn't have happened on my watch." No, Steve only bought it after the Nillis' demise. And, like the Vox amp covers and assorted gizmos and doohickeys from the past

55 years, Milli Vanilli's eight-track will wait for the right buyer to give Steve a call.

Or, it might be sold at the Apex's annual parking lot sale and weekend music festival. Every year in June, Steve puts almost everything up for grabs behind the store while local bands take turns jamming away on Steve's private stage out behind the store.

This coming June will mark 55 years in the business. So, it'll certainly be an anniversary worth celebrating.



Drawing of Apex' original store in downtown San Diego

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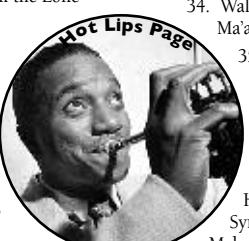


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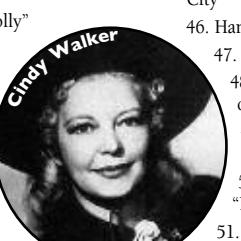
LOU'S SONG PICKS FOR THE YEAR

Well, it's time for my annual list of things you should try to listen to sometime in the next year. First, you just might find out you like it, and second, you might find in this age of the re-issue that it's a little easier to get to some of these. With the Internet putting us all a bit closer, there's lots of things to be found poking around some of the various archive websites (including my own FolkArtsRareRecords.com). At any rate, the search for good, rare stuff is always part of the trip. Happy hunting! Here's another 103 quality experiences.

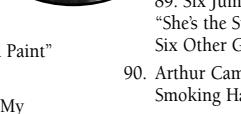
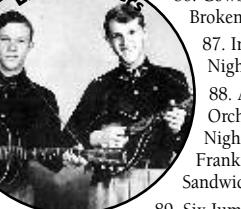
1. Esco Hankins: "I Pray for the Day that Peace Will Come" (written by Hank Williams)
2. Eddie South: "Dr. Groove"
3. Dillard Chandler: "Mathie Grove"
4. Banjo Ikey Robinson: "My Four Reasons"
5. Jack Shee: "Lovesick Blues" (1921 recording of the song Hank Williams made famous with the verse about going to the doctor)
6. Horton Barker: "At the Foot of Yonders Mountain"
7. Hawkshaw Hawkins: "I Am the Lone Wolf"
8. Homer Roadheaver: "The Brewers Big Horses"
9. Cindy Walker: "Don't Be Ashamed of Your Age"
10. Roy Acuff: "We Live in Two Different Worlds"
11. Billy Murray: "Come Take a Trip in My Airship" (1904)
12. Lee Wiley: "Sweet and Low Down"
13. Hot Lips Page: "The Lady in Bed"
14. Babs Gonzales: "Professor Bop"
15. Sara Cleveland: "Queen Jane"
16. Larry Vincent & the Pearl Trio: "Wong Has the Largest Tong in China"



17. Hoosier Hot Shots: "She Broke My Heart in Three Places (Chicago, Milwaukee, and New York)
18. Hoagy Carmichael: "Billy a Dick"
19. Cats & the Fiddle: "Gangbuster"
20. Hollywood Hucksters: "The Happy Blues" (vocal by Benny Goodman & Stan Kenton)
21. Beverly King & Joe Knight: "Remember Me"
22. Lily Mae Ledford: "Pretty Polly"
23. Glenn Orlin: "The Wild Buckaroos"
24. Louis Killen: "Pleasant and Delightful"
25. Gil Turner: "If I Had to Do It All Over Again (I'd Do It All Over You)"
26. Juke Boy Bonner: "Trouble in Houston"
27. Morrison & Reeves: "Thank You for Your Very Kind Attention"
28. Hobart Smith: "Claude Allen"
29. Shakey Joe Horton: "The Dirty Dozens"
30. The Bubbling Over Five: "Get Up Off That Jazzophone"
31. Alec Johnson: "Sister Maud Blues"
32. Bo Carter: "Policy Blues"
33. Daddy Stovetop & Mississippi Sara: "The Spasm"
34. Walter Cole: "Mama Keep Your Yes Ma'am Clean"
35. Charlie Poole & the North Carolina Ramblers: "Sweet Sixteen"
36. Vernon Dahlgren: "The Jealous Lover of Lone Green Valley"
37. Marion Harris: "My Syncopated Melody Man"
38. Bessie Jones: "Drinkin' of the Wine"
39. Hank Thompson: "The Older the Violin, the Sweeter the Music"



40. Julie Henigan: "American Stranger"
41. Laurence Ferlinghetti: Tentative description of a dinner to promote the impeachment of President Eisenhower
42. Lord Buckley: "His Majesty, the Policeman"
43. Roscoe Holcomb: "Across the Rocky Mountains"
44. Mike Seeger: "In the Days of My Childhood Plays"
45. Rev. Gary Davis: "Twelve Gates to the City"
46. Hank Williams: "House of Gold"
47. Muddy Waters: "Mean Red Spider"
48. Slim Newton: "There's a Redback on the Toilet Seat"
49. Clarence Ashley: "House Carpenter"
50. Byrd Moore's Hot Shots: "Frankie Silver"
51. Ernest Stoneman: "Say Darlin', Say"
52. Kitty Wells: "Queen of Honky Tonk Street"
53. Fats Waller & his Rhythm: "You Mind Your Mouth (I'll Mind My Bizness)"
54. Dicky Doo & the Don'ts: "Flip Top Box"
55. Dinah Washington: "Short John"
56. Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys: "So the Bluebirds and the Blackbirds Got Together"
57. Boswell Sisters: "Crazy People"
58. Jimmy Tarlton: "Lowe Bonnie"
59. Wilma Lee Cooper: "In the Hills of Roane County"
60. Ozzie Nelson's Orchestra: "About a Quarter to Nine"
61. King Solomon Hill: "Times Has Done Got Hard"
62. Howlin' Wolf: "Tail Dragger"
63. Lowe Stokes & his North Georgians: "Take Me to That Land of Jazz"
64. Sons of the Pioneers: "Skyball Paint"
65. David Miller: "Jailhouse Rag"
66. Cap, Andy, & Flip: "I'm Taking My



67. Jelly Jaw Short: "Snake Doctor Blues"
68. Roy Hoggard: "Snake Dance Boogie"
69. Cliff Carlisle: "Ringtail Tom"
70. Lonnie Irving: "Pinball Machine"
71. Hank Locklin: "Pinball Millionaire"
72. Bill Monroe: "Alabama Waltz"
73. Little Jimmie Dickens: "Pennys for Papa"
74. Stanley Brothers: "Come All You Tenderhearted"
75. Texas Jim Robertson: "Ridge Running Roane"
76. Merle Travis: "Moon Over the Motel"
77. Lilly Brothers: "There'll Come a Time"
78. John Cohen: "Talkin' Hard Luck"
79. Wade & Julia Mainer: "Courtin' in the Rain"
80. Nimrod Workman: "Travellin' Creature"
81. Jean Ritchie: "Loving Hannah"
82. Harry "Mac" McClintock: "Fireman Save My Child"
83. Ray & Ina Patterson: "Behind These Prison Walls of Love"
84. Carson Robison Trio: "What Are You Squawkin' About?"
85. Bud & Joe Billings: "You'll Get Pie in the Sky When You Die"
86. Cowboy Copus: "The Road of Broken Hearts"
87. Irving Kaufman: "Tonight's My Night with Baby"
88. Al Lentz & his Orchestra: "Every Night I Bring her Frankfurter Sandwiches"
89. Six Jumping Jacks: "She's the Sweetheart of Six Other Guys"
90. Arthur Camps Boys: "The Smoking Habit"



91. Gene Green: "Ruff Johnson's Harmony Band"
92. Mills Brothers: "London Rhythm"
93. Slim Gaillard: "Symphony in Vout" (aka "The Groove Juice Symphony")
94. Helen Kane: "I Want to Be Bad"
95. Kathy Larisch & Carol McComb: "She Moved Through the Fair"
96. Uncle Dave Macon: "From Earth to Heaven"
97. Hackberry Ramblers: "You Got to Hi De Hi"
98. Dutch Coleman: "Gonna Raise Some Bacon at Home"
99. Del Rey: "When the Levee Breaks"
100. Maybelle Carter: "He's Solid Gone"
101. Etta Baker: "I Get the Blues When It Rains"
102. Wanda Jackson: "Half as Good a Girl"
103. Al Bowly: "Let's Put Out the Lights and Go to Sleep"

Lots of brain cells to be displaced in the above. Hope I've given you some ideas for lists of your own.

Recordially,

Lou Curtiss

A Special Note: Our friend Wayne Brandon, who is one of the world's biggest Roy Acuff fans and who has played with is buddy Clark Powell and their New Smokey Mountain Boys at 12 of the last 13 Roots Festivals, was recently laid low by a stroke. Wayne, a champion of old time music, is recovering. You can reach him at royacuff@hotmail.com. He'd love to hear from you. Say something nice about Roy Acuff. That'll cheer him up.



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Kev Rones: Modern Musical Philanthropist and Creator of the S.D. Guitar Society

by Simeon Flick

It hasn't been so long, a little over one hundred years ago perhaps, since musicians were generally considered to be nothing more than their own kind of charity case. Most composers measured their relative success by the quantity and consistency of commissions received in the service of well-to-do patrons of the arts, be they wealthy aristocrats or denizens of royal courts. The resulting art itself was accepted as the return gift to society, with no extracurricular charity expected; not only were most musicians of limited means, but there was also a dearth of charitable organizations due to the lingering remnants of the old world's puerile conscience.

It wasn't until the early to mid-twentieth century that this began to change, when the first of many artists began to undertake and achieve the relatively unprecedented feat of elevating one's social status through their art. Singers like Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley burst out of lower class backgrounds to set a new sartorial standard. Woodie Guthrie became a paragon of musical patriotism and virtually invented the hobo-folk social commentary. Baby boomers imbued the music of champions like Bob Dylan with a tangible yet lamentably short-lived socio-political power. Eighties and nineties acts like U2 and Fugazi mixed left-wing messages with galvanizing music and devoted copious off-stage time and money to activist pursuits.

Meanwhile, John Rockefeller had set a new philanthropic precedent, donating millions to nascent and pre-existing charity organizations, setting a well-followed example for others, which subsequently enabled the organizations to develop and grow. These days, there are hundreds of charities and foundations, and as many recognized causes, with facile access to sanctioned government resources. Philanthropy and socio-political activism have become a virtually inextricable part of the new paradigm for musicians at every level of visibility. Not much has changed; most musicians are still poor! But the contemporary difference is found in the increasingly aware connective tissue of societal conscience, the potential for political power in music, and the emergence of a liberally minded

Photo: Dean Ritter



Rones mentoring two students

Photo: Steve Covault



D.J. White was one of the Society's first guest performers

middle class. Effective charitable action can and does now occur on a local, self-funded, grassroots level.

Enter Kevin Rones, or just Kev, as he has now come to be known, and his own music-oriented brand of community outreach.

A self-taught guitarist of roughly 17 years, Rones had been off and on with the instrument until about 12 years ago. As his father's health deteriorated, Rones spent the more idle hours of the necessitated hospice care in renewed pursuit of his favorite pastime. Rones had never given live performance any serious thought until the day his dying father paid him what was apparently a rare compliment. It inspired him to set a seemingly insurmountable goal: to perform in public just once in his father's honor.

He came very close to succumbing to his frayed nerves and aborting his mission several times on the way over to Mikey's, the now non-existent Poway venue owned and operated by Mike Chambers during the mid to late-nineties.

Still, his courage held and was further stoked by the superlative playing of locals like Jim Earp and Doug Milward, whose fingerpicking prowess ultimately served to connect Rones with his preferred style of playing.

Rones was shocked when Doug Milward announced his name from the Mikey's stage and thrust a high-end Goodall acoustic guitar into his hands. Mikey's liked Rones' three chords and, to his surprise, asked him back, which encouraged the grieving neophyte to improve in the midst of a supportive enclave of fellow aspiring musicians.

At one point, and despite his relative inexperience with the idiom, Rones declared his intention to enter the national fingerstyle championships, much to the nay-saying disbelief of many of his colleagues and friends. He wood-shedded for the better part of two years before entering the contest, and ended up with a very respectable finish, which impressed everyone with his determination to learn and his drive to succeed.

Although he does sing on occasion, Rones describes his predominantly instrumental sound with the moniker "high energy acoustic guitar performance"; it's a diverse amalgam of genres and styles (everything from Chet Atkins to Latin and jazz), played with acrylic nails in a wide variety of tunings.

Word of Rones' developing guitar prowess slowly spread until Taylor Guitars eventually asked him to be a part of their Guitars for Kids program, which donates instruments for the benefit of underprivileged children to participating schools across the country. Rones began visiting local schools as a Taylor liaison and found he had a way of working well with kids; the schools he visited began asking him back outside the auspices of the Taylor program. This was the catalyst for the creation of his own freelance extension of Guitars for Kids, which he dubbed Kev for Kids.

Rones recognized the primary impetus for this outreach when he realized he was in a position to help people of any age or background face their fears and limitations, cope with loss, and learn to perform in public, much as he had during the Mikey's era. He also realized that a classroom could only offer so much in the way

Photo: Jason Nidson



Kev Rones

of a practical performing and learning experience, so he created the San Diego Guitar Society.

The Guitar Society began meeting about seven months ago on the first Sunday of the month. The gathering of guitar music acolytes was purposefully structured to have a strong sense of all-ages community openness that would be free of any derisive elitism.

The first 20 minutes of a typical meeting consist of general colloquy while Rones checks in with most of the attendees. The meeting officially begins with a few formal announcements before proceeding almost directly to the first of a handful of performances by various society members (many of whom are under Rones' personal mentorship).

At least one special guest makes an appearance at each meeting; inspirational local pros like Robin Henkel and Jim Earp, and regulars like Tom Boyer and Tommy Emmanuel, show the less experienced how it's done, offering up positive reinforcement by example. The results of this outreach are tangible and seemingly instantaneous; some of the up-and-comers, kids like Ben Owens who is barely in his teens, are already giving the gurus a bona fide run for their money.

Rones' goals for the future of his endeavors build off the momentum of the present. He plans on eventually filing a 501C3 to elevate Kev for Kids to official nonprofit status, which will enable him to elaborate on the basic gist of Taylor's program and broaden the Guitar Society's breadth of possibilities (think retreats and/or camps, intensive workshops, Guitar Society performance nights at local cafes, concerts with big name national artists, and perhaps his own teaching practice).

Rones is giving both the hope of a consolidated community and the potential to realize the dream of a better life through music to the citizens of San Diego. No matter what happens from here, you can rest assured that on some level, and as a musician of finite means, Rones will continue to make a difference.

The San Diego Guitar Society meets on the first Sunday of the month (next meeting January 7), 4-6pm, at Old Time Music (formerly Acoustic Expressions), 2852 University Avenue in North Park. For further information, visit the SDGS website: www.sandiegoguitarsociety.com





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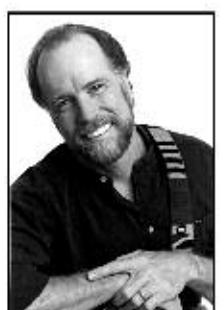
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Kite Flying Society: Wind Blowing in a Favorable Direction

by Steve Thorn

In director Wes Anderson's bittersweet cult comedy, *Rushmore*, socially mobile prep Max Fischer (Jason Schwartzman) jumps from one extracurricular activity into another. A memorable scene in the film has Max barking out the suitable candidates for his latest campus club, the Kite Flying Society.

San Diego has its own Kite Flying Society, a five-piece band inspired by Anderson's memorable film of eccentric characters and locales. There's no initiation or peer pressure to enjoy the San Diego affiliate of the KFS, just an open mind to enjoy a sublime mixture of folk and pop.

So far, the public reaction has been positive. *Where Is the Glow?*, the group's self-produced debut CD, has garnered favorable reviews and made several "best of 2006" lists. The Kite Flying Society has also made strides as a live group, putting in strong appearances on the West Coast, highlighted by a set last summer at the ninth annual International Pop Overthrow music festival in Los Angeles.

The band features Dustin Illingworth handling lead vocals, acoustic and electric guitar, Moog, B4 organ, and



electric piano. Vocalist Derek Rast plays an arsenal of keyboard instruments, including Moog, B4 organ, glockenspiel and the keytar (a keyboard instrument that is strapped around the musician's neck and shoulders; hence the keyboard-plus-guitar mixture of its name). The Kite Flying Society also features David Lizerbram on bass, Todd Caschetta on drums, tambourines, and percussion; and Kelly Duley on vocals, piano, B4 organ, and violin.

Where Is the Glow?'s charm lies in the way the disc transcends musical generations. Present day college students might compare it to the fine records made by the Shins while anyone who grew up during the 1960s will be able to hear the great British music hall era of the Kinks and the adventuresome pop of the

Brian Wilson-Van Dyke Parks collaborations. While these and other comparisons are inevitable (see sidebar), it must also be said that the Kite Flying Society has created a recorded set of songs that beam with a pastoral beauty—the audio equivalent of a perfect San Diego day.

From the opening track, "Submarine Music," to the waltz-like finale, "When Clouds Collide," it's apparent that the Kite Flying Society has



David Lizerbram and Kelly Duley during interview

found the glow. Based on the strength of the CD—and the live shows that helped spread the word—the band was voted Best New Group at the 2006 San Diego Music Awards.

"Well, we were thrilled to win the award," said Lizerbram. "All the groups were great, and we were very proud to be in that sort of company."

The success of *Where Is the Glow?* is a textbook example of do-it-yourself ethos in action. Instead of lengthy studio expenses, *Where Is the Glow?* was recorded at a residence in the San Diego neighborhood of Little Italy. An aggressive promotion campaign on music-friendly websites like My Space told of the album's pending release date. Duley said that because of the band's hard work, the "album paid for itself" by the time it was officially released last summer.

"We did an online presale through My Space," said Lizerbram, "and we had a bonus three-song EP of songs that didn't make the album. We burned the EP ourselves on a CD-ROM. We gave the EP away to anyone who bought the album ahead of time. About a month before the album came out, we posted on My Space a million times. We'd find bands that we [admire] like the Shins and we'd add their friends. We met a lot of cool people



Kite Flying Society: Derek Rast, Kelly Duley, David Lizerbram, Dustin Illingworth, Todd Caschetta at the 2006 S.D. Music Awards

and a lot of good bands that were very supportive."

And then there were the bloggers, who practically exist in a separate musical universe unto themselves. "Some bloggers would love to come to our shows and that's great—it keeps the ball rolling," said Duley, "Blogs are now where it's at, as far as new music and wanting to know [what is happening] here and now. You go to the blogs."

One of last year's more memorable highlights was when the Kite Flying Society performed with Peter Yarrow (of the folk trio Peter, Paul, and Mary) at a benefit concert held at Congregation Beth Am in Del Mar last October for Operation Respect. Founded by Yarrow in 2000, Operation Respect addresses the issues of taunting and bullying, which are all too rampant on elementary school playgrounds and in classrooms. The money raised from the Del Mar show went toward the support of the Operation Respect program in San Diego schools.

Yarrow, along with partners Noel "Paul" Stookey and Mary Travers, have championed causes for children in the past. One of their best selling LPs, *Peter, Paul, and Mommy*, was an album consisting of songs for kids. On the Operation Respect website, Yarrow speaks of his current work as the logical extension of the causes he was passionate about over four decades ago.

"Since I have lived a life of social and political advocacy through music, one in which I had seen songs like 'Blowin' in the Wind,' 'If I Had a Hammer,' and 'We Shall Overcome' become anthems that moved generations and helped solidify their commitment to efforts like the Civil Rights Movement and the Peace Movement, I knew I had just discovered a song ('Don't Laugh at Me') that could become an anthem of a movement to help children find their common sensitivity to the painful effects of disrespect, intolerance, ridicule, and bullying."

Lizerbram's father first met Yarrow through a mutual friend, and the Kite Flying Society bassist has also worked for Operation Respect. The pairing of the 1960s' legend with a new San Diego group exceeded all expectations.

"Peter was nice enough to let us play two songs as his back-up band," said Lizerbram. "We played 'If I Had a Hammer' and '500 Miles.' We got to do songs of our own. He pumped us up with a whole off-the-cuff speech about the

Kite Flying from the Past

Every musical era has had its gems of eclectic pop music. The *San Diego Troubadour* salutes great vinyl from the past.

Nilsson: *The Point* (1971). Before he destroyed his matchless falsetto with too much tobacco and booze and before he and John Lennon were tossed from LA's Troubadour nightclub for heckling the Smothers Brothers, Harry Nilsson released this soundtrack to an animated classic that originally aired on ABC's *Movie of the Week*. *The Point* follows the adventures of Oblio in a *Yellow Submarine*-inspired cartoon for the '70s' small-fry set and featured the top 40 single "Me and My Arrow." Fortunately for lovers of Nilsson's music and the cartoon, *The Point* has been reissued on CD and DVD.

The Kinks: *The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society* (1968): For years, VGPS held the dubious distinction of being the Kinks' poorest selling LP during their tenure with Reprise Records. Critical reappraisal (and a superb box set featuring mono and stereo mixes) has now made VGPS one of the most sought-after discs from the late '60s. Ray Davies' commentaries on British society have never been so droll or heartfelt. It all depends on what song is playing. Standout compositions include the title track, "Picture Book," "Animal Farm," and "Sitting by the Riverside."

The Free Design: *Kites Are Fun* (1967). Brothers and sisters vocal group that now sounds more like the precursor to the Manhattan Transfer than a minor league Mamas and Papas. With state-of-the-art production for its time, original Free Design albums now trade for a hefty price among collectors. The Free Design were right, kites are fun!

It's a Beautiful Day: *It's a Beautiful Day* (1969): San Francisco group noted for the husband and wife team of David (violin) and Linda (keyboards) LaFlamme. Strange coincidence: once the album's most famous song, "White Bird," became a staple of FM radio, the album from where it derived disappeared from record stores and became a collector's item.

The Beach Boys: *Friends* (1968). Sparse in its production and length (your average TV sitcom episode is probably longer), this Beach Boys release nevertheless exudes a certain charm. Listening to *Friends* is akin to sunbathing in Balboa Park—minus the grass stains.

— Steve Thorn

Kite Flying Society."

What is on the docket for 2007? Perhaps more television exposure. The band performed "Tiger Stripes" on Channel Six's *Fox Rox*, and a clip of the performance is now circulating on the YouTube website. An ambitious touring schedule is in the works and the band hopes to complete the follow up to *Where Is the Glow?*

Please remember that membership remains open in this Kite Flying Society—and you don't even have to know Max Fischer.

Website: <http://www.kiteflyingsociety.com/>

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by Craig Yerkes

So, you're a young singer-songwriter and you wake up one morning to an email that says one of your songs is going to be used in a popular television show. Within two months of your song being used, you start getting phone calls from the A/R folks at Warner Brothers, VH1 sets up an interview, and John Mayer asks you to open for him when he comes to town. Nice. Pretty soon you have a lawyer working for you and you're looking over record deals and fat performance contracts. Really nice. Then you buy *Billboard* magazine to see how many records James Blunt has sold this week and you see that your single has climbed into the top 100. Then your alarm goes off, you hit snooze and try to go back to the amazing dream you were having before you have to start work at 9 a.m. This type of dream scenario has, undoubtedly, run through the minds of young singer-songwriters everywhere, including here in America's Finest City. San Diego musicians who have been on the scene for a while may recall the limos pulling up outside the old Java Joe's when Jewel caught the attention of the majors. More recently, Jason Mraz and Tristan Prettyman have made the jump from playing local coffeehouses to the national scene. Of course, the list of bands that have broken out of the local scene and gone on to super stardom is long (Switchfoot, P.O.D., Blink 182), however, for the purposes of this story, we'll be focusing on the new crop of young acoustic-based singer-songwriters. The question on the table here is not only who might be the next breakout singer-songwriter from the area, but also how are these young guns going about the business of making it big?

First off, let's begin with our cast of characters, which is by no means an exhaustive list of the best and brightest in our fine city, but each of them has certainly demonstrated the potential to go national. These are some of the names that came up most frequently when I asked around to find out who I should focus on.

Tim Corley (featured on *Star Tomorrow*, a nationally televised talent search show on NBC)

Lee Coulter (Aussie transplant; played recent dates at the House of Blues and the Belly Up Tavern)

Josh Damigo (winner of multiple San Diego H.A.T. awards)

Kim Divine (winner of two San Diego H.A.T. awards, 94.9 FM/M-Theory Records Artist of the Month)

Jenn Grinels (numerous professional musical theater credits)

Jane Lui (winner of two San Diego H.A.T. awards)

Barbara Nesbitt (winner of San Diego Music Scene's Cream of the Crop award, San Diego H.A.T. award nominee)

Derenen Raser (featured on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*)

Anna Troy (formerly signed to Elektra Records, with her sister, as a member of the Troys)

Renata Youngblood (L.A. Music Awards nominee, San Diego Music Awards nominee)

Lindsey Yung (L.A. Music Award winner)

You'll find each of these artists playing all kinds of gigs throughout Southern California as well as occasional out-of-town dates. What they all have in common is a steadfast desire to have a successful, full-time career as a singer-songwriter. That singular goal is the one common denominator among all of our subjects. With that baseline established, I posed a series of questions to this list of potential up and comers as I sought to find out how similar, or dissimilar, their approaches are in their push to get to the next level.

Signed a record company contract, you know we've got great expectations . . . you know you're gonna be a sensation.

— "Rock and Roll Band," Boston

On the topic of the ever-elusive recording contract, I asked our interviewees what they thought about that route. "I wouldn't mind a big ol' pile of money," mused Barbara Nesbitt when asked about the pros and cons of getting signed to a major label. Lee Coulter agrees. "I just can't front the money for the kind of distribution or marketing I want." Herein lies the rub: as much as we would all like to think that an artist can do it all — control their destiny, keep more of the money (à la Ani DiFranco, the gold standard bearer of indie music) — the fastest way to the big leagues is still to get signed. As Derren Raser wisely sums it up, "Although being an independent artist is easier in a lot of ways [bigger profit margin, more creative control], some resources that labels have are really essential in gaining exposure, distribution, and contacts. Theoretically, you could do all these things yourself as an independent artist. However, it would probably take exponentially longer to accomplish." Kim Divine echoes that sentiment in simpler terms, "You can only do so much on your own." While most of the artists I questioned agreed with the idea of getting signed to a major label as possibly the best option, most also point out that options have certainly increased in recent years. As Tim Corley points out,

"Obviously, majors have the financial backing needed to push a record and get sales and airplay, but now, indie labels [subsidiaries of majors], or the indies that have major distribution, are also becoming more desirable than a major label. Indies can get you on the big tours and can get your records in stores across the U.S. If they are affiliated with a major, they can bump you up and throw more money into what you're doing if things are working, and you get a bigger royalty."

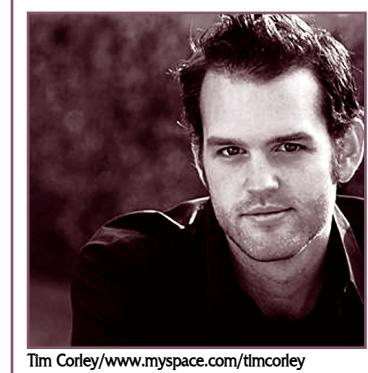
For Josh Damigo, the issue of getting signed has a lot to do with the idea of being able to focus more on the music as opposed to business matters. As he puts it, "If I were signed by a major record label, my expectation is that they would do all the promotions for me, have a staff to sell my CDs and merchandise. I feel that getting signed by a major label would be the best thing for my music and career. There is a huge business side to the music industry and I'm definitely less of a businessman and more of an artist." As great as it all sounds, just about everyone I questioned acknowledged the potential pitfalls of getting signed.



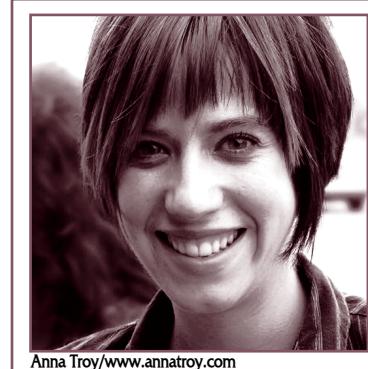
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Jane Lui/www.janeshands.com



Tim Corley/www.myspace.com/timcorley



Anna Troy/www.annatroy.com



Josh Damigo/www.myspace.com/joshdamigo

I'd rather be able to face myself in the bathroom mirror than be rich and famous.

— Ani DiFranco

Messing with an artist's music is like messing with the kid of a proud parent. When artists speak of getting signed, the overwhelmingly predominant fear is the dreaded loss of artistic control. Josh Damigo soberly reflects, "If I sign with a major label, I wonder about being able to call my own shots." Lindsey Yung offers a more passionate take on the idea of the big bad label doing its worst. "I don't want to be a product! My fear is that they'd demand the music to be stripped of its creativity and completely change it in order to make it 'radio-friendly.'" Tim Corley adds some scary math and detail into his take on the dangers of getting

CONVER with San Diego's EMERGING



Left to right: Jenn Grinels, Derren Raser, Anna Troy, Josh Damigo, Lindsey Yung

signed. "It's daunting to know that 80 percent of major label artists don't sell over 100,000 records, and it's estimated now that in order to just break even you have to sell a million. They can shelve your disc even after they've pumped 150k into recording and mastering it. They can basically not do anything with it and there's nothing you can do because they own it all." Renata Youngblood is the only one in the group of people I interviewed who seems completely undaunted by the idea of dealing with the majors. She states, "I don't fear the record companies or the ways they operate. That would be counterproductive. When you educate yourself about the market you're working in and the business of music and publishing, you find that the music business isn't such a scary place. Just get yourself a bad-ass attorney and you'll be fine!" In the "been there, done that, and not sure I want to do it again" category is Anna Troy, who was formerly signed to a major (Elektra) but has since gone indie. Troy sums it all up this way, "My past experience with Elektra was filled with as many positive things to look back on as negatives. Although the Elektra experience exposed me to a world of opportunity that is hard to achieve as an independent artist, my artistic vision was almost completely compromised in the process."

I'm selling more records on my own than I did on major labels.

— former major label artist, Aimee Mann

So what about the current indie music craze? While there are certainly success stories involving artists who have made the indie route work very well, the question quickly becomes, as Kim Divine puts it, "How does a musician become an expert in booking, promotion, and using the Internet to network and build a presence?" Divine continues, "It seems that in order to take a talented artist out of their small town scene and into the world of the big boys, they need to have most of their pieces in place. But in order to garner their attention you need to have already created that buzz, toured a bit, and created a valid fan base." How to create, sustain, and grow your "buzz factor" up to the point when you either get the attention of the majors or go ride the indie train successfully is a question on the minds of all of the artists. Jane Lui agrees with Kim Divine about building your foundation up to a point that you can almost take a deal or leave it. "I fight with this question daily and haven't figured it out quite yet. [It's] important that I make the right steps — promotion, creative output, audience interaction, touring, radio/film placement, digital distribution — if I get offered a deal it's because I've made all the right steps beforehand." It's mind boggling for an

CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG ARTISTS



Tim Corley, Lee Coulter, Kim Divine, Jane Lui, Barbara Nesbitt

artist to consider what to do, and what not to do, in order to maximize one's self-promotion efforts and, even more daunting, when this struggle is thought of in terms of national exposure.

*A prophet is not without honor,
except in his own hometown.*

— Jesus (as he contemplated taking his act on the road)

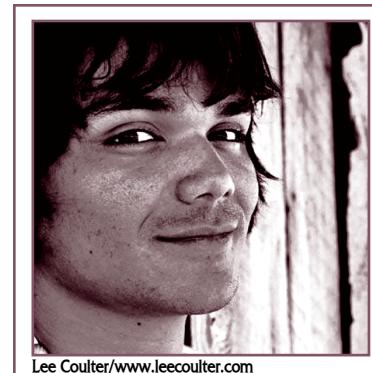
I asked all of the subjects how important they thought it was to take their show out of San Diego from time to time. Jenn Grinels put it this way, "I don't want to oversaturate my local fan base with shows. Ideally, it's great to cultivate a fan base in as many cities as possible." Derren Raser sees a pragmatic angle to getting on the road. "I'm sure that labels notice when you're playing regionally or nationally." Tim Corley sees the advantage in touring but acknowledges the logistical challenge. "If you play too much in one area, you end up being an option instead of an event. Expanding your fan-base is the whole goal and the whole point . . . touring is just another way to do that, although an acoustic/indie tour is tough to pull off financially unless your schedule is filled with college gigs that actually pay. It's not easy to live when you're playing coffee-houses." Lindsey Yung points out that if you don't get out and play other towns you risk getting "stuck being a big fish in a little pond." Lee Coulter sees a big up side

in aggressively targeting your home base and sees potential pitfalls in going on tour without a good strategy. "It would be really easy to feel like you just wasted a lot of time and money after a tour if you didn't start out with an extremely well-informed plan." Touring offers one of the most time-tested ways of marketing yourself to a music-hungry world; the Internet has certainly changed all the rules.

MySpace Is da bomb.

— Any teenager from here to Maine

"MySpace is ridiculously famous, and I have fans who listen from as far away as Guam, Australia, and Europe," relates an enthusiastic Josh Damigo. I checked the individual MySpace pages of our featured artists and was shocked to see that the total plays (the amount of times someone has listened to one of their tracks online) for most was over 10,000, with some well over 25,000 plays (Kim Divine topped the list at over 35,000 plays). Wow! In addition, our subjects all have websites where people are finding them, plus other sites such as iTunes and CD Baby offer yet more exposure, but MySpace seems to be king right now. The downside seems to be that it's very difficult to capitalize on the MySpace exposure and have it translate into actual dollar signs. As Lee Coulter points out, "MySpace has been great for new listeners and bringing local strangers out to gigs, but not really for sales."



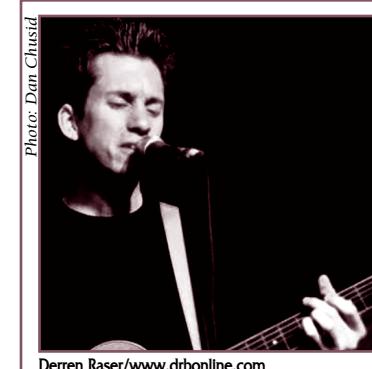
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Lindsey Yung/www.lindseyzung.com



Jenn Grinels/www.jenngrinels.com



Derren Raser/www.drbonline.com



Renata Youngblood/www.renatayoungblood.com



Kim Divine/www.kimdivine.com

Perhaps as the Internet music revolution evolves, it will bring with it new ways for artists to actually see some tangible financial rewards from the unlimited potential in cyberspace (MySpace seems to be moving in a direction that allows artists to sell their music from their MySpace site). But for now, nobody seems to be able to quit their day job as a result of their Internet success. Uh-oh, did I just say the two dreaded words right next to each other? *Day job?*

Don't quit your day job.

— Your Parents

While most of the interviewees do have to keep their day jobs to make ends meet in this expensive town, I was surprised at how positive most were about their daytime employment. "In my opinion it doesn't distract me at all. In fact, it lends itself to my writing because it makes me a more multifaceted person," reports Lindsey Yung with regard to her career as a registered nurse. Renata Youngblood also sees a bright side in her part-time day job. "I try to relish the times I get to go home and sleep in my own bed every night 'cause when I'm on the road or working in L.A., I sometimes miss that." A few of our subjects are gainfully employed in a musical way. Anna Troy is a daytime guitar instructor while Jenn Grinels keeps a very busy schedule as a professional

top can also be a very lonely and scary place. Hence, trying to do it all on your own becomes an intimidating idea. Acknowledging the "nobody does it alone" maxim, Renata Youngblood sees picking the right people to help manage one's career as a huge component in any musical career plan. "As my music begins to build more revenue, I am more concerned with finding individuals whom I trust to work with." Kim Divine adds, "I feel that this is the stage in my own career where I am hoping to team up with the right individuals who see the potential in my music and can help me take the next step." Tim Corley (resident comic philosopher and voice of reason) puts a nice punctuation mark on the topic of planning by pointing out that the biggest part of any plan is just getting out there and doing your thing. "I'm 25 and if I'm still playing the same venues and doing the same things and not progressing by the time I'm say...oh...30ish, then it might be time to rethink some things. It's on me, though, if I don't put in the time and the work it takes."

I did not choose music, music chose me.

— Maestro Richard Bonynge

As I alluded to earlier, the common thread among all of these young artists is an over-riding passion to pursue their music. "The more I delve into it, the more I realize that I could really do nothing else. Though there are aspects of life as a performer that will be difficult, it is really what I love and is really what I feel best suited for. Performing is one of the most fun, most rewarding things I know," articulates the young Derren Raser. When asked if she is 100 percent into the idea of being a career singer-songwriter, Barbara Nesbitt playfully asserts, "Wait, lemme see ... um ... YES!" Jenn Grinels keeps it simple. "Music is my life." Lee Coulter waxes downright giddy as he explains, "Even if I don't have a hit album and I'm playing private parties for the rest of my life, music is just too fun for me to not want to do it 100 percent of the time." Lindsey Yung says she would "do it in heartbeat" if the opportunity to do music full-time presented itself. Kim Divine puts it this way, "Ultimately I want to be able to make a living through music, writing and performing. It is what makes me tick. Who knows what exact path I will take or how far I will go, but I do know that I am giving it all I've got and I hope to never look back and regret."

So, you're a young singer-songwriter and you wake up one morning to find ... that your music fantasy has actually started to come together. It wasn't all just a sweet dream and you don't have to hit snooze until it's time to go to your day job. Is that kind of one-in-a-million chance in the cards for any of our subjects? As all of the interviewees would readily admit, the odds are certainly against any young artist really hitting it big, but for this group of San Diego acoustic adventurers, the fulfillment seems to be much more in the journey than in the destination. As these youthful champions of the San Diego music scene push forward, the rest of us can sit back, enjoy the music, and watch what happens.





Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden

MICHAEL CLEVELAND



Michael Cleveland (right) and Audie Blaylock. Photo: Jim McGuire.

one great show at the Carlsbad Village Theatre on Sunday, January 28 at 5pm. There will also be an as-yet-to-be-announced local opening band presented by the San Diego Bluegrass Society, so look for some local fireworks along with the main act. This will be a first ever trip to San Diego for four-time fiddle player of the year Michael Cleveland and his great band. I have heard most of the top bluegrass bands currently playing, and I can tell you this is one of the very finest on the current circuit. For tickets and information, contact Mike Tatar at staghorn2@cox.net or (858) 679-1225.

WINTER BLUEGRASS FESTIVALS

The winter bluegrass festival season is fast approaching. Here's a quick rundown on some of the festivals within striking distance of San Diego that you might consider attending.

- **Bluegrass in the Park**, Yuma, Arizona, Saturday, January 27. For tickets and info: <http://www.landspromotions.com/yuma-home.htm> or (928) 782-5712. This will be the second annual one-day festival in Yuma. Reports say that last year's inaugural function was a success and lots of fun.

• **Blythe Bluegrass Festival**, January 19-21, Blythe Fairgrounds. For tickets and info: <http://www.blythebluegrass.com/>. This three-day event has been running for years and boasts a strong lineup. Check it out online. Bring your jackets as Blythe can be cold in the winter.

- **Bluegrass on the River**, Parker, Arizona, March 2-4. For tickets and info: <http://www.landspromotions.com/parker-home.htm>. This relatively new, but successful, festival also boasts a strong lineup that you can check out online.

If you have never been to a winter bluegrass festival, you are missing something. These outdoor events in eastern California and western Arizona can be counted on for sunshine and pleasant days and cool to cold nights. This is a great time of year to visit the desert and enjoy some great music!



SDBS WORTHY CAUSES AND INSTRUMENT DONATION PROGRAM

The San Diego Bluegrass Society has started an instrument donation and lending program, a nifty idea to provide musical support to deserving members of our community. So far, the SDBS has received donations of a banjo and a guitar and is looking for more donations. In addition, SDBS, with the help of Moze Guitars in La Mesa, purchased two excellent brand new guitars at a significant discount for the program. SDBS plans to donate one of the new guitars and the banjo to the recreation program at the Naval Hospital so that injured returning vets can use them while they recover. SDBS has been working with the Naval Hospital's powers that be at and they are excited about the idea.

The other new guitar and the donated guitar will be donated to a program for homeless children, courtesy of Emma's Gutbucket Band, the SDBS school and community outreach program. And, if SDBS receives more instruments, they

plan to set up a lending program, which may include free lessons from SDBS board members and volunteers so that deserving children can have access to an instrument and enough lessons to get them started. Following the lending period, they return the instrument and it re-enters the loan program. So, if you have a playable instrument that you would consider donating, contact SDBS board member Phil Levy at drlevy@pacbell.net, or SDBS president Dwight Worden at dworden@roanrunner.com. Your donation to SDBS is tax deductible. Bringing music to the life of a disadvantaged child can make a lifetime of difference, and you'll feel great if you help this new program.

We also tip our hat to the SDBS for making recent donations to the International Bluegrass Music Museum in Kentucky. Hopefully, before too long this great collection of bluegrass memorabilia will "take to the road" and visit San Diego. The SDBS is working with the museum to help make that happen.

SDBS has also recently made a scholarship donation to South Plains College in Texas, the premier bluegrass musical school in the country. The scholarship funds will be awarded to a promising bluegrass student in the name of SDBS. Many great talents are on the faculty at the college, including Allen Munde (Country Gazette and currently of the Allen Munde Gazette) and prominent locals have graduated from the program including outstanding fiddle player Mike Tatar, Jr. Way to go SDBS, supporting the bluegrass community!

It doesn't help that I've just spent the last three and a half hours at the Target store in Grossmont Center and if I can't complete this transaction, all of my holiday shopping will have been for naught. That's right, I said *all* of my holiday shopping.

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

WHAT'S RED AND WHITE AND SPINS YOU 'ROUND AND 'ROUND?



Man, I am sweating bullets right now. It is Friday, December 15, 6:04pm. The pert young lady behind the register has just uttered that time-honored phrase most credit card holders in my income bracket dread hearing: "Oops! Can I see your card one more time?" As I comply with her request, she utters the word "thanks" under her breath and deftly grabs my Visa card with her left hand as she does a sort of sideways glide, grabbing the big red telephone with all the grace and aplomb of a hostess at the Four Seasons. "This will be just one moment, sir," she purrs. Ohhhh. I don't like the "sir" word, never did. Police call you "sir" when they ask if you knew how fast you were going. Those who administer technical support over the telephone call you "sir" because it's less inflammatory than "stupid." Airport screeners call you "sir" when they ask you to step out of the line, right before the full-body cavity search. But no, this is a "sir" of a different kind. This is the "sir" that says, "I'm gonna get \$75 for confiscating this maxed out hunk of plastic, and then I'm taking my boyfriend to Red Lobster."

It doesn't help that I've just spent the last three and a half hours at the Target store in Grossmont Center and if I can't complete this transaction, all of my holiday shopping will have been for naught. That's right, I said *all* of my holiday shopping.

I left the house thinking I could get most of this out of the way in five or six hours,

with maybe a quick run tomorrow to pick up whatever remained. By the time I got to the freeway, however, I could see that my Christmas and Hanukkah shopping were going to seem like full contact sports this year. The sea of cars created by the confluence of rush hour and like-minded consumers journeying to "Mall Land" was barely navigable and slower than Jessica Simpson taking an S.A.T. As soon as I could exit, I did so.

I went into native commuter survival mode, traveling the side streets and access roads known only to those of us who have called San Diego home since Poway was a dairy farm. Winding through the endless maze of self-storage facilities, auto dealerships, and industrial parks, I eventually arrived at the southwest corner of the mall and, turning in to the parking structure, found the perfect spot waiting for me as if the words "Reserved for Sven-Erik Seaholm Because He Has Traveled a Long and Treacherous Path to Get Here" were painted on it. I exited my '97 Ford Aspire (the vehicle of dubious choice for many record producers), pocketed my keys, checked the time (2:33pm), and looked up to see the entrance to Target looming in all its majestic red and white glory, a mere 50 feet away. My situation appeared to be improving.

Upon entering the store (or as I now refer to it, *The Holiday Thunderdome*) the day ahead of me started to appear longer than the next U.S. president's "to do" list. Dozens of checkout lines were stacked five or six deep. Crying babies seemed to be placed liberally and at regular intervals throughout the store. Sugar-high 10-year-olds with just-recently-unattended shopping carts were careening wildly through the aisles as if re-enacting the driving behaviors of their stressed-out parents (talk about *The Fast and the Furious*), leaving a trail of broken Elmo toys, dead AA batteries, and toppled clothes racks in their wake. The sales clerks, meanwhile, all seemed to be curdled into little red-vested clumps of three and four, yawning through bored conversations about when their shifts were ending, who was dating whom, and how today's deep-fried lunch at the food park almost made them puke. In other words I was on my own.

"Keep moving," I told myself. "It won't seem so crowded if I just keep going." I know I'm going to need a cart, so I head for another entrance. I see no carts there, so I ask the 17-year-old security guard standing nearby if he knows where I can find one.



Sven-Erik Seaholm

Since he is deep in the middle of a "conversation" with a cute 20-something co-ed, featuring the worst pickup lines I have ever heard, it would appear that he is not ready to be overly helpful. "Other side of the store," he says without looking up.

After eventually finding a shopping cart and commencing upon my serpentine maneuvers, I began to think back on last week's recording project. I was making a record with a singer-songwriter who had several guest performers slated to perform with her but no band to speak of.

The first thing I had done was to lay down a little loop for her to play along to, while she sang and strummed her acoustic guitar. It was obvious almost immediately that while her rhythm and tempo were fine, she wasn't going to be adept at "locking in" with another instrument; we were going to have to follow her. In the days that followed, I found myself playing phone books with brushes, shaking every imaginable sort of maraca available (including my shirt sleeves), and smacking everything from castanets to DVD boxes, all in an effort to create something that was unique and true to the artist's musical approach. That I was able to do this myself and without the use of my usual bag of tricks somehow gave me the confidence to say, "I can do all of my shopping right now at Target and not have to venture though these holiday hordes any further." I was right, too. I found every damn thing on my list.

Now here I am, with an overflowing cart (and an overflowing credit limit, I fear), waiting for what seems like an eternity for the corporate thumb of Chase Bank to choose its direction—up means I get to work half the year to pay for all this stuff. Down just means I'm *totally* screwed. The clerk hands me the phone and the nice lady on the other end explains that because I haven't used the card in so long, they had to be sure it was really me trying to screw myself out of all this money and not someone else.

Just as Target doesn't carry everything (but seems to have all the things you need), everything absolutely necessary to make a record is in your head and hands. Have a happy, healthy, and creative 2007.

Sven-Erik Seaholm just needs a nap.
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Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

SHERLOCK HOSE AND THE RETRO FASHION

The restored North Park Theatre across the street looks particularly majestic tonight as I lock my bike to the lamppost in front of Claire de Lune. But something's not right, I think, as memories of 75-cent double bills in the 1970s tickle my gall bladder. Then the excitement slaps me for ignoring it, and I prepare for my meeting, moments away, with the unsung cultural god who waits for me inside the coffeehouse.

This is it. We're in the year double-o-seven. But still, every evening, we can turn on the TV and gauge the state of cultural taste. We've got *Entertainment Tonight*, *Access Hollywood*, *Extra!*, and their siblings, even if we ain't got cable. That's right, even the Internetless among us can keep current with these essential quidposts for our own daily lives. We sleep better, I suppose, knowing that Brad and Angelina are still a couple (of what?), that George is truly the nicest guy in Hollywood, that the producers of these programs continuously service our needs. Before commercial breaks, the announcer's voice warns, "You won't believe what's coming up next!" amid split-second visuals and swashing, swooshing sound effects that paralyze the bladder and make a visit to the powder room useless. Can't pee with so much to see. "The lack of privacy is like being in Hell," says the botched babe in the million dollar dress outside the latest hot in-spot, where paparazzi have somehow materialized to blast their annoyingly frightful lightning on the oasis of one's casual evening out. But are they more than friends, as the rumors have suggested? You'll get the answer tomorrow night, right here, exclusively!

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"*Jose Sinatra?*"

"Yes; Hose. Mr. Dando?"

"Dominique Dando, yes. Call me Steve," he says, extending his middle hand to clasp my right one cordially. On cue, the lovely waitress stops by to refill his coffee and presents me with my customary fried placenta and mustard with the lemonade chaser. "Your bicycle outside...ees...monstrous and noble," he offers through a monstrously noble accent. Thank God he doesn't say "cool."

Dominique Dando seems surprisingly unknown even today, four decades after being the behind-the-scenes brain of Mary Quant, Carnaby Street, white lipstick, and essentially the "swing" in the swinging sixties. He retired in the early seventies to devote himself to painting, pranking, and obsessive travel. Today, examples of his nearly supernatural airbrush technique can be found hanging in the Louvre, having been found guilty of treason in 1987.

How I was made aware of his recent



Photo: Fallon Faraday

two-day stay in San Diego is none of your business, frankly; wait for the miniseries. But I was determined to find out, from his own Teutonic oral cavity, if he had been the one behind a recent *cause célèbre* that I had pegged as a remarkable hoax.

All of these celebrity-infested TV shows had lately been obsessed with some kind of world-shaking wardrobe malfunction regarding opera's famous alto Britney Spears. I hadn't spoken to Brit in some time and, having apparently mislaid her phone number, I sought the help of my delicious friend, Nodique Deneen. Through patient research on the Internet, she was able to provide me with several clear, color photos of the incidents in question.

Something seemed fishy. Later, while I examined the photos under a microscope, I spotted what appeared to be the signature trademark, *D. Dando*, printed in the famous purple-mauve that I remembered so well.

And I recalled the brief scandal back in '68 involving Dominique Dando: his creation of flesh colored bathing suits and lingerie with airbrushed designs rendering them anatomically (if not politically) correct. They came in three styles, as I remember: mountain lady, debutante, and sleek.

So, now on a Thursday evening in North Park, after swearing on the Beatles that I wouldn't tell a soul (I had my fingers crossed and, heck, I tell my brother Tom's soul everything anyway), Dominique Dando told me that I should have been a detective.

Nice one, Britney. Gee, isn't TV stoopid?

My mind's at rest and I'm feeling mighty proud. The great Dando, however, gazing across the street, seems worried, puzzled.

"Who vas zee genius to put zee lights around zee marquee but not behind, to let you see vat ees playing?" He seems mesmerized by what might mercifully be called a uniquely brave architectural innovation at the theater.

"I don't know," I answer. "But, obviously a native."

"Ah, yes. American. Of course."



RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

TWELVE MONTHS OF HOUSE ARREST

It's time for the year in review, from my perspective.

2006 was the first year of my life that I didn't have a full-time job. I applied for 50 or more radio gigs all over the country but heard replies from just three of them, two to say "hello, but no" (because I knew the person doing the hiring), and one to talk about my willingness to leave here for Lansing, Michigan (I may be crazy but I'm not stupid!) A big thank you, then, to KSDS for giving me the opportunity to remain on the air, however infrequently, when I was about to give up my career. *Please support public radio Jazz 88.3!*

I was in my house so much that I saw 140 Padres games on TV. Because of that, they won the West again!

I was in my house so much that I re-read every book we own.

I was in my house so much that I vacuumed all 2,025 square feet of it 50 times. That equals 101,250 square feet, the equivalent of 2.3 million pencil erasers!

I wrote 12 articles for the Troubadour, some of which made sense!

A stranger approached me at Von's last month and thanked me for putting Pink Floyd's *Pulse* concert on KPBS-TV. I told him it was my pleasure. I neglected to mention that I had nothing to do with it and that I was just one of the talking heads on screen to hustle him for money.



Jim McInnes

Made me feel like some kind of celebrity, he did!

I relearned the value of a dollar— and of a wife who works!

After playing in the Modern Rhythm band for seven years, my fellow guitar slingers Andy Vereen and Don Story have helped me achieve my goal of *near-com-petency* on the instrument! Thanks, guys. We played Humphrey's three times, breaking our previous record of two. I don't think we played any other gigs last year. We didn't want to get overexposed!

A few of my friends checked out too soon: Buddy Blue, Peggy Claire, and my youngest dog, Casey. But our son, Dustin, and his wife Kelly made us grandparents again!

My phone rang while I was sitting on the toilet on 136 separate occasions during 2006! Does anyone else experience such a phenomenon? Is this a world record? *I've been told I was full of crap, but this is ridiculous!*

Finally, and I am not making this up, as I was writing this article, I received a full-time job offer from a San Diego radio station! I'll tell you more next month. Happy New Year!



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Steve Morse and the Dixie Dregs in Concert at the North Park Theatre

by Bart Mendoza

It's a sad fact that after more than three decades of recordings, the name Dixie Dregs is better known than its music. Maybe it's an image problem. Their name might stir up images of Southern rock or even an avant-garde Dixieland band, but in truth they are an excellent jazz fusion band, albeit one that would fit in with the Allman Brothers or Santana. While the music of the Dixie Dregs itself can often ride the fence when it comes to genre, the clear focus here is on the guitar wizardry of leader Steve Morse.

Although various combinations of the musicians who would form the nucleus of the group had performed together as far back as 1968, it wasn't until 1973, when original members Steve Morse (guitar), Andy West (bass), Allen Sloan (violin), and Bart Yarnal (drums) were at the University of Miami that the group gelled. Quickly immersing themselves in the then burgeoning on-campus music scene, the group pressed up its own first album, *The Great Spectacular*. Now a rare collectable, only a few copies were pressed up to send out to radio and friends, and although only a few people heard the disc at the time, it wasn't long before major labels were drawn to the group. Pianist Chuck Leavell (Allman Brothers, Rolling Stones) is credited for bringing the band to the attention of Capricorn Records, but the band had already been building steam for years by the time of their 1977 major label debut, *Free Fall*. Unfortunately, while the group garnered critical acclaim, mainstream success proved elusive. It wasn't for lack of trying however. Eager to get their sound out in front of new audiences, the group made several television appearances, including spots on the *Tonight Show* and *American Bandstand*. After five more albums the band broke up in 1983.

The Dixie Dregs have periodically regrouped over the years and since their split Morse has performed with his own group. The biggest surprise for longtime fans, however, has been his side projects, with many band and recording sessions overlapping. During the late 1980s Morse could be found strumming with prog-rockers Kansas, although he's made his biggest impact as part of legendary rock hitmakers Deep Purple. Over the past 14 years, Morse has recorded 10 albums as well as seven DVDs with the band, firmly establishing

Photo: Susan J. Weiland



Steve Morse

himself in a group that had already been headliners for more than 25 years at the time he joined.

It's clear from one look at his itinerary that Morse loves life on the road. Currently on their first tour in two years, squeezed in between legs of a Deep Purple world tour, the Dixie Dregs will make an appearance at the North Park Theatre on January 20. Surprisingly, the band has no new product to push but is touring simply to play music.

Home to San Diego's Lyric Opera Company, the venue is an incredible place to take in a concert of any kind, with excellent sight lines and superb sound perfect for catching every nuance of Morse's guitar playing.

The Dixie Dregs has never had the most stable of lineups — over a dozen members have taken part throughout the years — but both founder Steve Morse and drummer Rod Morgenstein, who joined in 1975 just prior to their first recordings, remain today.

While the sounds on offer at this con-

cert might be a little further afield than the average pop or Americana listener is accustomed to, anyone who is inspired by sterling musicianship, dazzling fretwork, or complex, yet melodic arrangements will find this concert the equivalent of a musical thrill ride.

The Dixie Dregs and the Steve Morse Band, Saturday, January 20, 8pm at the Stephen and Mary Birch North Park Theatre, 2891 University Avenue.



Dixie Dregs

Michael Cleveland, continued from page 3.

same style and manner that helps us keep a strong and tight rhythm, which is key to the music."

The rest of Flamekeeper includes Jesse Brock on vocals and mandolin, Barry Reed on bass and vocals, and Pete Kelly on banjo, who are all great talents in their own right. Together with Cleveland and Blaylock, the band is living proof that the truly great bands are about synergy, drive, and working together, and may just be one of the best bluegrass bands playing today. A new record is in the works for release sometime in 2007, and you can

count on great things from this band over the next several years.

You can see Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper, featuring Audie Blaylock at their first-ever San Diego appearance in a special concert presented by the San Diego Bluegrass Society on Sunday, January 28, 5pm, at the Carlsbad Village Theatre, 2822 State Street. For tickets (\$15 in advance, \$18 day of concert) and information, contact Mike Tatar, Sr. at 858/679-1225 or visit the SDBS web site at www.socalbluegrass.org.



Audie Blaylock and Michael Cleveland

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Grand Canyon Sundown

by Jody W. Wood

Listing Neil Young, Willie Nelson, Jerry Garcia, Johnny Cash, and John Prine as influences, one gets a pretty clear picture about what to expect from the boys in Grand Canyon Sundown. Fortunately, they deliver the goods on this collection of mostly acoustic alt-country and folk-rock.

The songs ramble along like a ride in the old Chevy I learned to drive on the back roads of Alabama — pretty slow for the most part, with an occasional smooth straightforward where it's cool to step on it a little.

As far as instrumentation goes, *Grand Canyon Sundown* brings out all but the kitchen sink on this one. Acoustic, electric, and bass guitar meet drums, steel guitar, harmonica, fiddle, and mandolin to mingle like old friends with a good bottle, and the songs might well have been born from such a situation. Harmonizing well, almost everyone in the band is listed with vocal credits on their myspace page.

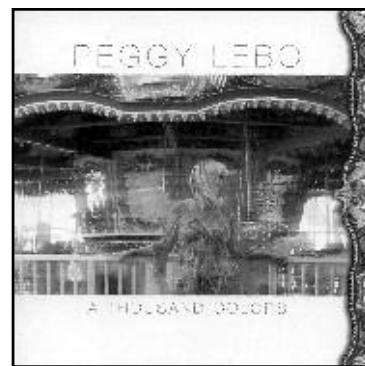
With regard to everyone in the band, I suppose it would be rude to continue without proper introduction. Paul Cruz plays guitar and bass and sings, along with John Postelnek on six-string, bass, vocals, and violin. David Farrell also takes a run at guitar, bass, vocals, and mandolin. Seamus Steele handles the drums, with Drew Danforth on keys. Junior Cat warms things up on the harp, with Doug Meyer adding some fine touches on pedal steel.

For me, the slower songs really stand out the most. "River Roll," "Fly Tonight," and "Goodnight Sweet World" are my favorites. The steel guitar on the latter reminds one of good old-time country western music, which has clearly had some influence on these boys. "Sail These Seas" is the one I wanted to hear over and over. The harmonica and distorted guitar stir up a little ruckus in the middle of a well-crafted campfire song fit for the radio. With a chorus about passing the bottle around, it got plenty of play.

"In My Dreams" sounds like one that might get the hippy girls dancing around up front and "Beneath the Surface" would be the ideal follow up to keep them there. This might be where the jam band part comes in, judging from the online description of themselves. This is a solid set-ending jam for sure.

"Band of Gypsies" rounds out the album on a light-footed, uplifting note. What it lacks in originality as a song title, it makes up for by sounding like something that gets everyone in the bar tapping their feet or playing drums on the console with a foot out the window.

Over all, the boys from Ramona fork up a good dose of what feels like a good time that's worth trying to get in on if you have the time and the right group of people.



Peggy Lebo A Thousand Colors

by Craig Yerkes

This disc is all grown up and I mean that as an unqualified compliment. Peggy Lebo and the team she assembled to help her make *A Thousand Colors* write, play, and sing their notes and words with the kind of empathy, maturity, musical sensitivity, grace, and confidence that only comes with experience. Case in point, the opening and closing tracks, "I'd Do It Again" and "Welcome to Your Life" are goodbye songs that go beyond mature into downright Zen territory. "No One Knows Better" and "Every Word" are love songs so insightful that the lyrics could be used as object lessons in couples therapy. Even on the darker tracks, a vibe of sweetness and enlightenment finds its way into the mood of the listener.

As for style classification, adult contemporary and pop sensibilities dominate this recording, with occasional nods to alternative rock and folk. The vocal phrasing, emphasis on piano (played quite nicely by the artist herself) in the mix, and harmonic approach will draw inevitable comparisons to Sarah McLachlan (and, to a lesser extent, Tori Amos). However, Lebo brings a very personal and unique spin to the genre. The hooks, while extremely addictive, are deeper and more hypnotic than your typical pop fare. For instance, the choruses on "Upside Down" and "I'd Do It Again" will have you singing along almost immediately, but there is something very mysterious in the infectious melodies as well — a layer of depth that makes the music more satisfying.

"Wonderland" is a supremely catchy, clever pop-rock ditty that uses vivid fairy tale imagery to, once again, add something more substantial to the track. "These Are the Things" is a powerful anthem to the power that love has to lift us above the daily grind, and the conviction in the lead vocal drives the point home with empathy and passion. Production-wise, there aren't many bells and whistles here, just effectively crafted sounds to support the tunes. Piano, synths, and guitars dominate the musical landscape on this disc, which could have used a few more diverse instrumental touches, but the overall goal of successfully supporting the writing and vocals of the artist is certainly realized. The title track is a beautiful summation of the overriding love letter the artist seems to be longing to share through her songs, with lyrics like, ". . . you can brace yourself with both feet on the ground and hold on tight to everything that you know...but there is beauty in just letting go". I wasn't really expecting such an uplifting, inspirational experience when I spun this disc for the first time, but this great music comes with the added bonus of a surprisingly powerful, heartfelt dose of soul food — the kind that only a person who has been through the fires of life and gleaned insight through the pain can deliver with this kind of conviction.



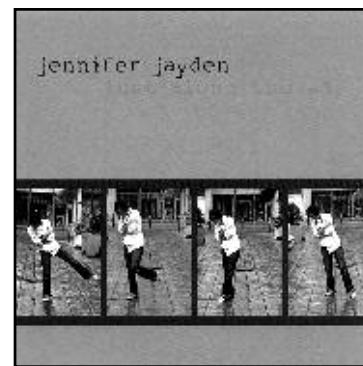
Renata Youngblood The Side Effects of Owning Skin

by Craig Yerkes

A long time ago I almost made a huge musical mistake in judgment. I had just been listening to a Van Halen album when I switched to the radio and "Sweet Jane," by the Cowboy Junkies, was playing. The contrast was so stark that I changed the station but then switched it back, due to some cosmic musical angel on my shoulder. Those familiar with that track know how hauntingly beautiful and mesmerizing it is. The same musical voodoo can be found on *The Side Effects of Owning Skin*, the new release from Renata Youngblood. Youngblood wastes no time establishing her unique brand of quiet, reflective musical power as track one, "Passer-by," weaves together wonderfully hypnotic music (the guitar and violin tracks drip out slowly as if suspended in time) and a sublimely subtle lead vocal. If this music moves at a frequency too mellow/meditative for you, the artist lets you know right away that she refuses to flinch from her approach. You can either jump into this still, deep water or go back to whatever you were doing. From start to finish you'll find a steadfast consistency and lack of compromise in her musical expression.

The vocals float in like an ethereal messenger and, when mixed with the perfectly restrained instrumental tracks, the music, for me, filled my mind with powerful visuals like a series of wonderful short films. On "Never Mine," I felt like I was in the midst of a conversation, watching a couple awkwardly stir their coffee as they tell the truth about their one-sided relationship. "By Now" had me picturing two soulmates exploring the world, sharing the kind of connection that makes every day an adventure. "Worth Lovin'" took me to a lonely room where a woman sits alone with a glass of booze, carelessly contemplating how to throw away what just might be good love. "Water," the most quietly impacting track, made me think of a vintage French film where a woman's hand shakes with withdrawal symptoms as she writes a letter of intense longing to her lover. The production touches and instrumental accompaniment offer not an ounce too little or too much in their supporting roles (with the exception of the flute on "Brown Eyes," which seemed a bit over the top). The electric guitar parts are stellar (especially the wildly imaginative solos on "Pay and Pay" and "Worth Lovin'"), and the accordion on "By Now" is nothing less than inspired.

This pure, pristine brand of music may not be everyone's idea of a good time, but for those ready to step outside their noisy world, getting lost in this rarified air will be a very satisfying journey. Although the music avoids catering to the demands of our greedy, impatient ears, the end result is far more impacting that way. A whisper is just as intense as a scream.



Jennifer Jayden Lost Along the Way

by Chuck Schiele

Hmmm. Jennifer Jayden's *Lost Along the Way* takes an interesting approach.

The liner notes begin with the warning: "album may contain mistakes. Entire album was recorded live, on a blank stage, on a cruise ship using ProTools LE and a Mac G4. Only two overdubs were done: sax and electric on track 11. This music is in its purest form. Autotune was not an option."

That's a bold statement on a number of levels. And so is the result.

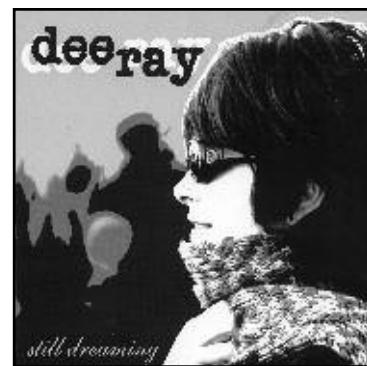
Falling easily into the acoustic music category, this record is emblematic of the coffeehouse music staple. It is supported with light percussion, another guitar, and sax. Jayden likes to sing about wide open themes such as truth, jealousy within the context of real-life situations and scenarios. And she sings with a vocal delivery that's passionate, powdery, thoughtful, and skillful, not far from say . . . Rickie Lee Jones. But not really. Whereas Jones runs outside of the music—sometimes—Jayden stays a little closer to what is familiar. As she continues, however, she will probably find herself wandering out that familiar gate. Most of her lyrics are sung as "expressed feelings" as opposed to "journalistic accountings." Nothing is really being invented here, but it still comes off as fresh, due to the fact that Jayden knows what she is and is not about. I say this because she comes across more deliberate than most. She's committed to what this is.

In terms of the first paragraph, I can easily say that I am astonished by the quality of Jayden's work. I find it remarkable that this CD doesn't sound like it was recorded live, since I don't hear the mistakes expressed in her disclaimer. I don't hear the problems or sonic compromises that occur in a typical live recording experience. It's tight, well-intonated, and, in a word, dead-on, which can sometimes come across as sterile, but in this case, absolutely not, as Jayden delivers one "felt" vocal take after another. Each song is special and honest, giving the listener the feeling of being in on a private conversation. It's one thing to sing the notes and get the words out at the right time. It's another to make those words feel like personal, deeply felt messages per personal experience. (I flick my Bic to anyone who gets that trick down pat.) "Flick."

While I enjoy this CD on the merits of its stripped-down arrangements and sense of solitude, I'm also engaged enough as a listener to hear the absent arrangements that could be, had Jayden decided to make a thicker sounding record.

They say if you want someone to listen more closely, just whisper.

Shhh..... and visit: www.jenniferjayden.com



Dee Ray Still Dreaming

by Chuck Schiele

Dee Ray's *Still Dreaming* is a pop-rock record outfitted with the musical garb of the alternative era. The songs are written well, the band is very good, the production is solid, and the singer (Dee Ray) is putting it out there for real. The ten cuts slither their way through a variety of soundscapes and musical situations in terms of both their rhythmic ideas and established moods.

"Other Side" is a track that stands above much of the rest as its own individual thing. And that's good. This song manages to make reference to many of the classic moves from the encyclopedia of rock school while also finding its own unique voice in a few of the unwritten pages. And since rock music has been played for such a long time, and in every which way possible, including all fusions and fissions therein, this is hard to do. But the band does it, here.

"Rattle" also takes an interesting approach in that the tune rides on a driving punkabilly rhythm section in support of its legato vocal flying over the top. Most folks decide to sing with the drummer in this situation, rendering a very staccato result. Fun song.

The band is comprised of Dee Ray (vocals, bass), who wrote the lyrics and cowrote the music with (guitarist) Johnny Ford. Sue del Guidice plays new-wavish keyboards and Alan Leisure is on drums. Co-producer Brian Stratman contributes on various percussion instruments. Each band member does a great job at their respective posts, keeping things interesting, fresh, and live in their craftsmanship.

Together, the band's combined talents prove to make a very good record. I have one complaint, however. Several tunes sound too much like the Pretenders' Chrissie Hynde to simply say that they are making noble reference or wearing that influence on their sleeves. I have to admit that the very first tune threw me for a loop because I really did think that I had popped in a Pretenders' CD by mistake. In fact, I actually got out of my chair and popped it back out to check. Mind you, it's a very good song as all the songs are, but in a few cases the delivery is an incredible incarnation of HYnde. (I love Chrissie, mind you!) However, based on the uniqueness of Ray's own musical territory, I would suggest getting lost (way lost) in that territory.

Having said that, this is one hell of a bumpin', bouncin' rock record that will keep you jumping on the bed all day and night. Visit www.deeray.com to check it out for yourself.





JANUARY 2007 SAN DIEGO TROUBADOUR

'round about

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JANUARY CALENDAR

tuesday • 2

Elizabeth Weedmark Foundation Fundraiser w/ Dave Millard/Jamie/Clark Stacer/Frank Drennin, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 7:30pm.

My Morning Jacket, House of Blues, 1055 Fifth Ave., 7pm.

wednesday • 3

Sue Palmer Quintet, Ca. Ctr. for the Performing Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., 4 & 7pm.

Hard to Travel Bluegrass Jam, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.

thursday • 4

Friends of Old Time Music Meeting, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 7pm.

Blues Traveler, House of Blues, 1055 Fifth Ave., 7pm.

Tiffany Haale, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

Truckee Brothers/Loan/Dead Rock West, Casbah, 2501 Kettner Blvd., 9pm.

JR Robison/Jennifer Jayden, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 5

Alyssa Jacey/Amy Kuney, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.

Jennifer Jayden, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.

Sue Palmer Trio, Bookworks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.

Mike McGill, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.

Tim Mudd, Borders, 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.

Lee Tyler Post, Borders, 1072 Camino Del Rio N., 8pm.

Jim Earp, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.

Leviticus/Stereo Suite/Dino/Alpine Daze & Boogie Nights, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

Speak Easy Quartet, Claire de Lune, 2906 University Ave., 8:30pm.

Anya Marina/Molly Jenson, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

saturday • 6

Patti Zlaket/Simeon Flick/Kevin Wheeler, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 6pm.

Derek Evans/Joe Cardillo, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 7pm.

Jim Earp, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.

Terry Matsuoka, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.

Steven Ybarra, Borders, 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.

Working Cowgirl/Sarah Green/Rory Stitt/Green Water District/Dawn, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

Brian Levy & Gilbert Castellanos, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8:30pm.

Trevor Davis/Chris Paul Overall, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Scott Wilson (electric)/Citizen Band/SweetTooth, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 6875 El Cajon Blvd., 8pm.

Dennis Quaid & the Sharks/Billy Watson, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.

sunday • 7

San Diego Guitar Society Meeting, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 4pm.

Pacific Camerata Early Music Vocal Concert, San Rafael Catholic Church, 17252 Bernardo Center Dr., 4pm.

monday • 8

Blue Monday Pro Jam, Humphrey's Backstage Lounge, 2241 Shelter Island Dr., 7pm.

tuesday • 9

Sin City Revue: Gram Parsons Tribute w/ Eve Selis/Berkley Hart/Tim Flannery/SlideWinders, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.

wednesday • 10

Blues Harp Blowout w/ Mark Hummel/Kim Wilson/Rick Estrin/Paul Oscher/Billy Boy Arnold/Rusty Zinn/Ben Hernandez, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 7:30pm.

Max Roach Tribute w/ Nathan Hubbard/Bob Weller/Justin Grinnell, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.

Colbie Caillat/Justin Roth/Miggs/Amy Speace, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 11

Joe Rathburn/Christopher Prim, Milano Coffee Co., 8865 Rio San Diego Dr., Ste. B, 7pm.

La Cumbiamba eNeYe, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.

Max Roach Tribute, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.

Tenacious Dave, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

4 Way Free/Kai Brown, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Greg Laswell/Any Marina/Ryan Calhoun, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 9pm.

friday • 12

Allison Scull/Victor Martin, Oasis Bar & Grill, Woodfin Suites Hotel, 10044 Pacific Mesa Blvd., 5pm.

Pacific Camerata Early Music Vocal Concert, Church of St. Philip the Apostle, 2660 Hardy Dr., Lemon Grove, 7pm.

Lee Tyler Post/Hot Rod Harris, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 7pm.

Al Kooper, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.

Harvey Reid, Carlsbad Village Theatre, 2822 State St., 8pm.

Manhattan Transfer, California Center for the Arts, 340 N. Escondido Blvd., 8pm.

Hargo, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.

Andrea Reschke, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.

Joseph Angelastro, Bookworks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.

Terry Matsuoka, Borders, 1905 Calle Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.

Peter Sprague & Fred Benedetti, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.

Stasia/Jon Estep/Taran Gray/Megan Connelly, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

Decatree/Tyrene Wells/Micah Dahlberg, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

Gully/Sara Petite, Whistlestope, 2236 Fern St., 9pm.

saturday • 13

Patti Zlaket/Paulina Logan, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mtn. Rd., 7pm.

Greg Campbell, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.

Four Shillings Short, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm.

Catie Curtis/Kenny Edwards, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.

Simeon Flick, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.

Josh Damigo, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.

Frances Charlotte, Borders, 1905 Calle

monday • 8

Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.

Pamela York/Kristin Korb, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.

Allison Scull/Victor Martin, Beaumont's, 5662 La Jolla Blvd., 8:30pm.

Alyssa Jacey/Erinne Halter/Matt Kaner/Silent Partner/Population Game, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

Travis Larson Band/SuperUnloader, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

sunday • 14

Allison Scull/Victor Martin, Beaumont's, 5662 La Jolla Blvd., 11am.

San Diego Folk Song Society Meeting, Old Time Music, 2852 University Ave., 2pm.

Travis Larson, Borders, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 2pm.

Jose Sinatra & the Troy Dante Inferno, Hot Monkey Love Cafe, 6875 El Cajon Blvd., 4pm.

Sue Palmer Quintet, Barona Casino, 1932 Wildcat Canyon Rd., Lakeside, 4pm.

Skip Heller Trio, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 7pm.

Peggy Watson & Dave Beldock, Clarke House Concert, Kensington, 7:30pm. www.clarkehouseconcerts.com or 619/291-4954

Rhett Miller, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.

Chet & the Committee, Patrick's II, 428 F St., 9pm.

Fairchild/Whitton, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

wednesday • 17

Toku, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.

Robin Henkel Band, Tio Leo's North, 10787 Camin Ruiz, 8pm.

Staring at the Sun CD Release, Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., 9pm.

John Eliot/Raina Rose, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

thursday • 18

Eliza Gilkyson, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.

Geoffrey Keezer, Athenaeum, 1008 Wall St., La Jolla, 7:30pm.

Rev. Horton Heat/Junior Brown, Canes, 3105 Ocean Front Walk, 8pm.

Champion Vinyl, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

Laura Sawoski/Chad Farran, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

friday • 19

Big Rig Deluxe, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 5:30pm.

Brenda Panneton/Rob Grad/Hot Rod Harris, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 7pm.

Billy Watson, Bookworks, Flower Hill Mall, Del Mar, 8pm.

North County Cowboys, Cask & Cleaver, 3757 S. Mission Rd., Fallbrook, 8pm.

Pat Metheny Tribute w/ Peter Sprague & Friends, Dizzy's, 344 7th Ave., 8pm.

Steven Ybarra, Borders, 668 6th Ave., 8pm.

Winterhawk, Borders, 1072 Camino del Rio N., 8pm.

Kim Divine, Borders, 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr., 8pm.

Andrea Reschke, Borders, 1905 Calle

Barcelona, Carlsbad, 8pm.

Terrance Hale/Delaney/Annie Bethancourt, Twiggs, 4590 Park Blvd., 8:30pm.

Gregory Page, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

The Highlights, Whistlestope, 2236 Fern St., 9pm.

saturday • 20

Tim Riffle, Hot Java Cafe, 11738 Carmel Mountain Rd., 7pm.

Tom Rush, Acoustic Music S.D., 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm.



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Hot Buttered Rum/7th Day Buskers, Belly Up, 143 S. Cedros, Solana Beach, 8pm.

Pawnshop Kings, Lestat's, 3343 Adams Ave., 9pm.

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